

# 2RV

24.2 (Winter 2020)

# The 2River View

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new poems by

Dana Knott, Derek Annis,

A. M. Brandt, Katherine Fallon

Jane Ellen Glaser, Erika Nestor, George Perreault

Travis Stephens, Phillip Sterling

Lauren Swift, Monika Zobel

2River

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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

ISSN 1536-2086  
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Jane Ellen Glasser has appeared in journals such as *Georgia Review*, *Hudson Review*, and *Southern Review*. Her eighth collection is *Jane Ellen Glasser: Selected Works* (2019).

Erika Nestor received her MFA from the Helen Zell Writers' Program, where she is now a Zell Fellow in poetry. Her work has appeared in *LEVELER*.

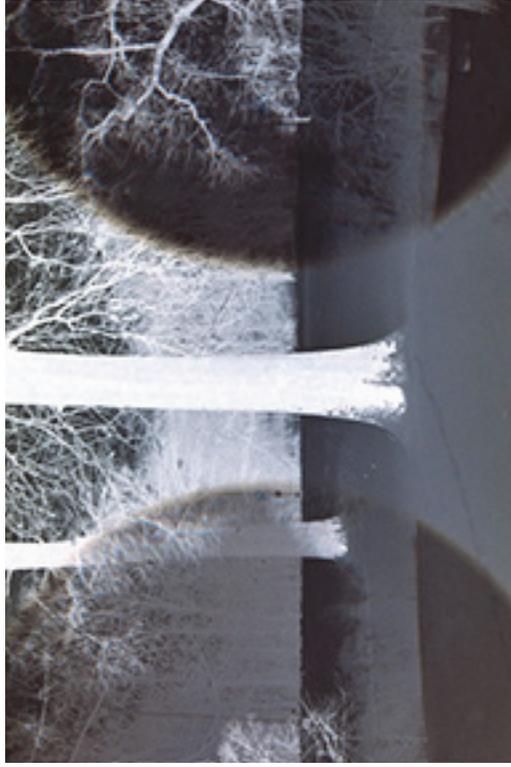
George Perreault is the author most recently of *Bodark County*, a collection of poems in the voices of characters living on the Llano Estacado in West Texas.

Travis Stephens is a tugboat captain in California. His recent credits include *Crosswinds Poetry Journal*, *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, *Gravitas*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *Raw Art Review*.

Phillip Sterling is the author of *And Then Snow* (Main Street Rag, 2017) and *Amateur Husbandry* (Mayapple 2019). His chapbook of February poems, *Short on Days*, is forthcoming in early 2020 from Main Street Rag.

Lauren Swift is pursuing an MFA at the University of California, Irvine. Her poetry and nonfiction have appeared in or are forthcoming in *Cimarron Review*, *North American Review*, *The Rumpus*, and *Utterance Journal*.

Monika Zobel is the author of *An Instrument for Leaving* (Slope Editions 2014), and *Das Innenfutter der Wörter* (edition keiper, Graz, Austria, 2015). Zobel works as a translator in Bremen, Germany.



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## Contributors

Dana Knott is the Library Director and a member of the Core Faculty at Antioch University Midwest. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Bitter Oleander*, and *Parhelion Literary Magazine*.

Derek Annis is the author of *Neighborhood of Gray Houses* (forthcoming from Lost Horse Press). Their poems have appeared in *Colorado Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Missouri Review Online*, and elsewhere.

A. M. Brandt holds an MFA from the University of Minnesota. Her work has appeared in journals such as *The National Poetry Review*, *The Sewanee Review*, and *The Southern Review*. She teaches at Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia.

Katherine Fallon, with poems in *Colorado Review*, *Foundry*, *Juked*, *Meridian*, and elsewhere, will be included in *Best New Poets 2019*. Her chapbook, *The Toothmakers' Daughters*, is available through Finishing Line Press.

Erika Nestor  
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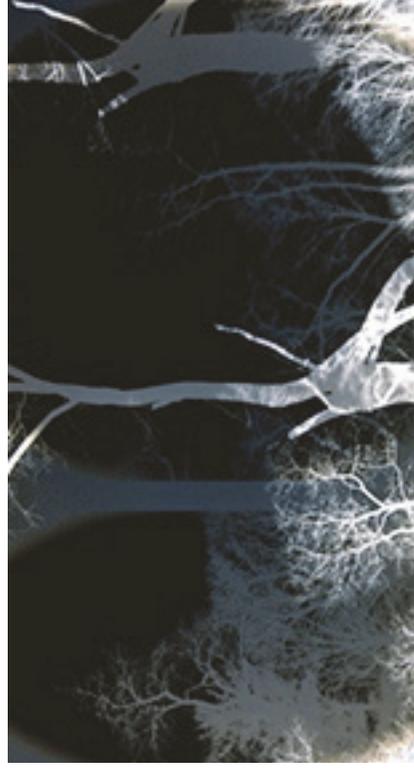
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### **The Trouble with What the Wind Does**

What the wind wants darkens the street  
between us. Hooligans kick the night's teeth,  
then each other's, the soiled bellies  
of trash cans. Rats now only scavenge in sunlight  
and the bakery, the bakery no longer slices  
their bread. You and I, we darken the street  
with our hunched bodies. If I were an engineer  
I'd make all roads end in recovery, backwards  
whisper in your room until my words stepped  
out. The staircase smells of various deliveries.  
Salt and brass. I can guess all your thoughts by shape  
and texture. The rough ones I clench  
until the wind takes what it wants. Cripples  
the wasps, breaks the flowers' necks. Memories  
of how we broke our bodies, memories like meth  
can make you jump from one branch  
to another, a lost bird. This the beginning,  
an introduction to our book of losses.

Monika Zobel

**Dear,**

It has been a few weeks since I wanted  
the night to burn the day. I no longer fling  
matches at the sidewalk. I'm no longer the resident  
arsonist on our block. The houses crumble on their own.  
Dear, did I ever tell you that I preferred the sinister  
fairytales? Remember Trakl's spin on the Bremen  
Town Musicians? Oh wait, you never read  
my poems. Let me tell you, all animals are drowned  
at the mill. Their songs are made into the stars.  
How's that for a Disney story? Dear,  
I remember a lifetime of stairs, your stairs, stairway  
to your silences. Dear, I remember the parties  
like a carousel. Your love yous made me throw up  
down the balcony. I remember it had to end, setting fire  
to all the words in the dark. I no longer want the night  
to torch the day. I'm quitting the benches, your waiting  
room, where nobody's ever seen. Dear, I was tired  
of stairs, your stairs, silent stairs. I remember how you glowed  
in the dark, your sorry like a spark. Dear, I no longer strike  
matches on your walls. Dear, it had to end. I remember  
the sickness like a concrete block, anchored and dull,  
could blow it up. Dear, I love the sound the heart makes  
when it's flung into the ashtray. Like a bullet in the woods.

Dana Knott

**Winter Love Poem**

Already the snow  
has graffitied the car  
in white as we walk  
together, solitary  
walkers in a crystalline  
world. Everyone else  
may be dead  
as we pull our coats tighter  
huddle our bodies closer  
each breath a shock  
an affirmation, a wisp  
of warmth and cold  
snowflakes fall like ashes  
silent and full, each crystal  
with a speck of dirt  
or pollution at its heart  
Let us exist always  
only in this moment  
  
but the wind, our skin, the chill

Derek Annis

## Man for the New Millennium

I know it's a cliché  
but I could tame a snake    ride it through the city  
smiling    gold teeth shining  
with sunlight

certainly    we have all considered lifting  
coins from the pockets  
of these children as they chew on our rat  
poison tablets

call me the one who does

those who fail at this violence  
will grow    nothing

but useless    I once felt

a warm light on my cheek    a faint  
memory of it roams  
my room at night muttering  
something    I believe  
it is trying to kill me  
the thought of losing it drives me  
to knife myself repeatedly  
and solder the wounds  
silver    so that in moonlight

I shine

Lauren Swift

no material nips  
like leather does, climbing  
to the room, where the bell swings

boots will try to mill a child into dust  
and she will fuse into an explosive  
they will place her  
in a beautiful case  
for the penitent to look upon

have you ever considered the silence  
that expands upon detonation

so holy    so bright

Lauren Swift

**mark**

a mushroom cloud  
waxing like leathered boots—  
like their snap on the stairs  
home from work  
hungry

whose room waits above  
and who within it—  
perhaps a bare tree huddled against winter gusts  
a saint's finger propped in a reliquary for onlookers  
an entire town grown deep astride high mesas  
nature's walls, to hide the forging of weaponry

within and without refrain  
a terrible home both in and out  
the clomp of a heavy trod  
home from the mill  
the place that grinds the nuclear elements  
to dust, which snows upon  
the family inside, and freezes into icicles  
on the eaves

from the belltower  
peals an old chorus:  
*remember you are dust*  
in the high room  
the trill of this song  
snaps the glass ice from the overhangs

Derek Annis

**Sunday Afternoon**

I walked beneath the bridge  
and removed a loose  
brick, but nothing happened.  
The river went on  
uninterrupted. I wanted  
and wanted and lit  
a smoke, threw the brick  
into the river, uprooted  
reeds from the muddy bank  
and found a doll's  
head with all its hair  
burned off. Orange-tipped  
hypodermics winked at me  
from the dirt. Traffic rattled past  
overhead. My smoke swirled off  
to wherever smoke goes. The brick  
settled among the smooth rocks  
at the bottom of the river.  
When I asked myself  
out loud  
who cares?  
the river made no reply.  
Over on the other bank, a cloud  
of flies sucked shit from a pile  
of fish guts. Who cares.

A. M. Brandt

### **The Way it Was**

There were mostly empty barns in our vastly empty country. There were fallow fields clear of trees

where the tractor stopped, an abandon as palpable as bankruptcy. Before a sunset there was a nervous

white sky, arrowheads hidden just under soil. Nowhere had there been a nothing like that.

When the rain fell there was a coming loam that never arrived. So many seeds unbroken

of the wheat-like shaft bitten and spit out, if it had a tongue. But there was surely want

if a woman dipped her hands in soapy water, something boiling in a pot, there was surely

a bed somewhere, a treasure still made new, as if two could always make more. There was

the wide-open ahead of us, there was surely desire when I lay back naked on the floor.

Phillip Sterling

### **Little or No Accumulation**

Some weather bears gifts the way those who shun gifts bear charity. "A mere dusting," one says, and the words take to air like woodstove ash above moss, neither *dust* nor *mere*, if truth be told. And still the moon—who cares nothing for our dispensations (having known the world before we called it *world*)—will find in snow's pale flattery reason enough to shine.

*Phillip Sterling*

### **The B Side of Promise**

A chance of rain, they say,  
and the loosestrife take  
to the woods like harried geese  
pouting and nudging the air  
as if meaning to speak  
from one side of because  
or the other, as if the wild  
grapes above them were  
aerialists of proper renown,  
worthy of our admission,  
and threat no more than this  
sudden and too brief shower.

*A. M. Brandt*

### **Whosoever Am I**

In fields where most of the orchards are gone,  
in wayward prairies wherever they are found  
and in the split dark recesses

where land falls into itself, where  
water seeps restlessly to its gathering.

Whosoever, but a sorrowing bone  
turning sweet in the sun as if wind-fallen  
from some bejeweled primal word

that tastes of sinew and packed  
seed, claw and stone.

The orchard's secret is on wing, on scat-  
tered mounds where none intrudes.  
And when I say seed, I mean leeway,

that which travels, across waters, wanting  
to be thrown shoreward in the wrack, I mean,

that which wrenches itself home.

*Katherine Fallon*

### **Flatiron Reservoir**

Past the reservoir, an old gelding, back bowed  
low like a hammock hung loosely, stoops to eat  
from the freckled hand of the earth. I wish to hold  
his cupped belly, keep sexless flesh clean  
of snow. Naïve, if only briefly, I think to prop him up  
with the handle of a shovel.

I remember you then. What hope I've had.  
And the mountains admire themselves  
in the water's bird-stung, wobbling image.

*Travis Stephens*

### **This Conspiracy of Ravens**

My brother the Trickster  
washes his sleek, black feathers  
in the pool, splashing and ducking  
while we watch. We follow him  
to the pool and find delicious guts  
of salmon, egg sacs, eyes.

There are still a few fish  
stranded, the tide has retreated back  
to its lair. Last night the bears came.  
Fish parts everywhere plus a heaping  
steaming grassy pile of bear shit and  
packed circles of grass.

This morning we left our home fir,  
the five of us, circling like leaves.  
In the morning we own the sky.

My brother the Trickster has seen the moon  
and where she hides. He has taken the  
taste of salt from the rain, has left it  
stinking of clouds.

My Brother watches from a branch.  
He is making a new song. It has the  
growl of an engine, the sobbing of the  
drowned, the crackle of a fire. We  
laugh and sing along.

*Travis Stephens*

## **Taos**

to the west a  
glow on the horizon,  
deep indigo  
and royal at the edges of sky  
except that sudden lightening of hue.  
It isn't a late sunset;  
it can't be.  
Chalk it up to a brush of snow  
a moon  
full of woodsmoke.  
The dog is delighted at snow  
but she also  
delights in mud sloughs,  
rain-soaked  
haybales &  
blackberry cane breaks.  
This pickup is our earthship,  
sage strewn in the bed,  
pinon and gasoline,  
Seattle three days past.  
Later a cup of coffee,  
studios closed until ten  
but Kit Carson's shiny spurs  
on display &  
on sale.

*Katherine Fallon*

## **When I Died**

When our dead brindle greyhound returned  
from the earth, he came up shaking roots  
from his feet. Beneath the barren apple tree,  
windfall fruit. The night smelled of sweet rot.  
There was the whisper of bristling fur, chatter  
of dry, brown crickets, and his toenails clicked  
against the linoleum. I am come back to you,  
too. As throat sounds. As the tight, familiar  
click-slide-pop of my jaw when I locked it  
making love, looking up. Your fingers, tapping,  
kindly guided the fugitive bone back in place,  
and you always held me after. Tonight you go  
hunting me, barefoot, floors creaking to let me  
know you are coming. I feel your hesitation  
in unlit spaces, hear your deep-sleep shuffle,  
wait for you as you draw the thrumming curtain  
fast, certain you'll catch me, and let it go slack,  
realizing you haven't. Wanting never to disappoint,  
wanting never to be disappointed, I figured death  
a shield. But I can tell: you are relieved not to  
have found me and, wanting all, always,  
from you, I never wanted this—

Jane Ellen Glasser

## Two Truths I Know

Tossed confetti  
soon smudges underfoot  
and the drooling maws  
of hunger die in a feast  
because nothing lasts.

When pleasure peaks  
I plummet, but  
in the clutches of pain  
I watch the clock  
because the only  
constant is change.

Ask a perfect peach  
about tomorrow,  
ask storm clouds  
about permanence,  
ask splintered glass  
about mending.

Even the beautiful accident  
of living gets used up.

George Perreault

## the phrase that was used

summing my nephew, his doctor  
avoids the anodyne, the passive voice  
which organs now are compromised,  
merely says he's actively dying

my brother and i've watched wives  
slide this way, my daughter too

it's taken years in the scrub lands  
to learn nothing is a weed

mullein thrives in broken soil  
its leaves laying down a richness

where others flourish in its stead  
before sparseness takes a turn

a fistful of blossoms each for a day  
a hundred thousand seeds

sealing themselves for decades  
until fire sweeps the fields

our nights fill with flowers,  
our days so busy dying

George Perreault

### **the burial grounds**

when last i walked among the dead,  
your mom and dad, a favored nephew  
it felt like archeology, a semi-feral cat  
slinking through the stones  
the catholics lay across the road,  
then a narrow bet shalom,  
all the caulked and sturdy boats  
waiting on the shore  
but today the markers rise like hives  
the preacher swells with buzz  
to dole out salvation's honey  
with specifics of the throne  
then man's held up as glory  
the pinnacle of god's dear work  
all those stations you might've dialed  
driving through the dark

Jane Ellen Glasser

### **What There Is**

There is the hunger  
of a gaping grave  
earth won't satisfy.  
There is a thirst  
like the Atacama Desert's  
torrents cannot slake.  
There is the emptiness  
of a mammoth cave  
eternity would not fill.  
There is the longing  
of a hummingbird  
in a garden of silk flowers.  
There is you, there is me  
pulling on the reins  
of our runaway lives.

Erika Nestor

## At Pictured Rocks After Her Death

To sail out on myself and carve my own:  
As usual only the want is left, to be solid like a lake.

Bile or tears as we sail by a lighthouse, hot chocolate,  
the beautiful water. I feel a hand yank back my hair.

My copper nerves taste of fish and pine. Cameras agape,  
interfering and clicking the cold air,

exactly what we expected but also not. Streaks of iron  
and limonite burrow into the sand with imprecise hunger

or whatever else I want to impose, for the emotion's mine,  
unconformable and easy to erode. Such richness in the  
scarlet-grey stone!

I squint to focus on the guide pointing at surficial deposits  
crowned by groves of dying beech. *Lovers Leap*.

The high sun stares me straight in the gut, glances  
across green water. This wooden cradle rocks me.  
*Where is she?*

Erika Nestor

## Moondust

Half asleep, I read you a piece of news about Neil  
Armstrong on the moon (as he is forever in our minds)  
where he collected a trace amount of moondust for  
scientific sampling, moonwalked several small steps back  
to Apollo and flew home, but left some moondust in a  
lunar bag in the spaceship.

It was as thin and sweet as burnt sugar, granular as plaster,  
and it smelled of gunpowder, a thick layer of static cling  
covering the lunar world.

In 2016 that moondust sold for 1.8 million, but they  
appraised it at 2 to 4, so that's actually a good deal, I  
whispered into your ear, and you blinked as though I'd  
worn you out, so I read on silently about the crushed  
silicon dioxide glass produced when meteoroids strike the  
surface, which explains the gunpowder scent, something  
light and bright born in the impact, but that doesn't  
account for the value, how the moondust market rises and  
plunges like all the rest.

That night I had a dream about taking a train to the moon  
to make our fortune, but you wouldn't go with me, even in  
my dream, so what's the moon to me?