

2RV

16.3 (Spring 2012)

The 2River *View*

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2River
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Christina Antipa, Victoria Anderson, Katherine Berta
David Ebenbach, Shirley Glubka, Howie Good, D. Lifland
Jo McDougall, Linda McCullough Moore
Laurence O'Dwyer, Sally Van Doren

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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.

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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.

Richard Long, Editor
2River
www.2River.org

Cover

Starry Night with a Wagon in Yellow and Orange with Red
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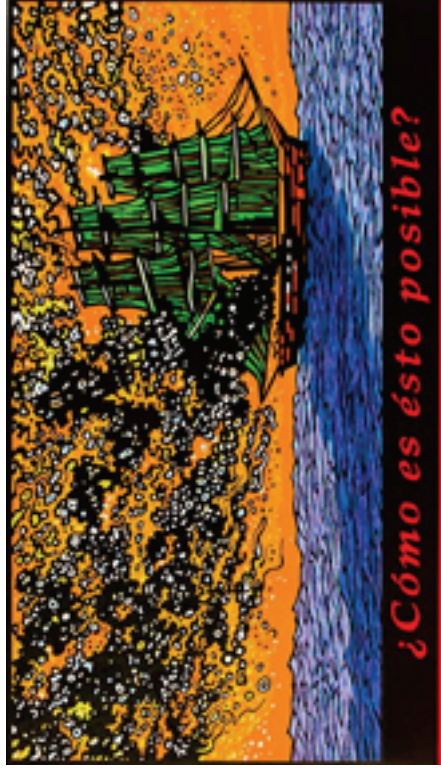
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If This Be Not I in Deep Orange with Red

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Shirley Glubka, a retired psychotherapist, is the author of *Green Surprise of Passion: Writings of a Trauma Therapist*. Her poetry has appeared in *h.o.m.e. Words*, *Narramissic Notebook*, *Puckerbrush Review*, *Seems*, and *Sinister Wisdom*.

Howie Good is the author *Dreaming in Red*. Proceeds from the sale of the book go to a crisis center. His chapbooks include *The Devil's Fuzzy Slippers* (Flutter Press) and *Personal Myths* (Writing Knights Press).

D. Lifland has been published in *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *Compass Rose, descendant*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, *Red Cedar Review*, and *The South Carolina Review*.

Linda McCullough Moore is the author of the short story collection *This Road Will Take Us Closer to the Moon* and the novel *The Distance Between*.

Jo McDougall, a native of Arkansas, now lives in Kansas City. Her five books of poetry include, most recently, *Dirt and Satisfied with Havoc* (Autumn House Press) and the chapbook *Under an Arkansas Sky* (Tavern Books). *Daddy's Money: a Memoir of Farm and Family* was published in 2011 by the U. of Arkansas Press.

Laurence O'Dwyer won the 2005 Hennessy New Irish Writing Award for poetry. He holds a PhD in paradigms of memory formation from Trinity College Dublin and is a research fellow at Goethe University.

Sally Van Doren curates the Sunday Poetry Series for the St. Louis Poetry Center. *Sex at Noon Taxes* (LSU Press) won the 2008 Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets. Her next collection, *Possessive*, is forthcoming from LSU Press in fall 2012. "Preposition" is featured as an animated film in the Poetry Foundation's Poetry Everywhere.

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Contributors

Victoria Anderson directs the Writing Program at Loyola University in Chicago. Her poems have appeared in *Agni*, *Cortland Review*, *Gulf Coast*, and *Mississippi Review*. *Vorticity*, her second book of poems, is forthcoming from Mammoth Press.

Christina Antipa, a songwriter who lives and works in California, has composed and recorded four albums. A poet, too, she is now editing a collection of poems written in Seattle, Washington, from 2005 to 2007.

Katie Berta, an Ohio native now living in Tempe, Arizona, is a recent graduate of Arizona State's MFA program.

David Ebenbach has appeared here at 2River and elsewhere at *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *Subtropics*. *Between Camelots* (U. of Pittsburgh Press) won the Drue Heinz Literature Prize.

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Underworld

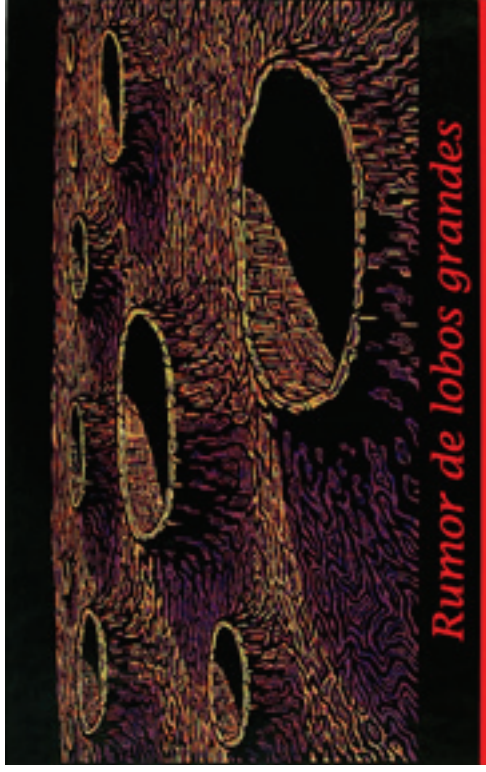
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The Night Studio in Maroon Red © 2012 by Endi Poskovic

Monopoly

Trapped in incentive alley
the fuming board game
revised its diffident warehouse
and strutted out into the membrane
ignoring the undercurrents of flame
and adrenaline. The magnet
zipped in its larynx elongated
and with each gulp coins and
jewelry flew to its throat.
With binoculars it was possible
to detect the receding compulsion,
that urge, some might call it,
to climax again and again.
Here, take this tablet if you
can't yet live the allusion.
This goblet's tenured. There's
no mystique about it. If you
check the watermark on the quit deed,
you will know your eyes are dilated
and your personal aquarium
is ready for your morning dip.
The tide is inconsolable.

Sally Van Doren

Bound

Whoever impeached my son, whoever
punched my son, whoever collapsed
on my son, breaking the brittle
cartoon appliquéd to our front door —
I forgive you. Your rash wheezing, though,
is no substitute for doing the breakfast dishes.
We dawdle at the hospital, eyeing the reclusive
personnel who stalk the emergency room
without name tags. The shrill whistle
of the ambulance metabolizes our
genetic predisposition to nurture. In this vial,
his soul's magma coagulates with the slab
of sentimentality I threw in. I threw it in
hoping that it would thwart the condensing process.
I threw it in, unmediated, without the silly man's interference.
It was a risk and now I wait to see if our porcelain iris
will expand or contract. If you would like to join me
on this indistinct stoop, then take the thorn
out of your cleft chin and have a seat.

Christina Antipa

Vultures

I saw vultures playing today.
No, they were *fighting*.
But one wasn't chasing
and the other wasn't running away
and they dipped and swirled
like big black leaves.

I saw vultures play just as children do.
No, they were *courting*.
But one wasn't chasing
and the other wasn't running away.
The sky looked wet and satisfied
and desert animals printed messages in the sand
with their feet.

I saw two vultures flap lazily.
One kissed the other's cheek
with her death-encrusted beak.
They were not in a hurry
as the sun crested on their pink heads
and made them both glisten
bright with blood.

Victoria Anderson

Low Songs

In this old stone corridor with its narrowing plank of sunlight, the throatiest coo in Mexico comes from the pigeon above. Just death in another disguise. At the Mercado a cardboard child's toy is a funeral procession complete with a treadmill for moving the mourners. The last turn of the crank provides the coffin. Last night the flamenco singer's voice registered as low as the pigeon's. No translation was necessary. Here no one is trying to beat death. Elbow to elbow they walk toward it. I'm tired of pumping myself full of remedies. Next month I will go to my mother's grave and spread a blanket of marigolds. At five we'll share a cocktail mixed strong. I'll transport beauty and arrange it just so. Then I'll explain the dance, the thundering purple shoes, the lift of the skirt, and the dancer's hands working like birds, furious with ecstasy and death.

Laurence O'Dwyer

Stroh Violin

You would ring at one o'clock every Sunday, or a little after. That stroh violin, with its resonator and string.

It's sound is a guide for the perplexed— patented in German, 1846.

Now it's one or a little after. This is not sad. I want to tell you, simply: I have fallen in love again. Make no big plans.

Just play that stroh violin and be glad.

Laurence O'Dwyer

On Precipitation

How is it that I never learned any of that language?
That old weakness whereby what we understand
is forgotten instantly,
and what remains hidden in a symbol
remembered always, never to precipitate.

People too are like language: never experiment!
The ones I weighed out into test tubes have disappeared long ago!

The ones I kept in bottles are in bottles still. Brighter now.
Their crystals harder, like a pharmacy that has been locked up
for eternity.

Victoria Anderson

Summer's Noble Species

O the spotting and naming of summer's notable species
the lesser the common the varied

but names cannot tame
the young male Ruby-throated hummingbird
who masquerades as female from spring to fall

or the smallest hummingbird
in the guise of a moth

or the largest moth the Death's Head Hawthorne
who carries a skull-shaped pattern on his back
and drops wing dust when flying towards light

and while a moth is never a butterfly
butterflies arose within moths and were beautiful

no clubbed antennae or brown wings
just slender smooth abdomens never gorged
on night blooming plants

no gorging is for the moths and microbats
for the Greater Noctule bat believed
to catch and eat small birds in midair

much can be expected of those dark velvety
things whose forelimbs serve as wings

whose small teeth can bite a sleeping man
who might never feel the sting
who might wake convinced and chant

O false vampire big-eyed spear-nosed sucker-footed
O funnel-eared communal rooster
O large and naked O sacred summer bat

Rib

You, of whom
I am supposedly made,
tighten your fingers
around a lung.
If you open out
I am splayed,
animal
meant to be
carved up;
in it there is a justice—
take me away from here,
this filet going to him,
that to her,
everything in pieces.

You told me
you've changed your mind—
there's no such thing as sin,
only the division of a person
from parts of himself,
the organs seceding
one after another,
the thoughts too.
What, then, am I,
meted out —
what can I contain
(everything defined
by what it holds)—this bone
there, that spleen, heart?
If you take me,
you take me apart.

One Plan

My grandmother spent years dying. Always slightly terminal.
I think there was a lot of that sort of thing back then.
And then she died. Just like that.
She was only six years older than I am now.
I thought she was a hundred.
Anticipating death was just a thing my family did.
When my little sister Eileen was in the ninth grade
(I would have been safely off at college, dealing with death
Only on holidays and school vacations),
they thought my Aunt Ethel was checking out,
and asked Eileen to spend the night with her.
“No,” Eileen said. “I’m sure she’d rather be alone,
and get a good night’s rest tonight.”
Eileen didn’t go. But neither did Aunt Ethel, eighty-five and
mean and strong today.

Maybe if I think I’m dying, I could send for Eileen, and she’ll refuse,
I’m very certain, just won’t come, and neither will my death.
There should be some little ritual like that when you are dying.
Some delay procedure you learn in advance that signals,
No, not just at this moment. Give me five minutes,
just to catch my breath.
Not yet.
Not quite yet.

Linda McCullough Moore

Hawthorn Mountain

My friend Nancy tells me she'll be buried on this summer's hill
where daysprings meet the aging farmer before dawn has torn
the covers

from the night; where beauty is at home. And so it will be when
Nancy's three mean daughters have grown old themselves
and one day travel long to stand beside her grave, they

will have to run the gauntlet of this grace, come face
to face with what is beautiful in what we have
not made, stand on the highest rise
above the valley

thinking what a thing a lifetime is.

Let not even I imply she should have saved her money, spent the
eleven thousand, three hundred and fifty dollars on Lipitor and
long term care insurance, thus assuring these three daughters
not even really nice as children—would burn her body up and
pay some stranger to sprinkle the ashes (that is what they will
call us then) out on the Atlantic, because, "Mother liked the sea."

The sea: that grave no one will frown if you don't visit.

There are not many ways to bring our children home.

Katherine Berta

To Sew, To Cook

We take the work in hand.
You take it by the hip, to guide it,
you say. You shoot
from the hip, as they
say. The lispings consonants
work themselves, trace
the edges of a lip, laze against
the head of a bed.

The things you say here
gather meaning to meaning,
a ruching, a folding over,
a bending
to reveal something
gross or intimate.
A thing built to contain.

We put things inside—
let us jar

sugar, flour, let us
shelve the jars. This is
comforting, the arabesque
of a kitchen. The folding logic
of appliances
meant to be stored. Once it's gone
inside, it is gone. Once we eat,
we eat.

Make it about
containment—what may I hold
with my hands
or otherwise? What may I hold
in my mouth?

David Ebenbach

Panegyric

She can't see much out the window—the lights in the jewelry store are too bright, bright off the expensive things and their glass cases—

but she can see her kids in the car, the girl old enough to watch the boy a few minutes. Inside, the man behind the counter smiles, leans

forward with his hands on the glass cases. He can tell the mother's not here to buy. From her coat, from her face.

In her hand, a small clutch of things: her wedding ring, now pointless, two bracelets, a necklace she loves, because her father

gave it to her before he drank up their prosperity. (Shift-weary, she remembers never having to work as a girl. She remembers

the cushioned house of a country doctor.) But there's little substance in memory; she opens her hand for the man

behind the counter. She'll do this and then she can take the kids to the market. The man leans forward some more.

Jo McDougall

In Meadowlake Park

Taking the park's long path, I come upon a family of four: father smoking a huge cigar, mother in purple flip-flops, boys ages three and five by my hasty reckoning—racing on their jubilant trikes.

A dispute breaks out between the boys. The father hands the cigar to his wife, kneels beside the boys, his voice quiet, deliberate, cutting the air the way he might peel an orange.

Then tenuously, as if from a frame stopped in slow motion, the four begin again—father reclaiming his cigar, mother retrieving a flip-flop she'd stepped out of, boys wobbling, subdued and fallen,

the wheels of their tricycles rolling now, orderly now, as a brisk cloud reaches toward the sun to reproach it.

Jo McDougall

Grace

Because you have willingly lost
an empire, effectively disinheriting
your children;
because you have wasted every talent
ever given you;
because each crystal moment of your life
you have trumped with greed—
you can now relax
into the state
of grace denied—
never being called upon to love
or grieve at funerals
or say Thank you.

David Ebenbach

Things We Can Be Sure About

Certainly our mother
put plastic bags around our feet
before we stepped into boots.

We pointed our toes into the sharp corners,
as though the bags were carefully shaped for feet,
but our heels were loose in plastic space.

And then our feet stayed dry,
aside from our own sweat,
which left our skin dead and white.

The snow outside was high,
standing over us like grownups
on either side of a shoveled path.

Certainly we were wary of snowballs,
which required aim,
and raised the body's fear of ice.

But the hallway out to the front door
was dark and taller than any grownup,
haunted even in full-on daytime.

Certainly we knew what meant what
as we stood in the vestibule on overinsulated feet,
between the snow pushed up against the porch
and the heat of the well-known house.

Shirley Glubka

The Bone Goddess

Ten years she stands
stoic, silent
in this under-heated room.

If a goddess is given,
let her be spare.

I am not a Goddess person,
but the bone —
the bone is another matter.

D. Lifland

The Figurine

I left the jade green elephant at her apartment.
She brought it back from a work trip to India as a gift
& I placed it on her dresser that night.
I enjoyed looking at it when I stayed over.

It was a handsome elephant with a strong trunk
& a wonderful color that sparkled
in the lamplight. And it had a wise expression,
like it knew something about this world.

I'm glad I never took it home.
Given the circumstances, I would've
placed it in a box on the second shelf in my closet
with the other things.

D. Liffland

The Doctor's Hands

My grandfather paid his way
through college & medical school,
playing the piano in bars, restaurants & night clubs
in Boston, New York & Philadelphia.
In my parent's living room
is a picture of him in a tuxedo
sitting on a piano bench,
his fingers splayed on the keys.
He looks young & handsome.
My grandmother said the first thing
she noticed about him were his hands.

Later, when he had his own practice
& could afford a piano,
he'd play for my grandmother
while she ate dinner.
Then he lost a finger in an accident
& immediately sold the piano.
In all the pictures taken afterwards,
his hands are behind his back.

Shirley Glubka

Comes the Clear and Humble Poem

Daily the difficult, the inexplicable, the gift.
Grit to transparency ground,
deeply tinted, heated,
carefully cooled,
broken.
Pieces then, fitted and placed,
based.
Lead seals the treacherous,
the accidental / edges.

Howie Good

RKQD4NV

Tell me something interesting. About constellations. Or Portland, Oregon. Maybe Facebook. One of those. Everyone I know who has a job hates it. I find running at the bottom of a swimming pool relieves faux pain. Last night Jesus appeared again on TV claiming that he was Betty Lou. And though there was no wind, the puddles shivered. None of this could really happen, of course, until it does.

Howie Good

Underworld

1

Traveling through streets of winos, we held hands the whole time, the driver taking us wherever he had been paid to go. You spoke of home, the curious blue fog, a funeral attended by only four mourners. I wanted to say something, too, but it was now night and rainy, and I had just enough body to keep a soul in.

2

I wake up feeling no better—worse, in fact. The news advertises the apocalypse. I think about changing my name and leaving, but I can't while I'm still half-asleep. And where's there to go, anyway, on a morning being built from cannibalized parts?