

The 2River View

17.3 (Spring 2013)



J. S. Belote, K. R. Barger, Randolph Bridgeman, Charles Cessna
Kathy Davis, Jeannine Hall Gailey, Christien Gholson
Katherine Mitchell, James B. Nicola, Diana Reaves
Philippe Shils, Barbara Wuest

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The 2River View, 17.3 (Summer 2013)

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Charles Cessna

Hanging

I am left
hanging as
the apple hangs
at the highest point of the tree.
So many
pried loose
become mash
under the hooves of cows.

When days
grow cold,
the sunlight lacks
a certain hardness
in the early morning.
Gradually
color changes
from ruddy red
to dull brown and gray.

Look up, look,
I am turning idly in the wind,
even as the last leaves fall,
and the cows lope insensibly towards the hay.

K. R. Barger

Scarecrow

After you died
I always thought I could
take the black and white
party dress hanging in the closet
out to the field
when I needed good things to grow—
the good times it had seen
would stand there
like a scarecrow warning off
the birds bringing the worms,
the bad unsettling thoughts
to feed this daughter's sorrow.
By the end you were as bony
as the shoulder shaped wire,
hanging that favorite dress;
it was shiny black with white lace
edging across your cleavage
as you danced with Daddy—
Showing off the dress.
The bottom would spin out
like a twirl of dark universe,
that would eventually collide
with all you loved breaking
down the days, dinners, dancing
leaving you so very widowed
and ready to go, that the cancer
in your middle became a vortex
and like a star you, your life
the lives of your daughters,
your house and home,
all you had, died out—

So right now as I drive by
I drive by all those days
that actually did not matter.
The house is now and will always
stand in the distance.
The field in front of it is empty
except for birds rising up
little worms of memory—
dancing your life, the closet, hats
and gloves, baby teeth and love letters,
above the black dress with the breathy edges
he liked so much—its twirling now gone—
I still see it hang there like a suicidal wish.

J. S. Belote

White Room

Though
numerous the leaves
lined with white are not enough
to cut the dark from them
& so only seem the stupid
afterthought of moon that is
the afterthought of sun
that is the freckles on my arm
I haul from childhood.

From Rhode Island when I held
a conch shell to my ear
& ignored the ocean
& listened for

the loudness that lived in me
& did not sound like me
or the heartbeat
of thudding apples in the orchard
the morning would reveal
through the numerous leaves & fog

& It's all so unimportant now.
So unimportant. This window
& the dull earth of wind & leaves
it gives you. This white room
you turn back to with nothing
in it but a piano
you would play madly

If it was not missing most
of its keys & on fire—

filling your lungs with the black
music that will consume you.

Randolph Bridgeman

rv guy

he bought a used 1976 break-wind
with shag carpeting and wood paneling
that resembles the inside of
every best western hotel room
that he'd taken his family to
on every vacation they'd ever had
the homeowners association
tells him he can't park it in his own
driveway which he does anyway
just to piss off the neighbors
because this is america goddamn it
and it's his property
and it's his RV
even though it's as tacky as last year's
vacation pictures that he posted
on facebook of it parked in front of
the gas station made of hub caps
or alabama's worlds largest open
air flea market
or ralph's rocky mountain oyster
and corn dog emporium
but this year because of the rising
cost of gas and because he's the cheapest
fuck i've ever known
he packed up the family and drove
all the way across town to the super walmart
where he set up camp in the parking lot
and spent his days shopping at ross'
or pick and pay
or rick's bargain barn
and his nights on top of his RV
in a lawn chair with a budweiser
making fun of the rednecks

Randolph Bridgeman

why he don't flip people off anymore

she kept her right turn signal on for 6 miles
before he pulled around her
stretched across the front seat to roll down
the passenger window so that he could
flip her off properly when his hand
slipped off of the window crank
and his head got stuck between
the passenger seat and the doorframe
by the time he'd gotten his head loose
he'd lost control of the car
and in his attempt to correct
he over corrected
crossing the medium and three lanes
of traffic before plowing into
a bob's big boy sign
that fat red headed burger eating fucker
with the stupid ass grin came off that pole
like an olympic diver in a perfect one
and a half gainer with a twist
and crushed the top of his car
so that it took the mariposa county
emergency response team four
and a half hours and the jaws of life
to cut his dumbass out
then they charged him \$8,000 which
caused him to get behind so they
foreclosed on his house
repossessed his wife's car
so she left him
and took the kids
because this was just one more
thing in a long list of stupid shit
that he'd done

Kathy Davis

No Rain for a Spell

I know he's coming, the man with the tractor,
so many fields around me harvested
already. Flower heads close to bursting on the timothy
out back, and here and there the reach of purple
clover, dandelion. Sometimes he cuts

the crop at night, headlights rude
through the bedroom window. The blade and rake
laying down row after row while I attempt
to sleep. Field mice and nesting birds in flight,
and you by my side, dreaming

undisturbed. He is taking, you would say,
what's his. The hay left for days to dry
before it's baled and hauled away. Horses
bending in their stalls to feed. I know a woman
who gathers summer weeds, weaves them

into bundles with buttons, needle, thread. Winter,
when the muse lurks in pod and root,
she presses pigment from the remnants,
brushes the meadow onto sheets of homemade
English ivy paper. Once in a foreign city,

you snuck us past an armored tank to reach
the restaurant in the alley just beyond. I can't
remember what we ate, only the warm *bienvenue*
of the chef's embrace, the lusty zest
with which he delivered food, plates laddered

up his arms, the sound of silver scraping dish
as we took in what he had to give.

Kathy Davis

Open Water

They push on through the swells,
the swimmers off La Jolla.
We track them, by the colors of their caps
to the buoy and back, caught up
in the race.

 A dolphin leaps—
as if we could forget
what teems below the surface. Today,
you clasped my wrist, gently
over coffee and told me
you were sorry.

 Harbor seals
have claimed the beach
at Children’s Pool, fouled the sand.
Some view it as a crime,
but still the tourists come.

 It’s a small thing,
what you have done, a petty grievance.
The swimmers shaking off the wet
as they emerge, the winners
lining up.

 How fast, yesterday,
we journeyed out to see the whales,
our small boat bucking chop
as we searched through the binoculars
for spray.

 I can’t forgive you yet,
there’s too much
pleasure hanging in the balance. The sun
licks moisture from the breeze
and salts our flesh—
its heat so sinfully delicious.

Jeannine Hall Gailey

The End

At the end of our story, we roll along
with the prince's procession,
or wake up to a castle filled with friends,
their eyes, too, were puckering at the light.
It never occurs to us to flee our fates.
After all, we cannot sleep forever,
it's not our role; we merely rest until we're touched –
or jostled – awake by the right man or moment.

How can we lament what we've missed,
asleep in glass coffins and briar-thorned prisons?
We've noticed no change, not the way
the citizens seem to glare at us as we pass
or the price of apples. The guns the men carry
now under their coats. Even the carts
seem sleeker, prepared to bustle us into the future.

And so we stumble into new fates,
on feet not familiar with solid ground,
still waiting for pillow marks to fade from our faces.
Groggily, we turn to the narrator for direction:
after all, all our lives we've been posing
for someone or other. Curtain called, we bow out
and try to make our exits graceful. It's what our mothers
would have wanted, their voices echo:
Try not to expect too much magic.

Jeannine Hall Gailey

Things I Learned in Waiting Rooms

That we are like animals: we like to sit alone
with our illness, we will seek out the chair
in the corner, or the bench by the door.
The sick have this in common.

That our animal parts can change for no reason –
one woman's ankles swell out of tennis shoes,
one man's arm bursts with red veins.
Hearts and spleens will be thumped for size
like little rotten melons.

That we put ourselves in the hands
of other animals, not angels,
that occasionally someone in a wheelchair
is forgotten, unconscious, in a back hallway.

That some wards are lit with paintings
of forests, and that birdsong piped in
sounds almost cheerful. Lollipops in gift shops, ceramic kittens.

That women can be careful
with their needles on the arms
of thin children and the elderly.

That we are finite – that even the young
grow religious when facing the dimmed light,
drawing pictures of Jesus, haloes of yellow crayon.

That we are not gods,
though we may sail ahead of our bodies,
smiling, as if we were.

Christien Gholson

Diaspora

Edge of a clearing,
a lone milkweed stalk.

The pod's soft, peeled bark;
four seeds still inside.

I open my hand,
two float toward cliff rocks.

Then, a new desire:
I'll take them with me,

release the seeds on
the mountain's west slope.

*

One lands among brush.
One twists in last light.

A third remains still,
thinking whose desire?

Christien Gholson

Every tree is softly falling

A trout leaps three feet
 into the air, buries itself
in circle after circle, folding
 this old mining town
into the past. Buildings blend
 into trees.

Your fingers
tock against a pollen-filled pine cone. A breath
 of yellow-green smoke.

 Later, back in bed,
there was intermittent rain, sleep,
thunder in the wake of a hummingbird's wings.

Katherine Mitchell

Your House

Hunched leaves fly
across the line
of bird tracks
in snow.

I stand outside the window
wishing you would all
come back.

No one cared if the rented
movies were good.
We had the humping dog story
and the backless dress story.

I step in closer.
The furniture is covered with sheets
like ghosts playing twister.
Your darkroom still set up
in the back hallway.

You made a rare print,
your son's face under a cloth
in the corner of the frame.
His hand outside the fabric holding it taut,
the surface pale and grainy
like an almost empty beach.

James B. Nicola

You see

You see,
that day was a beaded curtain
to a back room
where you could not go
not then
not then.

Though I had been
you hadn't
and I wasn't about to drag you
nor leave you there in the front room without me
not then.

All I could do was tell you
that that's where I'd like to go
with you with you
and let you think about it awhile
so that maybe you'll take my hand
or touch my robe
like Scrooge to Christmas Now

and we'll go
together
to the dark back room
one day
and fly
like The Present
and see clearer
all through the night.

Diana Reaves

A Mother Confessing

I was wrong when I said your voice carried me
away. Listening to you was nothing like travel,
nothing like getting lost. Those mornings as you sang
What language shall I borrow to thank Thee...? I imagined
you there at the piano reciting
directions to a warm blue lake.
But I never wanted to go.
Now I see your voice instead
as hands that held me
where I stood rinsing the breakfast dishes, your song
a cold rivulet, I'll say, with a gray crane,
soft and unsure.

Diana Reaves

Teeth and Feathers

My grandfather drank half a bottle of Jack Daniel's
the day he had all his top teeth pulled.

The next week he drank the other half, had his bottom
teeth pulled.

He never got dentures, and the man could eat a carrot.
When he died, you could see white beneath his thin gums.
I'd never thought about the bone there, or his macaw
shelling peanuts for him in the evenings, reminding him

Johnny Carson's on, Pa,
her cry and her shrill, blue wings spreading
even after he'd gone.

Philippe Shils

alone with my daughter in the house

when there are leaves
shimmering

she ignores me
preoccupied.

at the window
in the bedroom

the closest she'll get
to a tree house

i have to get in her face
to get a smile.

the winter snow
is something to look
forward to.

we'll be buried
in the neutral light.

Philippe Shils

hey hey pretty baby

woody guthrie's daughter cathy died in a fire
after he wrote her sweet simple songs
and sang them with a plaintive and pleading tone
"who's my pretty baby (hey hey pretty baby)"

lucia stops at the top of a step or a curb
and as she clutches vaguely for some help
I know that we together lost the mandate of heaven
woody and lucia and cathy and me

a dust bowl and the ceiling fan rhythm
of the locusts that persist all evening

the weather roils on

boiling heat or mean cold

I smell tangerines and taste watermelons

the chill on my tongue the tang in my nose
and the bitter pleasure of beer

and the rocking of a child
rapid and accelerating
steady and monotonous
and without comfort
frantic and clicking and clacking

Barbara Wuest

The Real World

Just when you think you've been on this earth too long something happens to make it all brand new—a made

thing or persons born, like the woman over there bundled against the cold walking from the side door toward the

barn that just might collapse if the wind picks up, how she and the landscape remind you of the character and

setting offered in that novel you read with its affairs, secrets, suspicious deaths, all seen through the eyes of a

boy who is now a grown man recalling having seen too much back in those days when his father did wrong with

the woman from the farm who fried the boy some eggs on the very same day and arrived in his dreams that night.

There's the book, there's the life, there's the thing that saves, an email, say, sent to your address saying your

best friend fell in love with a man who studies plants and she is no longer lonely or sad, and just below, in

your inbox, a niece writes in cyberspace in a parrot's
voice, one she made up and assigned a human name,

Ronald, and a country of birth, the moderate UK, alas!
We have a formal exchange in which he pokes fun at

our ways of staying in touch (email offends his soul)
and wonders about a species that hangs onto a distance

he has to relearn, spreading his claws over lettered
keys that "fly" him to Brazil to set the record straight.

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Contributors

K.R. Barger was born and raised in rural Virginia. She currently resides in Boston.

J. S. Belote is an MFA candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University. His poems have appeared in *Adroit Journal*, *The Cortland Review*, and *Mead Magazine*.

Randolph Bridgeman graduated from St. Mary's College of Maryland and is the recipient of the Edward T. Lewis Poetry Prize. He has three collections of poems: *South of Everywhere* (2005), *Mechanic on Duty* (2008), and *The Odd Testament* (forthcoming).

Charles Cessna hails from western North Carolina and now resides in the Piedmont with his wife and cocker spaniels. His poetry most recently appeared in the *North American Review* and is forthcoming in *The Broken Plate*.

Kathy Davis is the author of *Holding for the Farrier* (Finishing Line Press 2007). She has been published in *Barrow Street*, *Blackbird*, *Diode*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and *The Southern Review*. She lives and works in Richmond, Virginia.



Dancing Trees © 2013 by Corie Neumayer

Jeannine Hall Gailey, a Seattle 2013 Jack Straw Writer, is the Poet Laureate of Redmond, Washington. She is the author of three books of poetry: *Becoming the Villainess*, *She Returns to the Floating World*, and *Unexplained Fevers* (forthcoming).

Christien Gholson is the author of the novel, *A Fish Trapped Inside the Wind* (Parthian 2011), and *On the Side of the Crow* (Hanging Loose Press 2006; Parthian 2011). He can be found (infrequently) at his blog: noise & silence.

Katherine Mitchell holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Missouri—Saint Louis. She works professionally as an Alexander Technique teacher. She also teaches Argentine Tango at Washington University in St. Louis with her husband.

James B. Nicola has previously published in *2River*, *Atlanta Review*, *Tar River*, *Texas Review*, and elsewhere. His book *Playing the Audience* won a Choice Award, and he has also won the Dana Literary and Storyteller People's Choice awards for poetry.

Diana Reaves grew up in Alabama along the banks of the Chattahoochee River. She attends the University of Arkansas as an MFA candidate in poetry writing. Her poems have appeared in *Boxcar Poetry Review* and *Tar River Poetry*.

Philippe Shils is a physician assistant in Decatur, Illinois. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Alba*, *BODY*, *Elimae*, *Hyperlexia Journal*, *Rattle*, *Sixth Finch*, and elsewhere.

Barbara Wuest holds an MFA from University of California, Irvine. Her poems are published in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Cincinnati Poetry Review*, *CrossCurrents*, *Laurel Review*, *The Paris Review*, *Wind*, *Wisconsin Academy Review*, and elsewhere.

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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

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