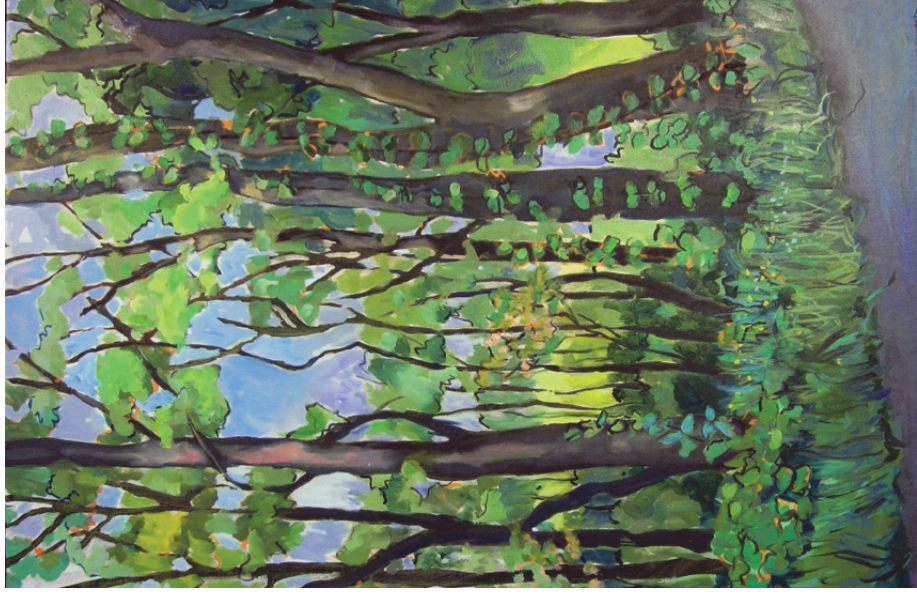


# 2RV

17.3 (Spring 2013)

# The 2River View

17.3 (Spring 2013)



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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 Shiels, Barbara Wuest



*The 2River View*, 17.3 (Spring 2013)

### **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

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# The 2River View

17.3 (Spring 2013)

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*The 2River View, 17.3 (Summer 2013)*

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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.

*The 2River View*, 17.3 (Spring 2013)

## 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

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The Real World

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.

*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.

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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

*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—

*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



*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.

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 the leaves  
numerous are not enough  
lined with white from them  
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

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.

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.

& 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

*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.

*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.

*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.

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  
took 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.

*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?

*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.



## **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.

## **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.