

The 2River View

24.1 (Fall 2019)



new poems by

Debora Chappell, Sarah Anderson, Sheila Black
Charlotte Covey, Jesse DeLong, Darren C. Demaree
Sean Lause, Michael Meyerhofer, Yiskah Rosenfeld
Esther Sadoff, Laura Lee Washburn

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Debra Chappell

It is Autumn

Dad, it is autumn here. The acequias are lined with flame yellow cottonwoods and the robin's egg blue sky hangs over the mountain. I breathe like you taught me. It calls to me every autumn, so I hike the mountain trail as far as I can, then sit and breathe as you taught me. Birds ready themselves for winter as does the blue-tailed lizard sunning next to me. Unafraid, he watches me just before a deer tiptoes in and freezes. I move slowly back down the alluvial plain and breathe like you taught me. I follow the alluvial plain to the river and revel in the smell of roasting chile. It is autumn here. Winter will come soon enough and I breathe as you taught me.

Sarah Anderson

In a Different Life

I draw in a quick breath. He places his glasses on the podium,
looks up and reads. I think of the way heartache
distorts as leaded glass.

I think of the heartache I have caused. Stop. It's been
twenty years—or
He loved her, the girl in Germany. I knew,
but spent the night with him still on a hard wood floor
by a lit fireplace.

Now, still, evening air rustles an oak. Are those trees
ice-resistant really?

Think of two people in a tent
who have been up all night, a thunderstorm wild

through them. I will always listen to you. You ache for this.
There's a cold and barely discovered quarry. Meet me.

Sarah Anderson

Twenty-Three Years a Widow

His poems took her breath away, waiting
in an envelope for her on the other side
of the world, and it's as if I remember
my grandmother sweeping the stage
while he played the piano, moments
before they met. To my mother,

who is moving back into her childhood
home, I say, keep, at least in a box,
the chandelier pieces she coveted. She
never imagined she could live without
him. Keep the Cartier pocket watch
she designed for him there

on the mantle. What did she wear
to the premiere of that symphony
he wrote for her?
She called the dog down
the back hill every night as if calling
to people on the shoreline.

Sheila Black

Aubade of Many

In Yeshir Ev, I woke to shadow, lace.
fake flowers on the ceiling.
winter's slate smoke, apple tea,
which tasted of sorrow, to bare feet
on concrete, the understanding I
would be leaving for much of my life.
In Yeshir Ev I woke to troubles more dense
than any I had known, the rule
of distance governing us all. Lose, and you
simply smoke more cigarettes, grind
your teeth at night, etc. I can hardly bear
to remember how happy I was.
Morning, a clinking of tinny bells,
a bomb exploding two streets away.
What did I think I would ever
keep? In the lobby, the major
domo in dusty red and gold braid
strolled through the dining room, turning
the crumbed tablecloths with a flick
of his wrist.

Sheila Black

Garden

It took me too long to get quiet,
to see anything but blur in the trees,
the rabbit that hopped out under the bird feeder,
the twitching of the fledgling robin so
curious it almost came right up to him.
I was thinking of that game we played
when we were kids—silly string wrapped around
us until we were caught in a giant web;
if anyone moved the web trembled,
and of the terror of being linked by gigabytes
as opposed to rain or myth; I hadn't
sat by myself in a garden for a long time.
I was bored at first, used to sights being
presented to me like dishes in a fancy
restaurant. The bench was wet, and the soil
beneath had a heady mushroom smell. Rain
dripped from the trees and onto my shirt
It took me a long time to breathe. Swallows
scissored as the sky muted. The puddles
silvered, and the rabbit twitched and vanished
into the hedge. I didn't see where the robin
went. The worms spangled the lawn, some
dying right there on the wet pavement.

Charlotte Covey

last night in chincoteague

each wave feels like a lullaby.
when it gets dark, the trees
flutter an october song, meant
to haunt the little trailers huddled
on the beach. the one at the end
of the dirt road has wood panels
and me inside. when i peer
out and see the marlboro's ember,
i follow. there's an oak
on the property, just one, and they
(your friends, all in a row, lit cigarettes
and quiet voices, whites of their
eyes glowing) ask me to
climb (they smirk when i do,
watch my bare spindle legs scrape
bark and dirt). i become an owl
at the top, big owl-eyes looking
down at my prey, ready
to swoop. the trees' voices close
in, darker, more
requiem. the men call
me down, spent cigarettes tossed,
game over. but i stay,
stop and listen. i see
the moonlit sand, the sparkle-
water caught in starlight. i leave
tomorrow, but i wish i could stay
here, where you can always find me.

Charlotte Covey

phone sex lullabies

they're all different.
a certain style, a preferred
moan. one asked me to be
a little girl. i giggled and obliged,
but imagined him imagining
curls and bows, hairless
flesh. another
made words turn
to violence. i feared
meeting him in the street,
knew i wouldn't have made it
to my car. and yet, fingers
flicking, i still pretended to
bleed, breath hitched, helped him
imagine neck blued and eyes
popped. with him,
i always screamed. but more
often than not, it'd be
little whispers, and sucking
sounds, and them, gasping,

*god, baby, you're fucking
mine.*

Jesse DeLong

As if the runnel is a river

As if the runnel is a river, and the wedding dress a baby sent on a reed-woven carriage, the dress drapes over the storm grate. Bird lifts its fabric, the yellowish lace flapping as water gurgles into the opening. She leers up at me. This is where she will nest: the sun half-clotted by clouds.

The way you feel—a tooth sensitive to saliva.
“Yes,” Bird says, “I do”. Everything else is a squat little plot of land the wind begins to rip up.
Feeling the way you are, Bird, is sensitive. Saliva germs have begun to gum up. Fingers, stinging because the blood is too constricted, seem sensitive. They are really dulled by the way you feel everything. Or else. “I say,” she does. “Yes.”

Jesse DeLong

Sitting on a hill overlooking Tuscaloosa

Sitting on a hill overlooking Tuscaloosa, the view we hoped for—what, exactly?—turns out to be streetlights in a dirty string over the valley. As if someone, too lazy, like me, to take down the Christmas lights, stumbled outside, post-storm, a June morning, and saw the lights strewn on the grass, still lit, though most of the bulbs busted, and didn't bother, because of how their light is subject to the sun's light, picking them up.

Smashed bits of glass, the trials of an afternoon—
now only night, heat, the press of knucklebone.
The light of the sky, as if to make room, overwhelms
with its bright bits of glass. An event that, after
it happens, is stripped away. Memory is
the shadow of someone in an alley as we walk by.
After you, trembling—the smashed bits of your life.
Only now, the night pressed. So often, a knucklebone.

Darren C. Demaree

Emily as a Charcoal Halo

I am secondary
to whatever play Emily is in right now.
There's all this color

that was never there before.
It's glorious.
We keep getting new tattoos.

I love the permanent art.
I don't know when she started
drawing across her forehead

like she is, but I have no trouble
calling her a Queen
if she wants me to.

She called me a poet
for years. Now, it all makes sense.
Now, we are in flux

with each other.
I don't know what will happen tomorrow.
I'm not asking, either.

Darren C. Demaree

Emily as Most of the Thunder Is Just Theatre

I was the park
hiding from the moon
widening

all over the world
& I heard Emily
fake a thunder storm

just to get my attention.
She knows I like
the storms.

I didn't know
she would be naked.
Adults are too weird

for the park,
but in the darkness
we can get away

with almost anything.
That's how I got
away with Emily.

Sean Lause

The man who turned inside-out

In a sudden wind
his mind turned inside-out
like an umbrella.
He could feel the spokes of the real
bend, groan, and break
like the spine of that umbrella.
He could feel his own heart,
his veins, his blood, his breath
as if they were at last his own.
Words beheld the things they imagined,
poems dropped gently with the leaves,
and books read deep into their readers.
Then another wind
turned the world inside-out,
and he blossomed into darkness and light.
He heard stars whisper like children,
the night bless lovers with planets conjoined,
and dandelions chant silver to the moon.
Now he lets the storms blow through him,
the sun enlighten, and the moon, in joy,
dream him to the silence of his bones.
And the beasts that guide us home from memory
lead him down their secret paths
he never-always knew might still be there.

Sean Lause

The old man in the cage

It is Sunday. The old man in the cage
is wheeled through town again.
His lips tremble with violations.
There must have been a time when he was young.
He signatures the wind with words
they cannot decipher. He is no one.
Though some say he knows when time will end.
His face is a map of sins and visions.
The citizens baptize their cars, their souls
as white as the illusion of innocence.
They toss him mirrors and laughter.
He shows them rage and the seat of his pants.
He is the sum of all their ages,
guilty of a crime he can't remember.
At sunset they return him to his cave,
where he'll remain until they need him again
to preen their jaded dream of being gods.

Michael Meyerhofer

Passing Along the News

But for a few minutes as they fussed
between her breasts that Tuesday morning

a few days before my birthday,
it looked like my mother would be fine.

Though her skin felt like a football,
the paramedics had found her heartbeat,

passed this news on to my father
who found me pacing in the hallway.

Then they waved him back, told him
no, it was just her pacemaker.

And that was something else
he had to come back and tell me.

Michael Meyerhofer

Two Baths

I remember one of our last nights
when we shared a tub of cooling water

in a motel beside the ocean
and I read to you from Jarrell's story

about mermaids while you wept
and covered yourself with a towel.

But I also remember that we tried again
a couple nights later and this time,

you leaned against me
bare-breasted in the candle glow,

the ruddy dawn still distant
as the flight that took you home.

Yiskah Rosenfeld

Love Poem on the Morning after Atonement

If not you, then at least
the ladders of light angling through your morning windows
voices still sleepwalking on the windowsills

at least the tall tilt of mirror
where liquid angels run up and down
the one place that you and I are both

at least myself as you could never see me
pregnant angel of your dreams
filtering through the rooms like the coffee and the light

If not you, then that angel's wing
rising to its elbow-perfect fold
and falling

Yiskah Rosenfeld

Seventh Day in the Valley

Blue jays exchanged mating calls
hopping and swooping around me on the deck

raucous rattle and sweet *kuet kuet kuet*,
then flying branch to branch to start their nest.

Yellow roses made their final bows
scattered patterned petals

in a path to the kitchen.
There I made a careful pot of tea.

The mountain was jagged in places,
soft in others, and magnificent.

As the sky darkened, the house
was as quiet as I'd ever known it.

Even the dictionary pressed its words
against flat red leaves in little kisses.

A coyote crossed the driveway,
then turned to watch. We watched

each other. We watched
a good, long while.

How I knew I had, at last,
grown still.

Esther Sadoff

Behind the White Hose Box

A spider hides behind
the white hose box,
black and dry as paper.
The spider dashes like
a scattering of leaves
as I tap my foot
to announce my coming
for the hose.

The hose unfurls itself,
waxy and mottled
and stretches like a cat
with a belly of green diamonds
in the crackling
and matted lawn.

I turn the stiff faucet
that squeaks and reels,
drumming up its downpour
from some deep cavern
and spritzing water
from its loose and shining neck.

I tap my feet each day
as the spider purses its
bristling legs together
into a tense and watchful ball.
Even in the winter,
I tap my feet and
check for the spider
hiding there,
a spider long turned
to hollow ash.

Esther Sadoff

Dance of the Sun

I'd like to bundle up all my things
and place them on the shining head of a pin
or have them fit on the brimful ledges of my eyes—
tears dried like tissue paper,
little moth wings that stuck and dried,
seafoam outlining the damp memory
of the mournful waves.

Let the lozenge of memory dissolve
and keep nothing very particular except
the custard yellow of the sky,
the swirling wind shaking the trees,
the tousled piles of gray clouds,
and a house the color of tawny ash
all at once illuminated in white light

as if the sun suddenly lifted up her ruffled dress,
kicked off her shoes and began to dance.

Laura Lee Washburn

Between the Wars

we are expected to imagine
these movie boys living on in wrecked Germany.
I came in late on this
and find the whole thing strange.
Her lungs wreck her when she pulls up
on the dock. The sanitarium's in snow.
All the money is gone.
Men are splitting heads in the streets,
wrecking cars, shooting to kill.

If he kills him in a cathedral
how can no one know? If she walks
to watch him goodbye,
she'll die from her bone.

Two ghosts walk with two men
out of the next war
and into the heat. Let's get drunk,
let's smoke. We're America
just up from the trenches,
skiddooing into schools and ranging cars

dragging ourselves slowly in,
burning our way out.

Laura Lee Washburn

History

*The history of all times, and of today especially, teaches
that . . . women will be forgotten
if they forget to think about themselves.*

Louise Otto-Peters

So who cares if you don't have another ride to the grocery store
or if he's still keeping your dog that you really love
but can't have in this apartment and who loves his yard
or if he's been such a good friend for so long
and besides doesn't want anything from you
and you're probably the only really good influence in his life?

If you're hanging out with the same guy
who put his hands around your neck
and a pillow over your nose and mouth
and even if it was only that one time,
who exactly is thinking about you—besides me

and I'm rolling my cart quick down a different aisle
unable to say anything nice, and certainly not willing to smile.

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Contributors

Debora Chappell has a BA in English and an MA in Creative Writing-Poetry. Her work has appeared in *The Denver Quarterly*.

Sarah Anderson holds an MFA in poetry from the Warren Wilson Program for Writers. Her poems have appeared in various journals, including *The Café Review*, *December magazine*, *North American Review*, and *Raleigh Review*.

Sheila Black is the author of four poetry collections, most recently *Iron, Ardent* (Educe Press, 2017). Her poems have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Poetry*, *The Spectacle*, and elsewhere.

Charlotte Covey lives in St. Louis, where she earned her MFA in Poetry from the University of Missouri. She has poetry published or forthcoming in journals such as *The CALYX Journal*, *The Normal School*, and *Salamander Review*.



Jesse DeLong has appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Mid-American Review*, and *Typo*, as well as in the anthologies *Best New Poets 2011* and *Feast: Poetry and Recipes for a Full Seating at Dinner*.

Darren C. Demaree is the author of eleven poetry collections, most recently *Emily As Sometimes the Forest Wants the Fire* (Harpoon Books, 2019).

Sean Lause is a professor of English at Rhodes State College in Lima, Ohio. His poems have appeared in *Another Chicago Magazine*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, and *The Minnesota Review*. His latest book of poems is *Midwest Theodicy* (Taj Mahal Review, 2019).

Michael Meyerhofer is the poetry editor of *Atticus Review*. His fifth book of poetry, *Ragged Eden*, was published by Glass Lyre Press.

Yiskah Rosenfeld holds an MFA from Mills College. She balances solo parenting and teaching in the San Francisco Bay Area. A Pushcart Prize nominee, she received the Anna Davidson Rosenberg Award and the 2019 Jeff Marks Memorial Honorable Mention Prize through *december magazine*.

Esther Sadoff has a bachelor's degree from Sarah Lawrence College and a Master of Education from The Ohio State University. This publication at *The 2River View* is her first.

Laura Lee Washburn, author of *This Good Warm Place* (March Street) and *Watching the Contortionists* (Palanquin Chapbook Prize), has published poems in such journals as *9th Letter*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Harbor Review*, *Poet Lore*, *The Sun*, and *Valparaiso Review*.

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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

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