

# The 2River View

20.4 (Summer 2016)



new poems by

Jo Ann Baldinger, Taylor Bond

Matthew Scott Freeman, Guiseppe Getto, Alex Greenberg

M. Nasorri Pavone, Carlos Reyes

Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Danielle Sellers

William Waters, Wendy Wisner



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ISSN 1536-2086

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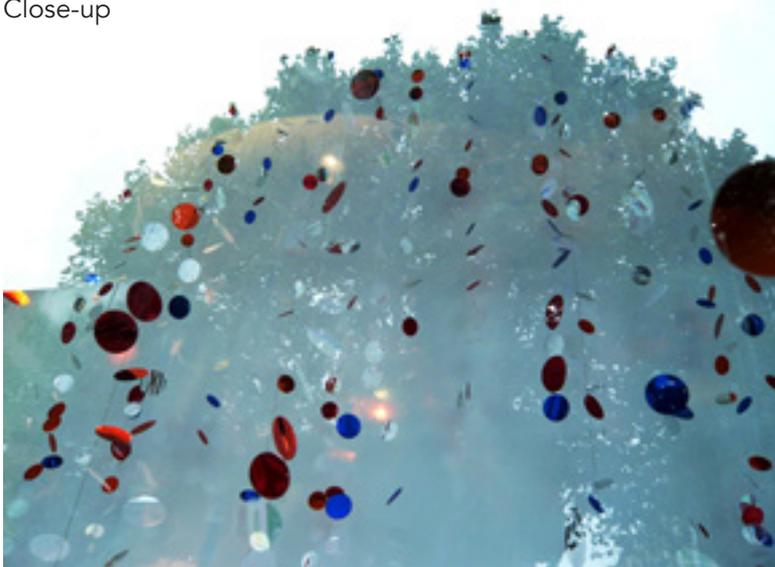
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*The 2River View, 20.4 (Summer 2016)*

*Jo Ann Baldinger*

## **Kiting**

Turns out I'm not brave enough to be a bird  
to do farewells the way they do, take their leave  
without the bulky parcels of regret.

At Manzanita Bay I fly a diamond kite,  
my proxy partner in the dance of weightlessness  
played out through this thread, this wooden spool

trusting that the line will hold.  
Hoping to be singed  
with something like electric fire.

Each launch is clumsy, unpredictable,  
each landing violent in a different way.  
I gather the broken pieces, all I can find,

and begin the slippery mule work  
of trying to put them back together.  
Learning to assess the losses.

Some bright salty days the kite opens  
gleefully to every random current,  
flicking long ribbons down to the shore

where the mad puppy races on the sand.  
His ears whipple inside out and he's barking  
at the kite--Come back! or Take me with you!

Taylor Bond

## Our Father

Father, you said,

*I have watched the sun wash the windows while I waited for you. I pried the claws off of lobsters, the crackled red shellac sounded like bullets, and I did not move. There is such a fine line between fear and pride. The light from the kitchen, a caution tape on linoleum tile. I tossed the remains to the trash and treasured the meat, the tender pulp, like cloth between my fingers. How long have I waited?*

In your absence I have become a predator,  
foul mouthed female. My mouth spews,  
aseptic syllables, heavy noise on sodden  
tongue,  
teeth licking flesh; like glue against fire, I stick to  
what I know is dangerous.

Here, a blade. There, a hand.  
Someone reaches out for me and  
I wish to lick their wounds until they know  
the taste of poison, until they love it  
more than cotton sheets and pencil shavings,  
more than the warm prisons of their own lungs.  
Sweet possessions. A symphony.

Taylor Bond

*father, I have waited for you.*

*I have pressed my ear, soft and hirsute, to dirt to listen to the thunder of your footsteps from a distance. I have become a carbon creature, a testament to life like all of the others. I have excommunicated the bees because they know nothing of loneliness. My scabs have blossomed into roses on my knees so that I am pretty while I kneel.*

Is this what I have become?

Maybe love is denying yourself                      everything you  
think you  
deserve.

Do you need the vitality of your own heart, selfish beast?

There is no stability in happiness; balance done in  
by scalpels against stems, cutting the seeds from the core,  
spilling everywhere; fierce progeny,  
do not cut yourself into children,  
or let loose your dreams like spores. Your hopes  
cannot infect other.

*father, you do not support these illegitimate dreams.  
Cast off your prosthetic love. Make a minister of me.*

*Matthew Scott Freeman*

## **College!**

Yes, I confess I figured I knew  
how it felt to have to dig  
your own grave. My mistake had  
been reading up on Crowley and alchemy.  
And this was back when stoners would  
say twelve trips would leave you legally insane.  
I was so freaked out I could only sneak out at  
night to buy cookies at Walgreens.

Then one morning as I lay stiff and prone  
Lesbia came in looking so sad and  
said I should come to breakfast.  
My father was somewhere way far off  
and the dining hall was gravid  
with origins. The kids were so colorful.  
My brain was burning and I stared  
so hard at this blond girl in the corner  
that her syringe actually burst.

Later I had to impress my professor.  
I paced confidently around my room  
and held on tight to the phone but I gasped  
when a crow flew in. My professor said I  
should come see her. Then I threw up.  
I had the overwhelming guilt of the seer.

*Matthew Scott Freeman*

## **My God is Not a Platonic God, Though**

I was walking up Delmar out of lockdown  
to get my beautifully meaningful  
soda when I saw  
a pretty girl coming out  
of the light and into the shadow  
and I passed her by  
and when I came into  
the soft light I stopped  
and knelt and prayed for mercy

and I was not quite actually  
a part of the real world  
and talk about the failure  
to reach the impossible thing  
like catching a catnap on my  
ex-girlfriend's grave and an evil  
spirit coming in and out of me  
and body language and the CIA  
and the mirror and trying not  
to be a loser and gone beyond girls  
and I said this to the mirror  
I said Father Good when Lesbia  
comes back I promise to  
love her just like an angel would.

Giuseppe Getto

## Different Geometry

Creationism reigns so much so  
in my hometown that the curve  
of highways leading outward  
is called lonely. Extended families,  
related but distant, crawl  
from the shallow end  
of diversion ditches come summer,  
their wet trunks hanging  
between their legs  
like vestigial webs—and there's always  
that cousin. The one with fingers  
or toes or nostrils that don't  
separate right, the tree  
without branches that somehow struggles  
upright against every gale  
and thaw. And spring brings with it  
challenges unique to living nowhere.  
Once a third cousin hit *Old River Road*  
near the irrigation junction going sixty.  
Did the fault of sunlight  
on black ice define where he reached,  
or the blanket excuse he lived  
to use from two wheels,  
his gaze permanently careful?  
Many times, you see, we are just interested  
in the image of the curve,  
in the parabolic sweep  
of mountains that drew generations  
of wagon trains like comets  
through the eye of a needle.

*Giuseppe Getto*

**Pioneering—July 22, 1838, Waycross, Georgia**

Fear of a weak frame will set you joining.  
You'll find lap keying the easiest joinery,  
but also the weakest—the logs breathe  
and water enters the joint  
making treenails or tenons necessary.  
They say their mothers first go home  
out here to the whistle of branch  
holding wind and trunks whittled as teeth.  
Consider the employ of stone,  
but brick if it can be had  
will breathe without soaking, especially when snow  
sparks through the gaps like thistledown.  
Employ axe, auger, and cross-cut saw  
for windows and the door once  
the wall timbers are set. You can do without  
as window techniques can indeed be vexing,  
but consider the lesson of the Wildes.  
They say the Wildes were aroused  
last Tuesday from inside their shoddy walls  
several times by two yard dogs.  
Had they proper windows they might  
have seen shapes in the treeline.  
It's true yard dogs, especially those  
of Shepherd descent, will alert  
as they no doubt spilled Wildes himself  
from the straw mat bed handed down  
by his mother. They say only Mary Anne  
was found still clinging to the dead baby  
and calling for water from the undergrowth  
where she hid, but immediately  
upon drinking she, too, fell dead.  
The lesson is always the same,  
out here. It was Daniel Stong of Toronto  
who seated wooden wedges, for instance,  
which, founded properly of moss and clay,  
allows the wall timbers to sit almost no matter  
how hard the wood or how straight.

Alex Greenberg

## Drainage

Christina Madrazo, a transexual immigrant, was placed in solitary confinement in May 2000 where she was raped twice by a prison guard. *Dissident Voice*

there was a day you couldn't stop swallowing  
you were that empty

a little girl in your throat, trembling

you wanted so badly to slip your thumb  
in her mouth and let her suck on it,

her tongue like a virgin lake bathing a body  
for the first time.

all of the guards who looked at you  
like a piece of food fingered from their teeth

coming back to memory.

no he will not watch his mouth  
when he enters your body

or remember your name.

he will spit on your welcome mat, make you forget  
how soft breathing can be.

*Alex Greenberg*

by the third year you didn't have enough hands  
to pray with so you stopped praying.

you gossiped about your own body to whoever  
would listen

stood in the center of the cell, your mouth  
opening and closing opening and closing.

you knew no other way to ask for help.

what else to do but shatter the vessel?  
can you really call it sacrilege after all that has happened?

M. Nasorri Pavone

## Blessing

Mrs. Woods sailed the long ship  
of her '60s Cadillac down Trowbridge Avenue.  
A little girl playing on that street  
would wait for her to wave, then wave back.  
Mrs. Wood's wave was always the same:  
church lady in a small town parade.  
She kept her car window raised.  
The girl liked her puffed helmet of white hair.  
Did it feel like cotton candy?  
Her parents talked to no one,  
threw lunch bags with feces  
from her training potty onto the lawns  
of other neighbors they hated.  
From next door Mrs. Woods had to have heard  
the father's fall-down fits, his hurling,  
the mother pleading. But Mrs. Woods  
never knocked on their door or  
called the police. She was hard of hearing,  
a most fortunate hardness.  
In the car she lifted her hand: a noble Calla lily  
gloved in gentility, a peace flag held up  
to ward off the squalor that stewed  
from the garden of waist-high weeds,  
the peeling paint, the parked hearse  
of the house, what couldn't help but smell  
of *Stay away* and *Run for your life*,  
and that's how the girl received her blessing.

*M. Nasorri Pavone*

## **Close-up**

When she imagines herself Anna Magnani  
in a foreign film, it's on a hound dog day

of vodka nips, two liquor store trips,  
of running into the street to stop a car

from crushing a dying pigeon flailing  
in the crosswalk, its one able wing.

It deserves a different death, she thinks,  
as screeching tires underscore that thought.

She goes home a candle puddle of Roman pride  
after the ransacking and no banquet,

after playing the peasant in happy face,  
the congenial whore with iron thigh grip.

Tomorrow the old shoe will fail her  
with another hard and public fall.

In the close-up, Anna throws her head back  
to laugh as the camera comes in tightly

on her mouth, so wide a way in, you,  
like the others who saw the movie, catch

a glimpse of her rumbling tongue  
and guillotine of teeth, the glistening cavern

of her howling at adversity which distracts  
from her brown eyes burning black.

*Carlos Reyes*

## **Man Walking Cow**

He has saved her from four lanes of traffic  
on the Inner Ring Road of Domluru  
brushed her black coat to a sheen,  
and dressed her up, starting at the tip  
of curved upward horns, she could hook  
the yellow moon with, to her well-trimmed  
hooves that were the nails of a princess,  
wrapping her in blood red, and green yarns,  
elegant silk saris, and bleeding madras.

He leads her like a drunken bride  
though the posher neighborhoods  
showing her the quieter worlds,  
humbly honoring her, his means  
of livelihood, or simply to shame  
those who look down on him  
and his cow from higher windows.

*Carlos Reyes*

## **Where a Ditch Has Opened in the Earth**

A standing black plastic bag—  
small bare feet beneath it  
then movement  
a child at play . . .

Blind inside her plastic garb  
she drifts  
to within inches  
of the precipice

Her sari clad mother  
in the ditch itself  
scrapes red dirt  
into a shallow copper bowl  
offers it up  
a sacrifice to the sun

*Jane Stephens Rosenthal*

---

He never took care  
of the blood.  
It didn't bother  
her.

She stole  
the shirt.  
She wore it.

Bit by bit  
the moon left  
them.

She took her  
underwear off.

He put them  
in his pocket.  
He brought them  
to her.

She drove past  
the battlefields.

He slipped in  
to her dreams.  
Hand underneath  
her dress.

He slipped out.

His cat showed  
up with kittens.

*Jane Stephens Rosenthal*

**for Laura**

Here there is coffee  
and break and milk.

No longer needing  
to make the self  
an offering.

It rains.

Danielle Sellers

## To Be Done With Desire: After Seeing You in Boston

Banishing love isn't a fix.

—D.A. Powell's *Corydon & Alexis, Redux*

And yet, here we are  
mid-thirties with our bellies slumping.  
You describe yourself as sickly, withered,  
no longer the young college wrestler  
who took me out for ethnic food  
on payday. And me?

I've grown more robust  
with time, my hips spill over,  
take more than their share.  
Thick swatches of gray cloak my temples.  
No more long red fingernails  
tapping the bulbs of wine glasses,  
no more lilting laughter  
late into the night.

After all the years between our former selves  
and now, even now, how you've grown pale,  
your reading glasses mark the bridge of your nose,  
sweaters hang loose on your shoulders  
that have stooped over books in libraries  
all these years, even now I still want

what I wanted then. Maybe even more.  
Now that I know  
what it is to be without you.

Danielle Sellers

## March Letter, Four Years Late

When I gave birth to my daughter,  
you sent a postcard of Gwyneth Paltrow  
and her mother, taken by Annie Leibovitz.

In the photo, Blythe Danner spoons her daughter,  
hands cinched about the waist she made in her body.  
Gwyneth's eyes are downcast in ecstasy.

*I thought you'd enjoy this touching  
mother-daughter scene, was all you wrote.*

My stone-faced husband couldn't understand  
why I sobbed for days after, remembering  
how much you'd make me laugh:

performing Mr. Roboto in your kitchen  
after cooking a dinner of lentils  
on your electric hot plate,

teaching me wrestling moves in the empty  
living rooms of our graduate school apartments,  
your body pinning mine every time.

And how, when I told you I was marrying him,  
you warned me not to, because men  
after war were never the same.

How they closed up their hearts  
in the pine coffins of their bodies.

*William Waters*

## **Beside The Jukebox**

at a bar  
over in the corner,

a man  
has a red dinner jacket  
on his tongue;

the woman with him  
has gunk  
between her teeth.

the dinner jacket  
keeps twisting  
his words  
to catch  
the light;

the gunk  
picks her  
teeth.

nobody's dancing  
but someone's

picking songs.

*William Waters*

## **Trying Time**

A fool is nothing but a man undone, by trying time;  
and if in trying time he finds the sun  
as wanton as black night  
lacking mercy, love, or light—  
then let his abuse be of use to you,  
for what's a fool to do?  
Who will not try time, time tries  
until with every truth the plaintiff lies,  
as dust must, when broken from the bone  
sanctified and cast beneath a stone.

Wendy Wisner

## **I died, and lost flight**

Yesterday felt like summer—

our son tramped through the field,  
a matchbox  
car in each hand.

I am trying to locate the spaces  
between dream and waking:  
his fingers  
as he splays them  
open

against bald blue sky.

Sometimes I feel a rash  
spread across my body  
to yours.  
But really  
I'm walking barefoot across the lawn. It's June.  
She's wearing the sundress

that makes her look pregnant.  
I don't step on the bee. She doesn't lose

the baby: her mind

isn't twisted into spider webs.

(Stop. Listen  
to the rain  
puncturing the roof.)

*I died, and lost flight—*  
words from last night's

dream. I told no one.  
I was a child.

Wendy Wisner

Did you believe me?  
I learned  
                  how to hold the letters  
in the roof of my mouth.

Then I brought you to bed  
  
while outside a moth  
pressed her terrible wings against our window.

By terrible I mean precise—  
                                  how I slice  
through the living room, a cup  
  
of boiling tea in my fist—

And you  
obediently waiting for me.

Are the children asleep?  
Do you believe in soulmates?

I died  
                  and lost

California  
where there is no rain,  
  
only flight. When I asked our son about death  
he said, you get shiny, then you get yellow,  
then you get broken—

and he pushed  
                          his tiny yellow school bus  
under the radiator  
until winter was over.

*The 2River View*, 20.4 (Summer 2016)

## Contributors

Jo Ann Baldinger writes poems and practices yoga. Her poems have appeared in *Blue Mesa*, *Burningword*, *Cirque*, *Monarch Review*, *Stickman Review*, *Verdad*, and *White Whale*.

Taylor Bond is a 2014-2015 Lannan Fellow, a copywriter at *Tokyo Journal*, and a freelance photographer. Her work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in *Belle Reve Literary Journal*, *The Foundling Review*, and *Underwater New York*, among others.

Matthew Scott Freeman holds an MFA from the University of Missouri--St Louis, where he was given the graduate poetry prize. His fifth book, *Everything I Love Restored*, was recently published by Coffeetown Press.

Guiseppe Getto is an Assistant Professor of English at East Carolina University. His work can be found in *Eclectica*, *Reed*, *Slant*, *Sugarhouse Review*, and elsewhere. His chapbook *Familiar History* is now available from Finishing Line Press.



Alex Greenberg is a teenage poet whose work has been published or accepted for publication in *The Cortland Review*, *The Florida Review*, *Puerto Del Sol*, *Salt Hill*, and *Third Coast*.

M. Nasorri Pavone is a Pushcart Prize nominee whose poems have appeared in *The Cortland Review*, *DMQ Review*, *New Letters*, *River Styx*, and elsewhere. She is also a playwright and lives in Venice, California.

Carlos Reyes is the author of *Keys to the Cottage: Stories from the West of Ireland* (2015) and *Pomegranate, Sister of the Heart* (2012). His most recent book of translations is *Poems of Love & Madness; Poemas de amor y locura; Selected Translations* (2013).

Jane Stephens Rosenthal is a poet and actress living in Los Angeles. Last year she wrote several of the librettos for the widely reviewed *Hopscotch: A Mobile Opera*. She is currently in pre-production for her film *No One Ever Said They Wanted To Be A Heroin Addict When They Grew Up*.

Danielle Sellers has an MFA from the University of Mississippi where she held the John Grisham Poetry Fellowship. Her poems have appeared in *The Cimarron Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Smartish Pace*, *Subtropics*, and elsewhere. Her first book, *Bone Key Elegies*, was published by Main Street Rag.

William Waters is an associate professor, in the Department of English at the University of Houston Downtown. Along with Sonja Foss, he is coauthor of *Destination Dissertation: A Traveler's Guide to a Done Dissertation*. His research and teaching interests are in writing theory and modern grammar.

Wendy Wisner is the author of two books of poems (CW Books), and her writing has appeared in such publications as *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Brain*, *Child Magazine*, *Literary Mama*, *Minnesota Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Spoon River Review*, *The Washington Post*, and *Verse Daily*.

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## **About the Photographer**

Sarah Katharina Kayß is an internationally published photographer, blogger and poet. She is winner of the manuscript award of the German Writers Association (2013) for her poetry and essay collection *Ich mag die Welt, so wie sie ist* (Munich, Allitera, 2014). Kayß edits the bilingual literary magazine *The Transnational* and is currently a final year PhD student in the War Studies Department of King's College London.

## **About 2River**

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry and art, quarterly publishing *The 2River View* and occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series. 2River is also the home of Muddy Bank, the 2River blog.

Richard Long  
2River  
ISSN 1536-2086  
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