

The 2River View

4.3 (Spring 2000)



Prairie Lace © 2000 by Silkie deWinter

POEMS BY Jennifer Elizabeth Adams,
Erin Elizabeth, Sarah Goodwin, James Lineberger,
Brandy Milowsky, Barbara Spring, Royce Sykes,
Clyde Tressler, Lisa Marie Zaran

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About the artist

Silkie dWinter

is a writer, photographer, digital artist, singer, actress,
and storyteller currently living in Middletown, CT.

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Dark Door in Essex © 2000 by Silkie deWinter

Jennifer-Elizabeth Adams

Magazine Rack

I look at the girls
with sunken eyes
and necklaces made
of bones and skin.
Belts of decay
and peel from within.
Shoes of nothingness.
Heel and sin.

Jennifer-Elizabeth Adams

Cheer Up Karly

Friday night brought
lawn gnomes and pink flamingos
dancing on your grandmother's front yard—
and earlier that day
those alley pharmaceuticals helped
you to feel better fast—
Before kindergarten watching the buses of
big kids going by while candy wrappers fly out of
our pockets to land in the dust on the side of the
road where business men are rushing to get to work—
Radios blast the 80's
and talk shows
gabbing about affairs,
gabbing about last night's scores
gabbing about somebody else
to take the attention off of themselves—
The kickball game stopped early when
I fell and skinned my knee while
you pulled away the jump rope
from a Hispanic girl
who didn't belong—
You pulled away the water pipe
and kept it for your own—
You pulled away from reality
the day we walked the train tracks and you
fell sobbing to the ground—
The trees will attack me! you cried
and I looked around, there were no trees,

no grass, no flowers,
just stones and ripped-up railroad spikes
from where the Mafia kept their secrets—
And I try to make you smile but you never do.
Cheer up Karly,
can't you focus on the better parts?
Your hair is beautiful
and your shoes that cost \$35
have lasted the past three years—
Remember purple rain clouds and My Little Ponys.
Plastic Winnie the Pooh backpacks
with erasers in the
front pocket shaped
just like two Scottie Dogs.
One black and one white—
Making tuna fish sandwiches
out of cat food and salad dressing
because we are
disgustingly creative
in this imperfect world—
Total conversations immersed
in *Yes, No, and Maybe so*—
Karly, I keep hoping
you'll come back around—
Houses begin to look dimmer now from the van
blurry, shaded, even cardboard
as you fall down again.

Elizabeth Erin

Driving to Rhode Island in the Snow

A gossamer scrap of moon is adjusted awkwardly
on denim sky. I take the wheel in one palm, modifying
the mirror for the slip of sun between flake and hill. The roads
from here to Boston are creviced, like cleavage,
and I don't know what exit in Rhode Island I should take.

It snows as if it doesn't care, the mist of it, a cyclone blotting
road. I am amazed at how dispassionately it falls, with
slow, ceaseless
redundancy. Is it that New England has become bored
with color,
calenture? Or is it simply me, weary with this stretch
of Connecticut that will not end.

There isn't any radio this far from Bridgeport, and 95 is
an anthill
this close to six. I wish the defrost was working because breath
is destroying the windows and silence is amassing in my lap.

Virginia was dazzling when I left, morning designed
like liquid, azure lava; I don't know why I gave her up
so easily. But someone
told me leaving is the first step. And it is Rhode Island.
Providence.

Erin Elizabeth

Cremating Ishtar

I am perched in obscure angles on the cliff
of mattress, counting my fingers, over and over,
trying to make the room loud. She is sitting, patiently,
on the other life of this bed, telling me that I don't
know how New York feels at sunset, all the hustle
of breath, calmed, suddenly. How I could never
lower my voice enough or broaden my hands,
my face. And that, to her, I would always be a girl
poet, climbing cautiously onto dim stages,
reading of Ishtar, doubled over in the sky,
cramped with menstruation.

Some days I feel like I have the world
trapped between my thumb and forefinger,
but she is across the room, tying her shoe,
telling me if we don't leave now, we'll be late,
and the Sunday of it all fogs like December
as I follow her, without hands, out the door.

Sarah Goodwin

Wild Nights

The beer is cold and you
Are hotter than hell tonight
Summer is coming:
You must take a lover

Then all is as it should be:
The lark in the nest,
The salmon on a plate

Every sprinkler in every lawn
Is part of the natural order
Let me take your hand here,
Our clasped fingers mixing
Scent and oil

These days even nymphs
Live among plush objects
And angels on earth just
Want to get laid
Leda sits alone in the dark
Smoking with television
On her breath, Bacchus knows

Winter is coming:
You must take a lover
Bring blankets, bundle,
Be pressed to your fires

The hunt continues: lions don't
Clean their bloody muzzles
The homeless man who finds
A hit pigeon doesn't mind infestation
He wraps it in a newspaper
And cooks it over flame

In ant farms congested with terrible trucks
Daisies grow willful in earthenware pots
We're all experts in our tiny fields
So the mouse, thrilling in her bantam sphere,
So the flea shapes his desire to a razor point

James Lineberger

Envoi

That other one
the one he loved wouldn't show
his face most

of the time or if he
did would hold back at the edge
of the crowd

like he was afraid of what they might
do like
it is now with Madonna or Liz you learn real

quick how the moth gets
burned which would describe
that one

to a tee a shy person that never cared
for the lime
light that if he was here

today and a papa
razzo tried to take his picture he would grab
the camera and hit

him upside the head with it so there could not be many
who ever
laid eyes on that one or could pick

him out in a line
up even now if another one the one that swore
he loved him

more had not got arrested
in Rome and been made to spill
it all how

when the women took them to the cave where
the rock was rolled
away that other one the dead one's

loved one laid down on the bed his paramour
had fled
and didn't give a damn who watched while he jerked
off on the rags and shot
his wad in the significant other's holy shit and left
over blood

Brandy Milowsky

Moving Twenty Times

It was impossible
for my lungs to fill a balloon,
so I measured accomplishment

in things I could reach,
opening the shades
so you could see

Juniper roots
split from Oregon
lying strung

in LA streets
and growing far
as Boston's cold sun.

Where my roots begin, you know
the evergreen, the smell of cut
wood. You know the dead

keep property,
but give back an insight
to last our lives.

You know I don't go out in the sun;
what is implied is what I mean.
If you ask what the weather is like, here,

I will say: the sun is slanted.

Brandy Milowsky

The Eye Nebula

A chair upholstered with leaves—
I close my eyes to each leafy detail.
Who thinks I live to offer a throne?

Who thinks it thinks
a simple confession is
a ponyride to heaven.

And you, fingering my name,
twirling it like a halo
over the heads of heretics,

I shed each leaf of you.
I stripped your skin for leather
and left you unraveling, rosy.

*

Five-hundred years ago, an Aztec bride
mastered the art of flatbread, then stopped
the calendar coiling her life.

She slipped past the hearth
into the blue dome of an atom.
The Aztec calendar slipped

into gradients of time:
a calendar buried its warriors.
I buried myself in the pause of a clock.

*

The eye nebula
faraway witness
already in the blackhole's grip.

Barbara Spring

Vernal Equinox: The Hero's Journey

The lake's Prussian glaze shimmers,
a slight wind fingers
its surface.

Fishermen troll the still deeps
the first day of spring
forgetting

their wives, their children, their homes.
They float on the lake
bundled up

like babies. What if they should
become like still life mezzotints

encased behind frames and glass
or wound up neatly in
skeins of wool

forever in their wife's rooms?
Men should roam the seas
standing up

in their boats to pee in the
water, free to be...
lonesome heroes.

Barbara Spring

Hieros Gamos

On their way to Egypt
two lions bound in the dark
across level Earth,
maned lion and lioness.

They carry desert
Nile and fertile delta.
They carry the royal sphinx.

Inside of them are the sun
and the darkness
of Africa.

Inside of them are the
four directions
and the center.

Royce Sykes

Canada Goose in Kansas

I saw her wheel, thought nothing
until, with slow majesty,
she came to land
within the stubble of autumn harvest.

I held myself still, awe-slapped,
She—must have been a she,

 Zeus has no business visiting me—
preened the bars upon her sleeve,
glanced obliquely inquisitive
at me.

Neck curved, never merely bending,
she arched towards the sky...
Then, waddling, flopped into the air.

I wish she had not gone before me.

Royce Sykes

Sparrows in Flight

Sparrows flash across the sky,
flocks like thin, quick lines
inscribed against a leaden parchment.
Each one a vivid punctuation
when feathers stretch to drive
them, then faint as they glide,
wings pulled in close.

I watch until my break is over,
Then return, faceless, to my
pre-fab workday bin.

Clyde Tressler

The Bribe

Your great green lawn runs down to the Bayou Teche
where the wispy cypress wash their knees.

The water whispers its brown messages
sucked up from the mud in the great swamp of the
Atchafalaya.

Logs, tires, secrets sweep down to the Mississippi
and snicker by New Orleans with a force
that could roll a locomotive
end over end.

Half way down
where the lawn was squeezed to yard
by the drunken hand of a dead boundary marker,
the neighbor's small summer cabin sits hard by the line
under the wrestler-armed boughs of a live oak.
The porch slants with rot
and color couldn't say its name
anywhere on the clapboard walls.

It is where I will stay
for your fortieth birthday party.
And while the pig is turning on the spit
and the smoke drifts across the sweet olive bushes
to whirl in the slow vortex of the ceiling fan over my bed
and the crawfish are tossed in red pepper cascades
across the newsprint faces of The Daily Iberian
and the Zydeco music makes the strings of lights dance
in the crowd of eyes,
I will take your bribe of a wiggly woman
because I like wiggly women
and because I know
I cannot tell
your secret
even to the bayou.

Clyde Tressler

A Car the Color of the Early Sky

If I had a car the color of the early sky,
I would drive until the sun streaked its sides,
and the blinking towers bent like wheat.
Wind would be everything,
and songs would sing through the radio,
Don't you know! Don't you know!

Framed by the window,
the swan's wings would pump alongside,
and its long neck would stretch with the speed of wheels
that turn against the appearance of direction.

Lines would map my way to straight towns,
arrows of destination to fly through, motor humming,
lights green as far as I could see.

Erin Whitfield

Peaches

Patches of green neon drift
through the dirty window like snow
as Peaches rubs the red welt stripes
left on her wrists by her last customer.

She knows better than to turn a freaky trick,
but her days on the streets are numbered,
old dollar bills shredded between
the fingers of some miserable life.

She is not quite beautiful,
yet there is a sadness that draws men to her:
the way her small hands float soft as goose down
when she sets her price,
how she sucks a cigarette
as if it were a last kiss goodbye,
her lips, a coast the hot smoke sails beyond.

When she sleeps, she dreams
of floating in a warm lake,
her nose, breasts, and kneecaps
the only parts breaching the water's glass.

When a salt tern lands on her belly,
its hard black beak opens and shuts in silence.
Peaches struggles to awaken,
afraid its claws will pluck something tender,
something with which she can no longer part.

In the bargain darkness of her tiny room,
Peaches turns over,
belly down from the watery world
outside her window, and then.
She swims toward the feathering shore.

Erin Whitfield

What We Do After a Night of Whoring

Where Miracle Mile curves into Oracle, surely
this is where one rounds the corner. This is where
sunrise flicks plaster snowflakes
off Frontier Motel
just as you look away.
You want to know
what we do
after a night of whoring?
We go home.

We eat eggs with salsa,
wrapped in soft tortillas.
Shred corners of twenties
between long fingers,
pass a joint Romeo traded
for our night's wages.
We push matted hair from each other's eyes,
pour juice into tall blue glasses.
We get quiet.

I let my sequined skirt slip to the floor
for the last time
until next time.

Settle into that fat chair by the door.
Silky counts the means to her ends as
condoms float from her purse—
breathless rubber clouds.
She stashes tens in a shoebox
and will mail it someday to
her little girl in Texas, Lucinda.

This is when hands grow smaller,
and closing eyes guarantee
we'll only wake again
when the peeling sun is long
on the hood of Romeo's custom Continental.
This room needs a tiny pot
of flawless yellow flowers
in the corner, there.

Lisa Marie Zaran

Concealment

maybe
old boots
are just your way
of saying
so much for pretenses
and mud packed avenues.

this is Arizona after all

we don't get a lot of rain

dust, yes
some wind

both I could live without

but here you are
strutting around in broken
down leather, steely toed
and rudimentary, cracked
and creased as if
you've traveled up and down
a beaten path, loving every inch
of height they bring you.

and there you go
tracking nothing
but a dry wash,
splitting air
with every step,
candidly foaming
at the sole.

Lisa Marie Zaran

Untitled

*When I die I want to come back
as a duck because ducks can fly
faster than cheetahs can run,
my teacher said.*

Okay son, I nod and let you believe.

I let you believe in the flight of your heart.

After my father died,
I had his body cremated.
All that remained was a package
of sand (not dust) the size of a child's shoe box.

I paid cash for him
and buried him in
the back of a coat closet.

*All my friends at school have grandpa's
that can talk, my son moans, closing the door.*

*And when you die, he tells a neighbor, full
of childhood wisdom. You turn into a box!*

Oh God. Come, let me hold you
while I still can. While your heart
still sits in a cage. Already you've
spent some time with flight and
your youth has gotten stained.

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About

Jennifer-Elizabeth Adams is a junior at Houghton College in western New York, where she is studying for a double major in English and Creative Writing.

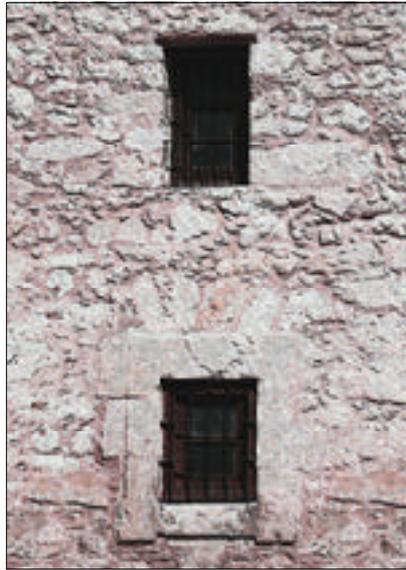
Erin Elizabeth is a Southerner now living among the thick soup of New England accents in Providence, Rhode Island. She edits *Stirring*, a online literary collection, and she is a 16-time winner of the Insomniac Asylum's Poetry Slam.

Sarah Goodwin has been published in *Fuel Magazine*, *Camelia*, and *Poetry Super Highway*. In 1998, she was a featured poet at the New York City Independent Film Festival.

James Lineberger has had work appear recently in *Afternoon*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Bluff Magazine*; *The Centennial Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *New York Quarterly*, and *Prairie Schooner*. He also writes plays and movie scripts.

Brandy Milowsky lives and works in Framingham, Massachusetts. Her first published poem was nominated for a 1999 Pushcart Prize by Gravity Press.

Barbara Spring is a travel-writer as well as a teacher at Grand Valley State University.



Waiting for Santayana © 2000 by Silkie deWinter

Royce Sykes lives in the Central West End of St. Louis, Missouri, where he keeps company with the dozen or so cats who likewise haunt the neighborhood. His poetry has appeared in *Ygdrasil*, *Snakeskin*, and *Liberty Grove*.

Clyde Tressler lives in White Plains, New York, and teaches secondary school. He has published in magazines such as *New England Review*, *Commonweal*, *The Lyric*, *Gulfstream*, and *Salonika*. His heart is in New Iberia, Louisiana.

Erin Whitfield lives in Tucson, Arizona, where she performs her poetry in nightclubs and coffeehouses to the music of Miles Davis, Nine Inch Nails, Beastie Boys, and Angelo Badalamenti. An ex-hooker in Tucson, Phoenix, and Hollywood, California, she now resides peacefully with her two children and is a successful criminal defense litigation support specialist.

Lisa Marie Zaran is a poet and essayist, with numerous pieces published in both online and print literary journals. She is currently working on her first book length collection entitled *The Sometimes Girl*.

2River is a literary site on the Daemen College webserver in Amherst, New York. The address is

<http://www.daemen.edu/~2River>

2River publishes individual volumes by authors, as well as *The 2River View*, a quarterly journal of art, theory, and poetry, which first appears online and afterwards in print. Interested contributors can read the submission guidelines on the 2River site.

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