

The 2River View

11.2 (Winter 2007)



An Innocent Death © 2007 by Megan Karlen

New Poems by Traci Brimhall, Jeff Calhoun, William Jay
Michaela Kahn, Ellen Kombiyil, Marie-Elizabeth Mali
Anne Deyer Stuart, JeFF Stumpo, Sally Van Doren, Peter Waldor

The **2R**iver **V**iew

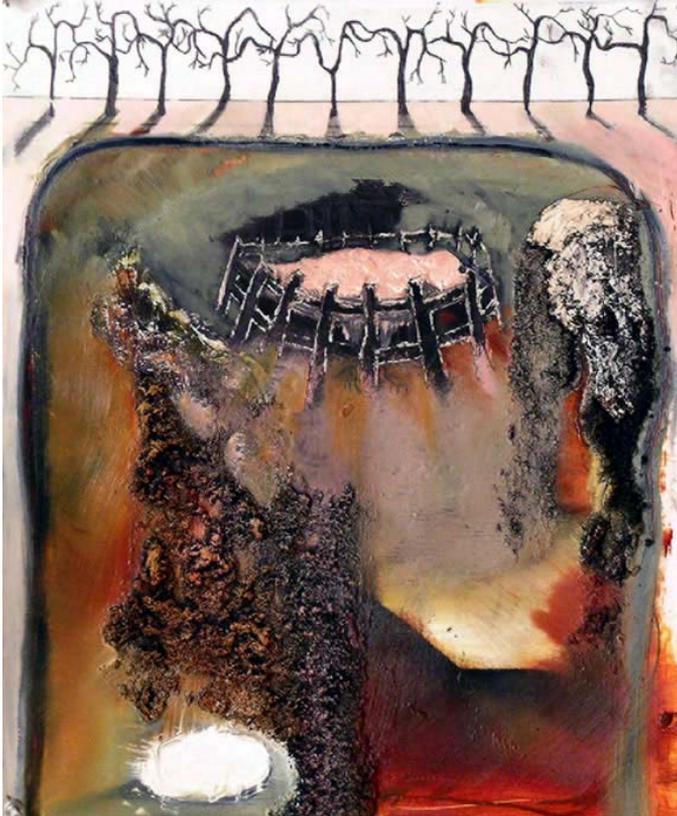
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New Poems by

Peter Waldor
And As For Music
Cart at Night
Dancer

Traci Brimhall
Marney
Missing



Disassociation © 2007 by Megan Karlén

Jeff Calhoun

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Sandman stumbles upon a crime scene

William Jay

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[envy is a nude door]
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While You're Gone

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Peter Waldor

And As For Music

Sad for people
to be shaped
like trees
and to have
no leaves,
so they are not
briefly beautiful
after death.
A boy points
at leaves falling
faster than feathers
slower than coins.
Though he will never
be red or yellow,
he laughs.
And as for music,
the rosin has cracked
off the crickets' bows.
The boy hears
each instrument.

Peter Waldor

Cart At Night

A troupe of dancers,
between casinos,
yawn and joke
on their cart.
Between shows.
They recall
an old master's
Gleaners Returning
From the Fields.
They laugh,
the great law
of dance,
which is we,
my friends,
are young
and beautiful
forever,
and you are
all passing
away.

Peter Waldor

Dancer

I could never restrain myself
enough to be a dancer,
never let my fingers
snow on the back.
I could never adore the master.
When a partner was covered
with sores I vomited.
When I have nothing to do
I do nothing.

Traci Brimhall

Marney

A year had passed, the surface
of the lake smooth, the wreckage
removed. The ripples stopped
reminding us of her until
lunch one day, when my grandma spoke
her name in passing, as though
she still lived, as if we hadn't moved
the chairs around the table to hide
the empty space where she belonged,
dividing up our share of loss
into many smaller spaces.

We kept our heads down,
chased the green grapes around our plates
with our forks and acted like her name
didn't still make our blood leap,
didn't make our hearts wait
to discover if her voice would fill
that violent pause.
All we could give our cousin
was our silence, let the memory fade
with the soft vowels of her name
and keep eating, pretending
his dead sister had not entered the room
and left again.

Traci Brimhall

Missing

I put on your shirt
and rubbed my nose
on your collar
to remember the smell
of your chest on mine.

I fit a finger on each
button, finding them
stiff and unfamiliar
without the usual
press of desire.

You're still fresh here,
my sheets still reeking,
where only last night
we lay like two commas,
curled around each other.

And only this morning
I pulled your tongue
into my mouth
so our bodies could talk,
but there was silence.

Jeffrey Calhoun

Sandman finds sanctuary

He did not know how the brawl began.
He had sat at the bar to drink alone
when the fists piled on him
like the deep snow drifts that dot Detroit.
He was no weakling: he plowed
through drunk bodies like a bulldozer.
The asphalt of the street was still warm
and as he wandered, he remembered:
someone with charisma that spread
like a wildfire in Albuquerque
had rallied the patrons against him.
Behind him, headlights were approaching
and familiar forlorn screams grew in volume.
Just then he learned to appreciate the squid,
how it manufactured ink to avoid becoming lunch.

Jeffrey Calhoun

Sandman stumbles upon a crime scene

There is a boy in a black bag.
A cop dad loses composure;
the captain barks, doesn't realize
he is berating the father. Yellow tape
is strewn everywhere like it's a party.
A drunk man tries to snort the chalk outline.
A rookie paramedic vomits. Some water pools
on Sandman's face; he has never cried before,
but the sympathetic glance of a woman
tells him he needs to do this more often.

William Jay

Nuit Blanche

The portrait of a man in electric blue,
a torso actually,

hangs there on the wall.
And further down

the depiction of an electric chair
done in pink, red, and violet pastels.

Oh how the shadows cry.
The voices of the dead.

And turning now we realize too late
that we have passed through

an opened door
into a forgotten room

where no one ever sleeps
and no one ever leaves.

William Jay

There Are No Heroes Here

for Cindy Sheehan

We are going nowhere now
in a house that has no doors or windows.

It is just a place to sleep.
There are no heroes here only mothers

and fathers calling out to children
who will never come home again.

But why try to speak of this?
It is like throwing ashes into the wind.

We are going nowhere now
in a house that has no doors or windows.

Michaela Kahn

Below

The sailors outnumber salt,
their webbed feet sift the gold
sand from the shells.

No time. Shelley rides the
current in his jellyfish form,
the chains he held became the
phosphor tentacles that spell
out names in the darkness:
*Angel-fire, Manacle, Anarchy,
Mistral.*

Why come here? Only poets,
bones, the quiet of starfish,
the silver flash of schooling
herring, turning away.

The hands you wore will not
save you from cold. You will
have to kick. To return.
Or learn to breathe underwater.

Michaela Kahn

The city forgets

How does a city forget itself:
a stone that paved the Spanish conquest,
latrine near the well, bent nail.

Which teeth punctured apple, what
stash of seeds. Whose ruin
beneath the parking lot:
squirrel, human, a sound
that makes itself from
pieces.

Each stone is itself
a story of blue and the ripping
winds, each stone knows
the weight of stone and stone
the dizzy heights of smoke
above a dry land.

Braided fiber, drilled bone,
plastic lighter, silver coin:
tool and echo.

Every time you leave it
the city cries out,
circles back on itself
scenting out the piece left.

Ellen Kombiyil

Georgia

For months, I painted blue.
I painted until I was drunk with blue,

until lines grew thick, like innuendoes—
not skulls, but the shadows of skulls

in desert's harsh light. I was painting
in the place of making and unmaking—

everything spilled open—tugging loose,
breaking the dry river stones until

their geode hearts bled. I heard the jay cry
thief, thief, marking the air.

In the silence after, I could almost trace
the sound back to the beginning,

to blue lines liquid with light, I named
Canyon. Sediment. Layers of Rock.

Ellen Kombiyil

The Matador's Daughter

won't eat meat
says red is a sound

not a color
that blossoms into fruit

Flowers follow
when she runs

headlong through the streets
apples open

when she peels them
with her fingers

Marie-Elizabeth Mali

Like a Book

I held the metal box
of my father's ashes
before he was buried
in the columbarium.
If buried is what you call
being shelved like a book
in a marble tower
on Madison Avenue.

Marie-Elizabeth Mali

Walking in Winter

Walking in winter, breath
stinging, I pass

a small waterfall
emerging from under

the frozen lake-top,
flowing beneath the road

to cascade downhill
on the other side.

Icicles hang from rocks,
weeping, gleaming

in afternoon's fading light.
For all my love of winter trees

stripped to reveal gritty twisting,
I hate the cold, the stiffness,

the way my eyes run
when exposed to wind.

If only authenticity didn't require
so much dying.

Anne Dyer Stuart

[envy is a nude door]

envy is a nude door that blends
into walls when it opens
chips scrapes knocks paint in a way only I
would notice
the wife that cleans once in a while
more so for company and then
with vigor
dust mitts, disposal toilet pads, ten-minute leave-on spray

last night's dinner party
at a childhood friend's
I knew her skinny, freckled, stealing change from her dad's nightstand
so we could kneel in the aisles of the 7-11 and penny our way to snacks
yet last night's shrimp casserole made me afraid
of calories of the girl I left behind
I was never that girl
never my skinny friend
mama always in my head counting
Snickers 280, M&Ms 270

upstairs her red-headed baby sleeps while
she and her husband talk enthralled
about his first crawl
first pull-up on tiptoe
and her mother warning
lower the crib

her mother was like mine
Jane Fonda in the tape deck, butt lifts by the outdoor pool
except her daughter is skinny in spite of it
I am a dough girl if I don't watch it
childhood was never free why did I think so
we trick ourselves about those times
we were never different than we are

Anne Dyer Stuart

October

Across the lawn you drag your flip-flops like a boy and I stare
what is it like to be so lovely in your bones
and if you do know why do you not tell
but sit with your feet separated by rubber, bars held
between your toes
I think you let me know you only as a man
when sometimes all I can see is the boy
the greater boy
wanting to show me how to live among leaf piles when October
still feels like June
jumping, diving
I must be alive too if I'm behind this window
watching like a woman would
not living like a man

JeFF Stumpo

Quantum Canine

For Stubby, who observed

Chasing ducks, our dog Apple
Falls into a lake & floats. I start
To think about Newton & gravity
& a grand metaphorical scheme
To bind in verse. But the play
Of light on water is too complex
For these Saturday afternoon
Philosophies, the quacking
Too insistent for any math, physics
Newtonian or otherwise simply lacking
Compared to canine appreciation of
The moment. This is levity,
The opposite of gravity, though both are
Beyond time. That may not be
Entirely true, but I have a dog
To fish from a lake, &
Relative to that, who cares?

JeFF Stumpo

While you're gone

For Kate

The house is too big.
The bed is too

small. The space
where you sleep

won't breathe. I
float through

the rooms, remember
suddenly something

of you, then lose it.
I watch

the fish turn over
and over its solitary

thought, unaware,
unable to decide

if this is a miracle
or just waiting—

our breathing
without air.

Sally Van Doren

Bagged

Zippers and nylon seal me in.
Ice droplets form
from our conjugal breath.
Pine needles and fir twigs
settle into the corners.
I have slid in the night
away from a rock toward
the pack at my side. I have
cinched the sleepsack
and drawn the cobra's
hood into a cocoon over
my head. Only our tongues
confront the freezing air.
It is late August and we tent
in the Grand Tetons. One last
tightening of the drawstring.

Sally Van Doren

Girlhood

Alone in the basement
hiding naked behind
the washing machine,
I spied on my father
looking for his ironed
shirt, watched two
repairmen work on the
furnace and heard
another flush out the
drains.

 Girl, soundless,
pinned between the hot-
water hook-up and the
ac adaptor on an ever-
lasting winter morning.

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Contributors

Traci Brimhall attends Sarah Lawrence College, where she is earning an MFA in Poetry. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Blood Orange Review*, *Kaleidowhirl*, *Poetry Midwest*, *Relief Journal*, *Slipstream*, *Tattoo Highway*, and *Wicked Alice*.

Jeff Calhoun is an upperclassmen at the University of Dayton. After graduating, he plans to pursue a graduate degree in cellular biology. His writing credits include *decomp*, *Lily*, *Loch Raven Review*, *Poems Niederngasse*, *SOFTBLOW*, and *Tilt*.



Separation © 2007 by Megan Karlen

William Jay recently returned to the United States after spending nearly four years in Paris, France. He is now working on a book of poetry tentatively called *The Man On The Blue Horse*.

Michaela Kahn, in addition to receiving the appropriate degrees, has worked as a barrista, teacher, secretary, and potato planter. Her poetry has appeared in *Big Bridge*, *Lilliput Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Red Rock Review*, and *Santa Fe Poetry Broadside*.

Ellen Kombiyil is originally from Syracuse, New York. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Cezanne's Carrot*, *Eclectica*, *The Hiss Quarterly*, and *The Pedestal*. She currently lives in India with her husband and two children.

Marie-Elizabeth Mali left her acupuncture practice three and a half years ago to write and perform poetry. She lives in New York City and studies with Mary Stewart Hammond. Her work is forthcoming in *Hobble Creek Review*.

Anne Dyer Stuart received an MFA from Columbia University and a Ph. D. from the University of Southern Mississippi, where she is an instructor of writing and literature. She is also writer-in-residence at The Columbia Training School, Mississippi's prison for girls, where she teaches creative writing.

JeFF Stumpo is co-founder and co-editor of *Big Tex[t]*; founder and host of Javashock, the Brazos Valley's poetry slam; and author of the chapbook *El Oceano y La Serpiente / The Ocean and the Serpent*.

Sally Van Doren teaches for Springboard to Learning in the St. Louis Public Schools and curates the Sunday Workshop Series for the St. Louis Poetry Center. Her work has appeared recently in *Margie*, *Parthenon West Review*, and *Poetry Daily*; and is forthcoming in *Boulevard*, *Ellipsis*, and *Snow Monkey*.

Peter Waldor lives in New Jersey where he works in the insurance business. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *American Poetry Review*, *Iowa Review*, *Margie*, *Mudlark*, *Sugar Mule*, and *West Branch*. His first book is due out in November 2007 from Alice James Books.

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About the Artist

Megan Karlen has made New York City her home since 1989. Although she came to the city to work in publishing she soon turned to art and studied independently with a number of the city's professional artists. She has been in numerous group shows along the east coast in addition to solo shows in New York and New Jersey.

About 2River

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry, art, and theory, quarterly publishing *The 2River View*, occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series, and, more recently, podcasting from MuddyBank. Publications first appear online and afterwards in print. Interested contributors can read the guidelines at www.2River.org/office/submit.html.

Richard Long
www.2River.org

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