

The 2River View

14.2 (Winter 2010)



New poems by Adam Chambers, Antonia Clark
Andrew Cox, Anne C. Fowler, Jeff Friedman, Pamela Garvey
jil hanifan, Kip Knott, Amy McNamara, Emily Shevenock
Wally Swist, Sally Van Doren

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jil hanifan

the market carol

the season's damp shoulders
shrug and jingle
before the door

where a pot dangles
temporary
changeful

traffic by and by
the carts clustered shepherds
nosing the curbs

what night
what night is this
wrapped in a muffler

stamping slapping
chill
a tinny gloria

on high
and only one angel
her lips cracked

blesses loose silver
a bus token a folded
single a broken

charm o little town
o deepest
night

Adam Chambers

My Father's Ashes And Duke Ellington

And then the door to the unexplained
shut for good
and then it was summer again
and then pieces of him were scattered across oceans
from here to Georgia because that's the way he wanted it
and then jazz played through the speakers outside
the shopping mall while I sat in my car and wept under the sun.

Adam Chambers

Swallowed

In the dream there was an old man's head on a baby's body,
there were animals dancing and a sick or dying horse.
We escaped the house at night, there was a descent
into a cave, the end of a tunnel, being eaten by dogs,
one's own funeral, and a woman who swallowed teeth.
Because of all these things I could not look you in the eye
that morning when you asked me how I was.
I could only walk by you and pretend not to cry
at the awful beauty of the world.

Antonia Clark

Dance Craze

He worries constantly that I'll forget
which side of the bed I'm buttered on,
tripping over accidental accessories,
stumbling through claustal halls.
Even our best friends consider us
mismatched, one brown, serviceable
shoe, one sassy, strappy number,
cut out for dazzle and fancy footwork.
There's always something one can say
to gloss over missteps, deflect
attention from clumsy feet — like
"arresting" or "All swell that ends swell."
It works every time. Then, everyone
can just kick back and wait to see
what the next dance craze will be.

Antonia Clark

Sky Cover

I remember now, how a hand can open,
palm to sky, as if checking for rain
or asking for an answer. It's the hand
I recall when you talk of change, beg one
more favor. A hand with nothing to give.

A woman learns early to read the weather,
knows what's coming after hard kisses
and swift release — even if, under the certainty
of gathered clouds, she lets you believe
for the moment that it's clearing in the east.

Andrew Cox

Someone Else's Work

The ones in hats and coats are on their way to church. Twins try not to finish each other's daydream. The woman's car contains no room for anyone but her. Someone takes credit for someone else's work.

Twins tried hard not to be left-handed. Second cousins did not know they were related. Someone took credit for someone else's work. The step child the cold settled in for the night.

Second cousins do not want to marry. The bowl with the dragonfly makes the cereal taste better. The step child the cold spoons with her bedmate. When will the fathers come home?

The bowl with the dragonfly lived for emptiness. What the lawns had to say was overrated. When did the fathers come home? The ones with the hats and coats were happy to be in church.

Andrew Cox

Reel It Back In

She's a firecracker someone said. She is the daughter who loves her father. The father the leaves fall because the weather wins. The mother decided to hide in the closet among her clothes.

These words want to slip you into silence. This father and daughter follow the lines on the road. The road wished something would reel it back in. The rooms denied any role in what happened.

She's delicate someone thinks but she wins arguments. How mothers gesture should mean something but doesn't. Daughters who love their father's twirl.

How she wears sunglasses on her head means a business deal is struck. The mother hides in the closet. These words want to smash something into pieces.

Anne C. Fowler

Those Last Pictures

Xeroxed from the police report
sent with all the material you requested
from the District Attorney's office,

will they show everything in her bedroom
as you remember it -- chaise longue
covered in floral chintz, matching curtains,

tall mahogany bureau, mirrored
dressing table, pastels of the two children
over the mantel? Her bed table,

lamp with its ruffled shade, rotary phone, book
open upside down, and her glasses? Those
last pictures: look at them, now. The unmade

bed, bloodstains blotting the sheets
and, laid across the bedspread somehow,
her bloody white cotton nightgown.

Jeff Friedman

The House

He had a key, but first he knocked. He had found the key hidden in a drawer and put it on his dresser, where he looked at it for weeks. The key kept changing positions, glowing in the darkness. It had some kind of power, he was sure of it, so he put the key in his pocket and headed to the house where the key would open the door.

The knocking echoed and echoed before it faded. The house knew him as well as he knew the house. The house spoke, "What does it take to succeed? Tell me what does it take?" The house knew the answer, but the question would be repeated until he answered, "Hard work." Why had he come here again?

He knocked again, but no one was coming to the door. As he turned the key, the latch gave way. He pushed down on the handle, but the door resisted. He turned the key back and forth and then pressed down again. Still it wouldn't budge. "What does it take?" He repeated his answer again, "Hard work," and then lifted his shoulder to the task and the door opened.

As he crossed the threshold, he placed the key back in his pocket. The chandelier over the maple dinner table cast an orange light in the room. He heard the house shifting on its foundation. He heard his father's harsh, disdainful voice.

At the table, he used his index finger to write his name in the dust. A wind blew the door shut. He heard it again, "What does it take to succeed?" But it was his father's voice, and his father was unyielding.

When he turned to leave, the light dimmed. The door was gone. He reached into his pocket to get the key, believing that the key would find the door, but the key was gone also. Then his hand reached into air. The pocket had disappeared.

"Hard work," he shouted, but his words dissolved into silence.

Pamela Garvey

Eve Responds to Cain's Confession

Are the feral
blossom.
Are the devotion of the river
fretted into rapids.
Are the outskirts
leaching the center
of faith in itself;
unbound book
of your mother's lap.
Are the tilt.
Are the winded
fields. Are
the monastery of the far-flung,
the nether-den.
Spawn of the shuddering harvest.
Cornucopia of questions.
The unliftable anvil. Hammer
to the Word. Are
uncoaxable, the never
graced, the grimed
and gravel ground.
Anti-ghost, anti-mirage,
the fleshy scripture
written in fists and hugs and blood
deep enough to drown a god
who will never understand.
Fronds blocking His light,
ferment to His honey.
Are the eye-level gaze
He'd love to blind into this beautiful
tumbling, spills scattered.
My one and only
unmoored umbilical.

Pamela Garvey

The Commandments of Paradise

You will not crack.
You will not gleam
with want. You will not tremble
with uncertainty.
You will not zigzag.
You will not be sick
or crazy. You will not
veil, lie, gild
or brood. Definitely no brooding
or holding back
smiles or hitting
the walls. You will never
knock them down
with those dainty fists.
You will not resist
the names or jewels
chosen just for you.
You will not oscillate.
You will not frown, fidget,
fester or fend
for yourself. You think
you can fend for yourself?
You nothing, you mime,
holding out a hand
. . . to strike?

Kip Knott

Childhood Memories of Sulphur Springs, Ohio

I wrap the old floorboards of my childhood home
around me to keep warm. The pain of nails digging into my back

and the splinters combing my hair bring on dreams
of stillborn fawns rolling down steep hills into sulfur rivers,

of thirsty men swimming in coal fires,
of women pulling large loaves of bread out of the ground,

of eyeless children smiling at a solar eclipse without a care in the
world.

Kip Knott

The End of Winter

The nights grow shorter.
How many stars will be added
to the infinite list of the dead

by morning? More than there are
atoms in my body and yours
together. Their absence

will go unnoticed in our lifetime,
like secrets we keep from each other
until the heat consumes us.

Tonight we are still alive,
but the dead swarm around us
attracted by our light.

Amy McNamara

suplicants at the augury

depending on the reading of the birds

or the waters are calm or

today they lash at us like iced whips

still, the film over our eyes
(oh how it is to be deprived)
our hands fingering the air

and the singing all kinds of it

Amy McNamara

they float in the fore

like mums around the crowns
of happy girls

fast action-ers, last chancers
clothed in lack; loathe cloaks

they are holy halos, hat fasteners,
or the wail of a siren, far, far aft

Emily Shevenock

Residence of New Hollows

I. Clay Motion of Naps

Fragmented, slovenly
under-visions arouse under
the crimp of the eyelashes lulled shut. The crest bone seamed; a
ladder tilted
into the fine enclave of ribs
enclosing a male creature of fabricated weight. Draw sound into her,
through
to a solemn, double-bodied nap.
Lines recede towards a recessed cry.
Earlier heaviness left — wet-nape —
surmise a face of marker, or ballpoint pen. Sleep dealt
the strangest reality of gesturing. Deeper,
the dominion smacked
ripe, open;
earth of the floor saw the luster in fresh eyes.
Knees were first to hit; desires to lick as cat, marvel in sin
to quench by tap and drink, dress in blouses, wear rage in subtle blare,
a silent teeth-mad you assent to deny.
Awaken, version
of mostly telling,
wide, lolly eyes. Stood in the green
entryway, bleached light
hung: Fireshone and split
the day awake. Pathetic, ripe,
a body-stick drafted headless, thus nameless,
blotted out by the hottest artist: Sun.

II. Auspice

Drudge of rooms,
lessen;
the saintliness thickens of the bedroom.
Wall rinds stipple in places, an advent to the wiry heat. Conversely,
dropping in temperature, the fruit leaking flan
of the blanket —

Emily Shevenock

sections of osprey remnants filter
in slow suspension of furred air.
The body cold and svelte,
clout of her neck, grips the sheet — upwards
and wrapping it to her long, now blueing
white stem.

Serum chills.

Tin body waits, lavish and cold-silver; finally rubbed and eaten supple.
An erotic stillness grinds and behooves;
above it, her hair like the walls,
live and aglow.

III. Residence of New Hollows

Telephone wires
deport
and still.
Elope
with objects:
So lax
and gravelstain
went the portrait of us dining through the evening.
Ream cut into
with corrugated spacing;
lilts up day slice,
seep,
a cold foliage
sun blue stilts
the creepy sailors manipulating along.
Blandish beacon

in the swatch southward.
Its dimlight drones
then primness,
its cut-cross
then pricks alive grass —
rove away, wary and high at the shed.

Wally Swist

Rats in the Barn

As O’Keeffe forced herself to watch sidewinders
in the desert, she became inured to the undulating of her own viscera.

Old Earl, storyteller and itinerant handyman, had a similar challenge
every time he tried to quit drinking. My fear was no worse

as I walked to the barn every morning to gather brushes, ladders,
and cans of paint; to feel cold sweat bead as I listened to the rats

drag themselves across the warped boards that floored the hay loft;
to know the shadows had eyes. Only after the job was finished

and all the shutters were rehung just a day before first snow,
Old Earl announced he had shot one in the head, *Big as a cat*, he said.

Wally Swist

To Psyche

What she awakens in me is that I do recognize
her face. The light in those eyes radiant
above what is breathless. Her face changes
like the moon's phases: the crescent this morning
shining through mist, Long Mountain
deep in clouds and the dawn rising.
When we know what we want, it is just like this,
this not knowing, but thinking we know;
and all of it disappearing in the light around us.

Sally Van Doren

La Poggia

Cast off the rainbows dripping
on the windowsill and bring back
the clouds closing in on the highway,
I mean, bring back the rainbows
til they drape over the windowsill
and wipe away the clouds
fogging up your sunglasses.
Make sure your bed is cool
and wet and the night is hot
and dry. I mean make sure
your bed is warm and soft
and the night is cool and quiet.
If it matters to you what I say,
I will re-say it until you
fall asleep. The rainbows
help me tuck you in, the fog
and I hover over your bed,
and soon we will envelope
you with our bodies, which were
made to turn you into a dream.

Sally Van Doren

Ancora La Pioggia

I found a trilogy of torrential
rainstorms in the museum
under my bed. With a fish hook,
I procured a paragraph to flesh out
your vital signs. Sponging off
the carbuncles on your chest cavity,
I discovered an isthmus on the island
floating just between the Sculpture Hall
and Old Master Drawings. After taking
the service elevator down to the basement,
I walked around the mummy cases until
I came upon an octagonal urn that held
the remains of an Egyptian princess.
That burnished receptacle also held you
and your mother's teacup. I accepted
your offer of a sugar cube and sucked it
while its corners dissolved on my molars.
My speedometer said time to go hit the hay
so I crawled back up onto the mound
of down pillows and silk comforters,
pulling you up with me on the scaffolding
attached to my mattress pad. We had
a slumber party with all the docents
and didn't mind one bit when the Italian
Renaissance resurfaced. You slept
with the Ghibellines in the Palazzo Rucellai
and I slept with no one but you, as I always do.

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Contributors

Adam Chambers lives in Connecticut with his wife and four children. The one-time long-distance truck driver is now enrolled full time in the MFA poetry program at Sarah Lawrence College.

Antonia Clark works for a medical software company in Burlington, Vermont, and is co-administrator of the online poetry workshop The Waters. Recent poems have appeared in *The Chimaera*, *The Innisfree Poetry Journal*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, and *Stirring*.

Andrew Cox is the author of two chapbooks: *Company X* (WordVirtual) and *Fortune Cookies* (2River). *The Equation That Explains Everything* will be published by BlazeVOX Press in Winter 2010. He lives in University City, Missouri.

The Reverend Anne Carroll Fowler is an Episcopal priest with four chapbooks, *Five Islands*, *Whiskey Stitching*, and *Summer of Salvage*, all published by Pudding House; and *Liz, Wear Those Pearl Earrings*, winner of the Frank Cat Press 2002 Chapbook Contest.



Jeff Friedman's fifth collection of poetry, *Working in Flour*, will be published by Carnegie Mellon University Press in 2010. His poems and translations have appeared in *Agni Online*, *American Poetry Review*, *Margie*, *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, and elsewhere.

Pamela Garvey's chapbook *Fear* (Finishing Line Press, 2008) was a finalist for the New Women's Voices Competition. She has published poetry in journals such as *Cimarron Review*, *The North American Review*, *Pleiades*, *Sonora Review*, and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.

Jil Hanifan is Director of the Writing Center at the University at Albany. Her chapbook is *Whethergirl: the wind rose*, and her poems have appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *Heaven Bone*, *Little Magazine*, *Snail's Pace Review*, and *13th Moon*, and online in AlbanyPoets.com.

Kip Knott lives in Delaware, Ohio, with his wife and son, two dogs, two cats, and Chilean rose hair tarantula. His chapbook *Whisper Gallery* is online at Mudlark.

Amy McNamara is a writer and photographer in Brooklyn, New York. Her poems have appeared in *Barrow Street*, *Conduit*, *jubilat*, *Linebreak*, *LIT*, *The Literary Review*, and elsewhere. She sometimes blogs at paperbuttersugarprint.

Emily Shevenock lives in Brooklyn, New York. Previous writing appears in *Primavera* and is forthcoming in *Burn*.

Wally Swist's most recent books are *Mount Toby Poems* (Timberline Press, 2009), issued in a letterpress limited edition, and a scholarly monograph, *The Friendship of Two New England Poets, Robert Frost and Robert Francis* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).

Sally Van Doren's collection of poems, *Sex at Noon Taxes* (LSU Press), won the 2007 Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets. Her poems appear recently or are forthcoming in: *American Poet*, *Barrow Street*, *Boulevard*, *5AM*, *Harvard Review*, *Margie*, *The New Republic*, *River Styx*, *Southwest Review*, and *Verse Daily*.

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About 2River

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry and art, quarterly publishing *The 2River View*, occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series, and, more recently, blogging and podcasting from Muddy Bank.

About the Artist

Endi Poskovic is the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, most recently from the John D. Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center (2010) and The Open Studio Centre, Canada (2009 and 2008). His graphic works are in the permanent collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and elsewhere. Poskovic teaches at the University of Michigan, holding a dual appointment in the School of Art and Design and the Center for Russian and East European Studies.

Richard Long, Editor

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