

# 2RV

19.3 (Spring 2015)

# The 2River View

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*The Recurring End* © 2010 by James Deeb

new poems by

Mark DeFoe, Michelle Acker, Karla Huston, Lois P. Jones  
Kevin Kinsella, Laurie MacDiarmid, Robert Manaster  
Darren Morris, Jack Powers, Juanita Rey, Ron Riecki

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### **About the Artist**

James Deeb holds an MFA from Western Michigan University. His art has its philosophical roots in texts like Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, the work of the German Expressionists, and the writings of authors like J.G. Ballard and Charles Bukowski. Deeb refers to this artistic strand as the dystopian minority opinion.

### **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.

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*Smoking Monkey* © 2012 by James Deeb

Kevin Kinsella is a freelance writer and poet living in Brooklyn. He is the translator of two collections of Russian poetry: Sasha Chernyi's *Children's Island* (Lightful Press) and Osip Mandelstam's *Tristia* (Green Integer Books). His work has most recently appeared in *Bombsite*, *The Bridge*, *Pif*, and *Tarpaulin Sky Magazine*.

Laurie MacDiarmid is Professor of English and Writer in Residence at St. Norbert College, in De Pere, Wisconsin.

Robert Manaster is a poet and translator with co-translated poems in *Hayden's Ferry Review* and *Virginia Quarterly Review*. His own poems have appeared in journals such as *Image*, *Rosebud*, and *Spillway*.

Darren Morris holds an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth. His poems appear most recently in *The 2River View*, *The Missouri Review*, *New England Review*, and *New Ohio Review*.

Jack Powers teaches at Joel Barlow High School in Redding, Connecticut. His poems have appeared in *Barrow Street*, *Cortland Review*, and *The Southern Poetry Review*.

Juanita Rey is a Dominican poet who has been in the United States for five years.

Ron Riecki likes to write about the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. His books include *UP: a Novel*; *The Way North: Collected Upper Peninsula New Works*; and *Here: Women Writing on Michigan's Upper Peninsula*.

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Mark DeFoe is Professor Emeritus of English at West Virginia Wesleyan College where he teaches in Wesleyan's low-residency MFA Writing Program. His poems have been published in *Kenyon Review*, *Paris Review*, and *Poetry*, among others.

Michelle Acker is a student of English at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, Florida. She is a near-lifelong poet as well as an aspiring filmmaker.

Karla Huston is the author of *A Theory of Lipstick* (Main Street Rag) and seven chapbooks, most recently *Outside of a Dog* (Dancing Girl Press).

Lois P. Jones is host of KPFK's Poet's Café. Her publications include *Narrative Magazine*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, and *The Warwick Review*, with upcoming work in *Eyewear*. She is Poetry Editor of *Kyoto Journal*.

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*The Errant Parade* © 2012 by James Deeb

### **The Things I Never Should Have Done**

They include matches. There is a moment where I tripped a child, when I thought about fucking a blind girl, where I chopped down Jesus when he was wanting to date me. I hate all these closets, the way that they open so fucking slowly that you almost hear the skeletons, their privates rubbing together, the pubic bone's connected to the public bone, the fucking bone's connected to the paparazzi bone. I wish, sometimes, that I could have been worse, much worse, a Pol Pot of the library, a fucking Hitler of my high school. There's a punk phase you go through where you whip it out in front of everyone in study hall, their fucking mouths all hanging there like noose-victims and you realize that even evil can sometimes feel so boring and that good can be so motherfucking awesome that it makes you want to cum until there is nothing left but peace.

Ron Riecki

### **My Brother Thinks I'm Suicidal**

I'm trying to keep him  
from crying, telling him  
that poetry does not mean  
I'm dying for graves. I mean  
that he needs to calm down.  
He keeps seeing me falling down  
into the holes, I mean, hells  
of it all, the mines like Hell  
in this town where we're owned,  
where we don't seem to own  
anything, only this worry for  
each other, this lack of forest,  
this ten-hour shift, deep need for rest,  
and I say I pray I'll stay alive for him.

Mark DeFoe

### **Won't You Please Help Tiffany the Tiny Pom-Pom Girl and Little Kevin the Quarterback with Their Expensive Operations**

From snapshots taped to a collection jar  
they smile. We leave our quarters-worth of hope  
where we buy beer and smokes and gas the car.

On the way to our local friendly bar  
their eyes, guileless and devouring, grope  
at us from the altar of their Mason jar.

Sunday we barbequed, almost broke par.  
Monday—there they are—those desperate folk  
who crave our loose change when we gas the car--

Quick trip or Get 'n Go—can't let small things mar  
our laughs, our profits our plans—make us choke  
on the guilt that seeps from a half-full jar.

Salesperson, plumber, trucker, software star—  
no time for sorrow in a dusty jar.

Michelle Acker

### Sublimation

There are mountains in Alabama,  
which are probably really more like hills,  
except to a girl growing up in Florida.  
They rise tentatively over the cotton crop,  
their slopes no steeper than the roofs of houses,  
they rise barely above the treetops—  
tentatively, but not apologetically—  
they have been here for centuries—  
they rise gently above the cotton and the corn,  
above streets with names like Bumper Crop Lane  
and Slaughter Road, above streets without shoulders,  
Methodist churches and Baptist churches  
and Korean churches, above grazing cattle.  
I knew these mountains on horseback,  
and their welcome sight when traveling by plane,  
and slight ascent when by car.

there are fjords in Norway,  
carved staunchly from water and ice,  
they stand as if a law of the universe,  
as if you are not below nor they above,  
but everything around, and in its right place.  
I gazed on these mountains from a rain-slick boat,  
eating tea and waffles as if I  
could never eat again.  
There was a sense of belongingness here,  
of rightness, looking to the rivers of snow,  
I thought, this is a safe place,  
a good place, things are okay here.  
I took pictures of my tea  
and felt right.

there are mountains in alaska.  
surrounding a low valley  
they tower like ancient  
kings and queens  
wearing crowns of snow.

Juanita Rey

### The Man Who Got Me Into This Fix

Hola!  
He waves through the car window.  
I shrug him off.  
Qué nos paso.  
He's half pregnant though he  
does not know this.

Chica, he calls me.  
He hears the American word "chick"  
and he plays with it  
like he does with all women.

I return to my job arranging tulips.  
The uglier I get,  
the defter my hand at beauty.

I will see him drive by every day  
until I grow so fat  
he will no longer know it's me.

I'll just be one more fulana  
bearing someone else's baby.

He is an empresario.  
A fine word for when there is no meaning.

Juanita Rey

### Behind the Foreman's Back

The others laugh behind the foremen's back.  
The man has only a thumb on his right hand.  
He lost the other four to an accident  
with the machinery.  
They call him Captain Hook,  
though he has no hook,  
merely a stump and a solitary thumb.  
Marcial is my fellow countryman.  
He laughs as loud as any of them.  
And he can't do a hard day's work  
with two hands.  
Too much time talking baseball  
with his compinches.  
I don't defend the foreman  
though I know he would me.  
After all, he's shown me  
the photograph of his family.  
He too is Dominican.  
Came here with empty pockets.  
Now he does well.  
Vacations at the shore.  
Comfortable apartment in the city.  
But then he looks at me,  
and even Marcial,  
feels too guilty to be proud.  
What if I, a man, could get....  
had got pregnant,  
like poor Juanita, he says.  
What if I had it too easy  
like lazy boy Marcial.  
He's given muscle and sweat  
and time—so many hours—  
to make it work.  
But it's not all perfect, he says.  
He has those missing fingers  
just in case.

Michelle Acker

down in that valley,  
the cool valley  
of flowers and grass,  
a sparkling creek,  
the faint ghost of white fang,  
down in that valley i stood,  
and i could hardly look at them,  
the biggest things i'd ever seen

### the three thoughts

all life is accumulation  
and death decay—this  
is the first thought,  
*and there is nothing wrong*  
with building a shrine to  
yourself, especially if  
no one else will.  
but here is the second thought:  
to accumulate is to decay the other,  
to be alive is to take life,  
to give life is to lose life,  
to have energy is to lose matter,  
to do is to destroy  
the universe. some scales are  
tipping and never  
tipping.  
life and death are not  
different. you are alive even as  
your cells die. you are dying  
even as you live.  
  
the third thought:  
just forget it.

*Karla Huston*

### **Doves at the Edge**

Sitting on the icy shore  
of my heated birdbath, they look

a little confused, feathers puffed into fluffy,  
gray parkas, they hunch shoulder to shoulder,

seem to squint into bright light glinting  
on snow, tails balanced in water.

And today they are gloomy angels perched  
on the wire above the garden, wings open,

spreading to gather what they can,  
beaks moving to some unheard story.

They balance like clothespins, tails steady  
as rudders, holding them asea in the morning air.

*Jack Powers*

### **In Praise of Heart Attacks**

Not the sneaky kind at forty when your kids are seven and nine.  
Not the cheap ones that fence you into smaller and smaller yards.  
I'm talking massive coronary in the late 70's—82 tops.  
Here to not here in an instant. I've seen the mind go slowly  
from What was I saying? to How did we get here?  
to There's a woman in our room trying to dress me. Not for me.  
And the body dwindling from walking to walker to waiting  
and wheezing? Slow decline into silence? Uh uh.  
No sir. A massive stroke could do. Something sudden  
and self-contained. No clean up. You're thinking it's bad luck  
to say aloud. Or bad form. It's cruel to the survivors.

No. Survivors  
wipe your drool and your ass, try to remember who you were.  
They should thank me. You think I'll chicken out? Maybe.  
Maybe in the end, something's better than nothing.  
But if there's a button I can push, I'm buying. So at let's say 78,  
stop the Coumadin, the Heparin, the Beta Blockers,  
the latest magic pill. No more static. Let the heart know  
when it's time to go. Say farewell. Let's end this show on time.



*Lois P. Jones*

### **The Reluctant Daughter**

I stayed with death  
until I lost my shadow. Dumpsters  
rolled through me same as before.

The marching out of ghosts  
and the kneading of identity.  
I was another spirit in search

of water, missing the feel  
of touch. Inside your womb  
respite from an umbilical-free

world. Inside, nothing but sunlight  
filtering into unformed eyes.  
I didn't know you, really.

I followed my sister  
from the train she threw me off of.  
Dachau or Paris?

Or was it a boxcar  
of yellow grain? Details are lost  
the way a foot is too large

for a glass slipper. Life  
made me love you  
mother. And now I wonder

which train took you away.  
There is no place  
dry enough for all this rain.

*Darren Morris*

### **Steampunk**

At the center of beautiful women  
who do not love us  
burns a white flame.

We are machines  
that consume and desire and want  
for such abiding loneliness

that to invite it  
is to extract blossoms from the rain.  
I am the elevator that opens

on each floor in the metal  
hotel of your heart.  
And on hearing the laughter

down the endless  
hallway, I press a button  
and slide shut my doors.

Darren Morris

### Cloud Seeding

Cloud seeding—otherwise  
known as delivering a chemical dust  
high in the Earth's atmosphere  
to encourage rainfall  
in a particular region—seems  
about as selfishly misguided  
as sandbagging a flood.  
You only sandbag a river  
to distract yourself from the inevitable.  
It is a massive over-estimation  
of existence. This is what I am  
thinking while we're fucking.

Lois P. Jones

### Thirty Seconds at the Light

Her face was earthy and gnarled like a figure  
from the Potato Eaters. Her cheeks, red onions  
shining in the heat. No time to read her sign.  
I didn't care what it said. All I could feel  
was the sun blistering her skin as she balanced  
on the meridian. I waved my hat in the air  
and she ran toward me smiling as the light  
turned green. No one honked.

*Thank you, bless you.* I thought of the life  
my hat would have sheltering one woman  
at the height of summer. Happy the chin strap  
would keep it safely on her head. Thought  
of the other drivers as witness—how we only  
have a few seconds to love the world  
as the fire leaps between us.

*Kevin Kinsella*

### **As Though**

When I first saw the photograph  
of the two of them sitting  
in their starched kitchen whites  
on the steps out behind the restaurant  
he with his arm around her  
and she leaning close to him  
almost dropping her cigarette  
and both smiling for the camera  
I readily understood that  
they were once happy together

but now here are his swollen eyes  
staring heavily into the camera  
as though daring me to guess again  
with his arm held tight around her neck  
pulling her close with such force  
that she almost drops her cigarette  
while she smiles bravely as one does  
when someone is recording  
a quiet moment of time after work  
in the days before they lost everything

*Robert Manaster*

### **In the Deep Recess of a Period**

While nearby sway the dissonant  
Leaves, a crow stiffens to a branch,  
Uncorks towards strips of cloud  
As shriveled as dried cherries. Look  
At me. Here, I wish to be  
Desired once more. Come here  
Like the late summer wind that swells  
The shade of a plum tree. Come near,  
Come near. To sense your voice is like  
Pressure of rain about to fall.

*Robert Manaster*

### **The Art of Being Intimate Strangers**

At sunset, rising  
From behind a massive cloud,  
Shafts of honeyed light  
Tone the blue above into  
The shade of a lover's last kiss. Further,  
There's a thinning outward of this light.  
Even this moment begins to wisp: let go  
Like a window curtain  
Pulled back just long enough to see  
A woman whisper to a man and their bodies  
Snuggling into one  
As they stroll by unaware.

*Kevin Kinsella*

### **Knife Work**

My grandfather could peel a whole apple  
with a small pocket knife so that the peel  
stayed connected in one curling piece  
like a single helix twisting in space

and while I was left handed like he was  
and young and sober like he wasn't  
I could never pull off the trick myself  
without nicking my finger and bleeding

all over the fruit and the peel  
which he'd take from my shaking hands  
and rinse in a pot of cold saltwater  
so that the apple didn't turn too brown

then laugh and tell me to go wash my hands  
before my mother saw all of the blood

Laurie MacDiarmid

### **The Clock of His Shoes**

Late at night,  
face pressed against  
the virgin pillow,  
he relives his wife's

cool smooth skin,  
and, with a tiny pain,  
realizes how those  
we once loved

remain in the world  
as echoes:  
his father's voice  
in the blue jay

that taunts the fat tabby,  
his dead child chattering  
somewhere across the street,  
and his sad-faced mother,

her measured stride in  
the clock of his shoes  
against the granite floor  
of an empty museum—

the sound of her  
sliding before him  
into each room, as her body  
once slid,

parting the air,  
into church each Sunday,  
solemn and swollen  
with faith.

Laurie MacDiarmid

### **If My Father Came Back from the Dead**

would he wear plaid shirts  
short sleeved with pocket protectors  
and jam in pens like crowded teeth

would he tape the corners of his  
thick black glasses and get fat around  
the waist

would he drink in front of the boob tube  
while mom makes dinner, holding forth  
about asinine students—is it just me

or do they come out of the womb stupid?

if he came back from the dead would he  
smile at me lopsided let me smell  
the scratchy wool at his neck

would he run his big hands over  
my yearning back til i'm warm all  
the way through

or would he make me track him down  
to the freezing river and then  
dive in

would he swim out into the unbearable  
winter dark  
and shout: if you want me so bad

come get me