

PAUL ZARZYSKI BIO

Paul Zarzyski calls himself a *Rodeo Poet*, a title earned from, and informed by, the 35 years he's spent *spurrin' the words wild across fenceless/open range of the blank page*--15 of those years in which he rode bareback broncs on various rodeo circuits including the PRCA. Paul's been selected as a featured performer for every Elko Gathering since 1987, quipping that he was disregarded for the first two because his poems *rhyme a skosh more in the middle than they do out on the jagged ends of the lines*. Of his ten collections, three books remain in print—WOLF TRACKS ON THE WELCOME MAT, which received the 2004 Spur Award from the Western Writers of America, ALL THIS WAY FOR THE SHORT RIDE (the rodeo poems), winner of The 1997 Western Heritage (Wrangler) Award from The National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, and BLUE-COLLAR LIGHT, a chapbook which speaks in both prose and poetry to his boyhood roots in northern Wisconsin. Paul has also co-written song lyrics with Ian Tyson (**Rodeo Road**, **Jerry Ambler**, and **Whispering Hope**), Tom Russell (**Bucking Horse Moon**, **All This Way For The Short Ride**, and **Heart of a Bucking Horse**), Wylie Gustafson (**Saddle Broncs & Sagebrush**, and **Rodeo To The Bone**), David Wilkie of Cowboy Celtic (**Black Upon Tan**, and **Flying, Not Falling, In Love With You**), Don Edwards (**West Of The Round Corral**), Betsy Hagar (six songs) and others. To boot, he's recorded four spoken-word CDs WORDS GROWING WILD, THE GLORIOUS COMMOTION OF IT ALL (both produced in Nashville by Jim Rooney), and ROCK 'n' ROWEL and COLLISIONS OF RECKLESS LOVE (produced by Open Path Music, San Jose, CA). Joining a stable of esteemed western writers, including Norman Maclean, Stephen Ambrose, James Lee Burke, Dorothy Johnson, Ivan Doig, William Kittredge, etc., Paul Zarzyski is the recipient of the 2005 Montana Governor's Arts Award For Literature.