

The 2River View

19.4 (Summer 2015)



new poems by

Fang Bu, Anna E. Childs, Maria Elting, Marcia Hurlow,
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Corey Smith

Quantum Immortality

You will survive me
You will hide my memory
In yours, scenery and family
Vacations. On a sad, lonesome,
Whiskey night, you will, in hushed
Tones, whisper my insecurities
To friends whose warm arms will
Calm you. This and your horizontal
Pillow ebb seclusion until the day,

My Baby Pie, when you join the collective
Cosmos and we meander eternity.
I'll receive you and once the last person we knew
Speaks our names for the last time, we'll
Vaporize along with our era

As we coma together. They'll never know
Of the winter walk we took tonight in the garden
As snow fell among the silent trees

SEE ALSO *Schrodinger's Cat* (1935), *Parallel Universes* (1956), *Quantum Resurrection*
(100 Trillion)

Fang Bu

Fridays

Me and the boys,
we talk dirty and drink
anything in the house
that isn't corked 'cause
the screw's busted
and I'm lazy
and twist-top Merlot
gets the tongue wagging
just as good as top-shelf
scotch I forgot to buy.

These nights we set
my neighbors' ears ablaze
with our coarse smattering:
obscenities, Spanish, Hebrew,
me too sober for Chinese,
too drunk for French,
settling somewhere in between
Chaucer and death metal,
though at least my pipes
are too lubed to sing

Like a loose canary
from a mine shaft:
been through hells the others
don't know, shouldn't care,
and so have they,
but we don't discuss ugly
like a woman's affairs,
fouled laundry no place
for live wire and grease
and a 3-dog night.

Only the waking is hard:
4AM and no you
to calm the liquor-dreams,
catch my filthy mind,
ask me what I meant
in my polyglot ramblings
splattering the toilet bowl,
but stopping to admire
my tight ass. Boy,
I loved being your girl.

Fang Bu

Saturdays

Saturdays are risky.
Saturdays I stumble
out of liquor dreams
wanting my piano
and a dose of poems,
trip over the Raiden-cat
who doesn't know
the word "Father," only
the men in Mommy's
life fleeting as spring
over the East River,
Saturdays I remember

Your hands touching
curve of hip, tangle
of thigh, that smile
after the kiss it took
a week to plan
and my clumsiness

as always a third
party to be gotten
over, after all that,
a salute. The excavation
gone to completion,
you spoke the words.

A genie rose shrieking
from the bedside lamp,
"Not true." I know,
still I gave you
benefit of a doubt:
no doubt you loved
within that moment,
your flesh in mine
unfurling together an eternity,
our love was eternal
for a moment. Trouble is,
Saturdays, I love still.

Anna E. Childs

Phoenix Frozen

The past, that line on the highway,
yellow paint stretching ahead,
fleeting flash in rear-view mirror then gone;

there is a tendency to envision people frozen in time—
that girl with one blue eye, one brown
used to run around with me hot evenings in the neighborhood.

She stays eternally six years old without sons, office, work, house;
we continue to chase each other across back lawns, up hills barefoot,
squealing, dipping hands into old people's bird baths.

Strange how these times bring the past back, making lost found,
and twenty years later the outline of the child's face is still faintly
visible in the Facebook photo as you stare unblinking at the screen.

As I child I learned to let people go, to rely on the mind's eye
for sheen of hair, warmth of sun, glint of blue eye, yet now it is certain:
the first boy I ever loved still breathes beyond the screen.

There are his words after eighteen years: ill temper at his job, food
he had for lunch; the flip of a switch erases all distance between
now and seventeen, that whole road, until there is another window,

and my best friend of sixteen who is dead.

In the years since we parted I have watched us walk together
behind my eyes through cold night mist in the woods above Casper,

the sparks rising to stars from the fire at camp, and I have heard
our laughter in a rooftop pool in El Paso, when growing up began
to balloon as the shining buildings rising out of darkness around us.

I've found myself beside her in cars, walked the halls of high school with her in our youth. Then social networking made her finally gone, dead of heroin at twenty-nine. What to make of frozen time that ticks?

The past once stood there, gray and still, a silent monument in the corner of our eyes; now the loves of a thousand years bubble to the surface, old comrades, forgotten schemes, regrets that never die;

they call and call, ghosts filling all air, infringing on the very corners of leaving, making us forget the very idea of *lost*, becoming phoenixes ever restless in cool red dust.

Lenny DellaRocca

Don't Blink

I sit on the other side of the room, wondering if it'll move. It whispers names. I won't listen to the coo and warble of its make-believe. And while my heart is a little less free when it moves, I adore the mobility of it. I wake to learn it has always been attached to my sleep. All those dreams about flying. All that sudden lifting off the ground. No sense fighting. Eventually the music, if that's what it is, lulls me into making friends with it. I invite it in. It needs me to sustain itself, but I don't know that, not until it's too late. I only know the fairy tale which I repeat to others. I only know the myth. It is everywhere. It knew my name before I was born.

Lenny DellaRocca

Spice

Your old wife sets a plate before you at the evening table, looks, smells, tastes as it always has, but this time look in her eyes, they will not meet yours. An apple slice mellows in the wine, there is a face in it, something in the broth in your spoon that could only have come from a faraway place. Push back the meal. Let birds appear on your lips. Take daylight from your pocket like an old timepiece to tick a way out. Tell the woman to look at you dead in the eyes.

Maria Elting

An Ontology of Violence (Levinas)

in the sharp light of naming and coming to know, something
moves towards the world
advances upon it and there is violence in that, a groan in the
bowels, knash of teeth in the wording but
grace also.

a god-making, a let there be lighting, and this violence,
irreducible to the valves of the heart, pumping the heat of all things,
the finger-slipped, the beating brain, the cracked knuckle crunched
cartilage nose, its grace is good, this god is with you, is in you,
is.

and the something moving, something signaled
snared in the light, red hand revelations, known by the place in the
dark where it ain't
and found in the prayer of your knowing, in the overflow of your given
name,
happening even
as it might become.

Maria Elting

Stems (a revelation of suicide considered)

I should like to keep the flowers fresh by window side
I should like to dry and press them free from the brittle grief of wilting,
you below,
So, do not, just yet, go.
A week, a month, next Fall, fifty Falls from now but
 a plot and stone grow no green that is more becoming
 than the pink Spring of your cheeks this morning, in bed,
 me beside
fifty Falls will come, come rushing, come quick
they will come to you so- do not so quickly run from me, while the
flowers are fresh
and your dear soft skin going rosen and gold,
announcing a summer so lustfully near.

Marcia Hurlow

Death Wish of the Phonetician

Every word kills me.
If there are ghosts
I want to be one
who sits here adrift
in this cushioned
corner of couch
surrounded by back
vowels round as pillows,
who rests to formants
of high front vowels
whistling in time
to tunes of the spheres.
No consonants, please.
Don't obstruct the air.

Marcia Hurlow

The Wife of the Traveling Salesman

When you have left again,
this day reduced to a thin
cinder of sunlight caught
on your back fender, the dark
drops faster and repeats
without gathering leaf,
bird or thought, every word
a slight variation not worth
attention, a wavering drone
in the same starless night.

William Knudsen

Hymn #5

The evening comes, a soft moan in the crook of the neck, shuddering into nighttime's breast.

The air is heavy with the breath of God, a thick fog covering the city like sheets damp with sweat.

Come closer. Like we might know each other biblically. Brimstone, exodus.

What are we made for if not this? The clemency of cracked open, unbuttoned and blushing naïve.

The dance is our first tongue spoken. Your hips are songs I would press my ear to if you'd let me.

If life has taught me one thing, Heaven is a small room with open windows,

headlights through the blinds. God is in the moment we forget our words. Our bodies speak only of mercy.

William Knudsen

Hymn #23

In the fever, I dream her shape out the window.
Cotton dress clinging to her hips. She trembles

unbuttoned and her ribs sing. There are old world
gods in her smile, dances around ancient fires.

I would not trade such fictions for any truth, save
one. A song upon waking, lips brushing against

earlobes and unbuttoned how we might sing.
How those old gods might sing.

George Moore

The Book Market

Along the famous river, readers comb the stalls for some old note of recognition, a bent volume another has left them from some distance of centuries, an ink of mud on papyrus from along the Nile, kept crisp in imaginary pyramids until this stretch of desert time unfolds, or a curl of bark from birch off the northern plains, or off the wall of a church where bombs destroyed any sense of its meaning, thinking, literally dreaming, it would be good to know what none have known before. And so, the delicate scripts are cracked open like an ancient pysanka egg, showing a parallax of histories, falling always forward into the light of day. Today, the pages simply carry codes. The jars split open, their rolls exposed, even absentmindedly burned to warm the hearth, or to cook a meager bit of buffalo or camel. What is the worth of a book? How fitting that apocrypha from true lost believers should once again catch fire. Who can you trust to decide the importance of a fragment of knowledge it took centuries to tell and be untold, that then was packed in jars and buried, or as today, stacked on shelves of small wooden stalls along the city's waterway? When Paris streets are bare again in spring, all this seems purely academic, or imaginary, for pages curl and mold (a bacterial survivor of the unwritten word) and renew their vast campaigns. You pick up one for the feel of its jacket, brittle at the spine, and downplay the skin-deep death. Wisdom gone to seed. How utmost and accidental this one seems, on the periphery of your vision, and that of history's. How much? For this? A new one off the internet would be but half. The words you play for words once played creep out of you like an evil spell. The marketeer drops the price a quarter, a gesture of modernity. Nothing but the good are bartered for in life. Burned, denatured, the sands of some dead cult ground into the skin of your better days. Of those who have touched your edges, drank time, moistening the starred rim of your galaxy, which of them could bury you away for a better future past, for the proposition of a love by pure accident?

George Moore

The Wood

That town's borders had cordoned off my life
at a dangerous edge of things where it began,
and although I sometimes walked a few feet in,
I was never out of range of the street light.

I never knew the truth of *Bloodgoods Pond*
or *Shackamaxon Lake*. A child as taciturn, or numb,
as all human children are, and these were words
and sounds some other creatures made.

In later dreams, avenues remain. The Boulevard
or Main, neighborhood routes through the thick
of cunabula things, talisman against the flux
of future worlds. A miracle the town stayed hidden

from my fears. Woods grew denser then in India,
Iran, in Afghanistan and on the Thai border.
But in each a wood remained, a moment between
here and now, and then, on into the dark again.

Taylor Rickett

Backwoods

I heard her grandmother's low
growl from the other room; Baby, never
let a backwoods white boy from Indiana tell you
he loves you. She defended me
against the woman's tongue, and all
I wanted was to walk downtown
with her, kiss the dark crease her neck makes.
Why wouldn't she go with me? Because
it's a trick and he can chop the Alabama pine
out your fence-straight spine, she rumbled
in her honey full house with
its six-string singing and wood smoke.

Taylor Rickett

Poem in Apology

It might be as simple as this—

I am sorry. I put my hands on the cart
that day not knowing you would look
at me with those eyes and reprimand me
for hanging on as you pushed through K-Mart.
I didn't listen until you grabbed me
by the arm. I didn't hear your deep growl
until my ears were red with embarrassment—
22 and still being scolded. All I can say is

I am sorry, the lock on my tongue
finally picked—I didn't understand my hurt
half as good then, but I know I caused it
with my open mouth and empty ears.

Mary Ellen Shaughan

Dreams

This is the second generation
of teenaged boys she's heard
talk about driving to California
the minute the diploma
is in their hand.

It's as if some DNA
from the gold miners of '49
is in their blood.

I'll be driving out, he says.

John's going with me.

The next one asks

*How much would a taxi cost
here to San Francisco?*

She remembers the energy
she wasted, panicking
over the dangers,
the logistics,
and the child's innocence.

Now when the third one says

I'm outta here,

just 6 more months and

I'm off to California

she doesn't falter while peeling the potato,
just nods her head and says

That sounds great.

This is no time

for either logic or panic.

Where would we be without our dreams?

Maybe peeling potatoes.

Mary Ellen Shaughan

Redemption

My family gathers around the white-lined table
this day in late November, gathered
to give thanks for the good in our lives.
I sense that some feel grudging
rather than grateful to be here,
coming to see me and not each other,
having grown distant over the years,
what with perceived slights,
different struggles, and divided politics,
both familial and national.
For awhile, we sample and taste in near silence.
Then intermittent, civil,
almost formal conversations begin,
testing the waters,
until one daughter pulls a memory
from her long-ignored trove
and at the telling, her sister's veneer crumbles
and soon the two cave in on themselves,
helpless with laughter at the memory,
tears of mirth running off their cheeks
and into their gravy,
leaving the rest of us mystified,
but also smiling and somehow relieved,
redeemed, as always, by laughter.

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About

Fang Bu is the author of *Spring Cleaning*. She currently lives and works in New York City.

Anna E. Childs lives in East Tennessee, where she writes poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction; teaches college English; and raises three children.

Lenny DellaRocca has recent work in *Every Day Poems*, *Fairy Tale Review*, and *Miami Rail*; and forthcoming in two anthologies: *Twice Upon a Time* and *Objects in the Rear View Mirror* from Kind of Hurricane Press. *Sleep Talker* is forthcoming from NightBallet Press.

Maria Elting is originally from Oahu, Hawaii. She currently lives in Istanbul, Turkey, where she is completing a BA in Art History and Philosophy. This is the first publication of her work.

Marcia Hurlow teaches creative writing, journalism and linguistics at Asbury University. Her most recent chapbook, *Green Man in Suburbia*,



won the Backwards City Review Press contest; and her first full-length collection, *Anomie*, won the Edges Prize from WordTech.

William Knudsen is a writer and musician from Fort Collins, Colorado. His poetry has been published in *The Legendary*, *Sparrow Ghost Collective Anthology*, and *Streetlight Magazine*.

George Moore, after a career at University of Colorado, lives in Nova Scotia. He is the author of *Children's Drawings of the Universe* (Salmon Poetry 2015) and *The Hermits of Dingle* (FutureCycle 2013). Poems have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Colorado Review*, *North American Review*, and *Poetry*.

Taylor Rickett received his MFA in poetry from Drew University and has placed work with *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *Cleaver Magazine*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and *Xanadu Poetry Review*. He lives in Bloomington, Indiana, where he spends time fishing, teaching, and writing.

Mary Ellen Shaughan is a native Iowan who now calls Western Massachusetts home. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals and magazines.

Corey Smith holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Wichita State University where he taught English for four years. He currently teaches high school English in the same city. He has previously published short stories in small press magazines.

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About the Photographs

The three photographs of sand dunes at Silver Lake, along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, were taken by Richard Long while he was riding his bicycle self-supported around the Great Lake. Long blogs about his solo summer bike tours at richardtreks.blogspot.com.

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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