

The 2River View

13.3 (Spring 2009)



Astral Timepiece © 2009 by Mitko Zhelezarov

New Poems by Richard Freed, Libby R. Friedberg
Jeff Friedman, Peter Joseph Gloviczki, Stephanie Lynn Keil
John McKernan, Richard Krawiec, Blake Lynch, Paul Piatkowski
Rob Talbert, Brian Trimboli, Florencia Varela

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Peter Joseph Gloviczki

A Brief Series of Accidents

Snow off the branch & my wet coat.
Gravel on my lips, skinned sleeves,
the first spring day of the year & how
the hospital bed felt.
What I asked for when I saw you &
how all the water ran down my chin.

Richard Freed

Departure

having been around this lake
before the seasons changed
and the chill set in
you know the eaten are just below
and you must be cautious and have his silence
you must not say the moon will be a mercury dime
so your ripples might cancel his own
and no argument come between you
or note the late-season terns circling far above
or the dark gathering on the water
or gesture ahead where months ago
the trees gave way to meadow
just have the the trail's end
where night no longer embraces

Richard Freed

Home

when you walked home
the yellow-lacquered shops
seemed some other's country

where old men scuttle their
cardboard shacks and disappear
and children weep in the alley

searching your eyes for theirs
but it is surely yours now isn't it
in every doleful threshold

Adam's renaming the animals
utterance mangled by silence

Libby R. Friedberg

Archeology

Truth,
you smiling bastard,
you supercilious know-it-all.
you watch me squirm and sweat
and play my educated games.
my scrupulous digs
among the shards and fossils of my life,
my endless treasure hunt for clues,
my careful fingers brushing sand
across the screening,
even as I try to hold the frame
and see it loosening,
missing a stud,
coming apart.

Libby R. Friedberg

New Year's Day — 1991

Unsummoned
a follicle of memory
invades the armor
of my aging bones
with a careless dance
fluid as sparkling
water over rocks.
That was me, it says.
Once I could move like that
arms and head on swivels
legs springy as saplings.
That was me.

Jeff Friedman

Luna Moth

I thought it was a bat, looking for trouble,
but it was only a luna moth, clutching the screen.
When it settled on my pillow, closing its wings,

I left the room and waited for it to fly out
but it remained in the cavity of my pillow
until I slipped a piece of cardboard

under the speckled body.
Then in anger it flew wildly through the rooms of our house,
a blessing gone awry, and before I could swat it

it vanished into some crack or
hidden place. Then I lay down again
and waited for you to open your eyes

but you gripped the sheets and held fast to sleep,
and the luna moth scudded through our bedroom, reading
my horoscope on the dust of the blinds.

Jeff Friedman

The Survivors

They come back with wool sweaters
and coats smelling of straw and shit

smoking their old cigars
ashes flaking from chin and cheeks.

They come back with glistening shells
pain in their joints — rooms of water.

Salt glittering on their lips
they walk on rock

where fish gasp and choke
and stars cluster in sand.

Sun rains into the abyss.
They come back with ruined hands and backs

hurling coins across oceans
building bridges with knots and fists

digging up cities of corpses
rotting under the rainbow

as doves fly out of their pockets
scavenging the carnage.

Stephanie Lynn Kiel

Funeral for April and May

Oh spring — this is not a question,
you have not crucified anyone,
but how are the skeletons to understand
death's time instructions?

I hear the petals singing,
music for the ordinary,
flowers believing they are accomplished,
even at a funeral for two.

How can I be ordinary?
A woman can't be lonely,
emptiness can wait.

Oh rush in Silence,
I am tired of beautiful.
November is far — something discouraging.

Rob Talbert

you jumped

for Erica Smith

I read comic books as a kid because I wanted to fly more than anything. Stay high above the molten rivers of night traffic and learn whether living without ground means I'll never again take touch for granted. Of course, there's always the chance of falling — a fear that's kept me off diving boards my whole life and bungee cords with bridges attached to them. Erica went skydiving before Erica went drinking. This was long after the rush-hour of high school classes had carried her face out the door and into the city of our twenties. A face I still recognized on the front page of the newspaper. Maybe I was in love with her, the only woman I was sure had fallen to earth smiling and screaming, who stepped out of the safety metal can give us and opened her arms across the vast green tiled floor planes look down upon. The loud roar of progress in her ears. Touch now a language only wind can speak. Maybe the man driving the other car that night was a pilot, wishing for more directions, wishing for wings the way I did in the obscurity of youth, wrapped in the walls of my bedroom and crouched over superheroes. Cities can give you everything. A bed made of street so reassuringly solid, and all the sky you can take in, before someone picks you up and it falls out of you.

Richard Krawiec

cut branches

for two weeks
they've lain piled
in the growing scuffle
of my side lawn
a loose groping
of plum branches
leaves withered
to a thick sensuous orange
like the wrinkled bodies
of dried tomatoes

this is just illusion
there will be no harvest
only the slow death of neglect

two dozen new shoots
thin purple stalks balanced
with stair-stepped leaves
sprout around the pile
of severed limbs
a fence as erratic and permeable
as the Mexican border
as love
that desperate immigrant
seeking something better
something new

it may be true
that one death feeds
a new life but nobody can say
why branches must be cut
where something else will grow
when debris will be removed

Richard Krawiec

silence, stillness

even the hum
of the air conditioner
doesn't break
the illusion
of silence inside

the rapid declining chirps
like paper torn and scattered
fails to alter
the stillness outside

beyond the loud clack
of a pen against teeth
the swaying oak bursting
with clumps of acorns

silence, stillness

who are the leaves
waving at in such desperate joy?
what does the screen
enforce and protect?

Blake Lynch

Key West

I brought back stones from my night walks.
In the morning, Roseanna, who cleaned for us,
tucked them inside my suitcase whispering
Americano Perezoso.

Oh Roseanna Marquez, I spot her one night
sitting at a bar outside of Whitehead Street.
Dark as a tiki doll made of stone and mud.

I want to tell her that we have talked. We haven't.
I think the Atlantic Ocean at her door gave her shivers.

Her burnt bare feet clacked like quarters against the stool.
as she stood on phone books to reach the mirror.
She stuffed her bra full of socks and handkerchiefs
until her breasts become hills of blackberries.

So when the bartender says, beauty is tossing
its head everywhere tonight, I think of Roseanna
drinking Disguises 101 and waiting to walk
on these sunny streets dripping with flowers.

Blake Lynch

Three Birds

All evening, the black girls keep busy
with the fake hair laid out on the table like the remains of zebra
while I watch Elizabeth dance.

“Do you love her more than the moon? The rain?”
The girls ask as they wash and wrap.

I find the scar on the tall one’s shoulder
from the time she tried to fly from a moving car

as she braids the hair of the young mother
who makes a baby from bedsheets the night
the nurses take her to roost on the roof.

Besides them, an old blind woman cracks
nuts with her knuckles and waits for me
to read to her from an airline magazine.

This is how we spend our days in Western.
Waiting to fly, traveling shoes tied, counting
the number of birds that fly into the window.

John McKernan

The Melonoma Looked Red-Orange

On your body
Not a high-noon sunburn

Lying
In its pool
Of blue blood

The doctor dove right in
With his “switch blade” & “six shooter”
I like a good street fight
Those were his actual words

Toward evening the landscape began
To breathe again as we watched
That blind nag ride out of town
Past your death in the drainage ditch
Wearing a fresh carpet of black & blue feathers

John McKernan

Missing Photograph Is Found

My father has just walked up the stairs
to the front porch

My mother has her left arm around his waist

My father has lifted a huge bag of tools
from the trunk of the old Plymouth

My mother has just reached out to touch his
right arm

It is in black & white The colors would
have been blues & tans & yellows

My father is standing right next to my mother
A new swing set in the background

My mother must be holding his hand behind
her back Pressing it to her spine

My father begins to climb the first steps
to the house on Cass Street

My mother is wearing an apron over
a sun dress & her hand seems covered with
flour or powdered sugar as she reaches
out to touch his shoulder

Several family album photos are black

I have always seen those black photographs
as our parents tight in love safely out
of the range of any ear at midnight

Paul Piatkowski

The Full Lynching

My cow is not pretty, but it is pretty to me. David Lynch

An ant infestation
eating out his meat filled head,
and an ear dropped ever so
carelessly in a field —
this opens up a brand new world
etched beneath that plastic surface.

Who killed Laura Palmer?
The myth of the picturesque
family life is really such a ruse,
and for it to be severed discreetly
from the underbelly throbbing
under the father's scrutiny,

requires the killing of his daughter,
and so the mastermind creates
this supposed supernatural world
refracting a glimmer of raw brutality
coming from this reality.
It is to be left unmolested:

The stark blue of velvet spitting from his mouth
with her thighs opened towards him; a temptress
archetypal as everyman's story. He hits her,
but what else exists when man's frustration
with women — with illusion — with deceit —
leads down a lost highway

past sand worms and prophets, past midgets dancing
in another world, past heads making erasers, past
Dr. Treves and John Merrick — the elephant man,
and through years of avoiding the straight story;
the mastermind is still only a normal man: steel gray hair,
a happy little family — placed between two worlds:
Fire walk with me.

Paul Piatkowski

Stomach Pains

The sweat beads running steadily
into the slits of my eyes and salting
the line of my lips.

Billy my neighbor offers me
a cup of water. The head I have nods
heavy, and alien, as the

breaths coming out squeeze my lungs
like the indrawn wheeze
of an accordion.

He chuckles
and points at the glass perspiring
over my hand, now all empty.

You swallowed
a tadpole, he confides holding his sides.
I have felt it growing these weeks

and during the day
he avoids atrophy by jumping around
and he gives me diarrhea

while at night
he croaks so loudly that my parents
just the other day told me

that they think I must have
some kind of snoring problem,
but I could not make them understand

the creature that I have growing
so deep inside the pockets of my body,
so deep that it has now become me.

Brian Trimboli

Four Eligies for Florencia

The christmas tree as an orphaned animal.
It remains for much longer than a year,
and it's burned rather than moved.

The clouds never did go away, either.
Every few years their sound grew
like some precious jewel from my chest;

amethyst, topaz, sapphire ribs,
a cage of luminescence.

I imagine it looked like I was carved from the sun.

*

Nothing is ever buried for the last time.
As I have come to understand, this universe recycles.

I have read that matter is not created
or destroyed. It sits along the outer edge
of a cold and dusty galaxy

waiting for the incredible luck of being.

I believe it was knowledge that skips a generation.

My father's father worked on the moon landing
and almost played professional ball

or so I'm told. He is a good man, regardless
and I try to have dinner with him every few
months. But yes, I am sure of it now,
it is knowledge.

Brian Trimboli

Do you remember how we met?
If I remember correctly,
we were two parallel lines.
Oh? We still are? Very well.

*

And you are worried they will find us
the same as our fathers; it is now

I am filled with dahlias. The earth, Florencia,
becomes beautiful with those whom we bury.

*

I followed the rattle to an island
where all the world's wind met.
It was winter there also.

Too cold to swim back, I sewed
a parachute from the deciduous branches
of a powder frosted forest.

The blocks of frozen land
like ice cubes in a glass of water.
Unfortunately, the wind always

dropped me off in the same spot.
The edges of the beach then seeming
to stretch past the horizon.

I was the last of our kind to realize
I had always been hungry.

Forever approaching,
but never arriving.

Florencia Varela

Four Elegies for Brian

Somewhere in New York, it is not clouded.
Spring has probably arrived in Monticello,
or Long Island.

My last Christmas tree is still in the backyard,
covered by last night's snow.
What happens if the tree remains
the rest of the year?

Would its branches vitrify,
splinter against the grass-blades,
or would they press into the earth,
past the loose clumps, into darker

soil and reach wooden fingers
towards others' roots?
Everything grew quiet. Everything grew loud.
Can you imagine how we have changed
in the eyes of other animals?

*

You count beautiful women on the street, calculate
the slopes of their backs,
the angles in their faces.

It seems like everything reverts to numbers these days,
or that we chose the wrong careers.

I now consider my apartment
three rectangles, two smaller squares
and a circle of flotsam
from which all socks and books and pens never return.

How many times will we undress another
for the first time, or bury someone for the last?
Everything becomes a question these days.

Was it knowledge or eye color
that skips a generation?

I thank the frivolity of our math
which allows us to personify
that supplementary angle or an alternate interior.

*

And if we never marry.
Woods bent on finch & throe,
a foothold taxed by its own artlessness.
Outlines etched onto strata,
years from now scientists will unearth us,
fossil and sorrow done, and upon
examination, will they not find us
the same as our fathers, Fisher King lithographs
unmoved and rueful,
sorry for their small violences.
We are full of gestures we don't mean
and of dahlias, and dahlias.

*

Somewhere in Brooklyn, winter won't end.
How terrible to survive it!
The season had us in mind
when it decided to stop separating
reds from reds, sewed each afternoon into a dim pulse.

After New York will the afternoons still glow amber;
and after winter, what clementines?
The dark has already taken our empties,
nothing left for it to collect

but some lingering hunger.
I went to a beach, the closest
edge I could find.

The sand clung to my skin as if it knew
of the rattle within us —
Go downwind, and farther.

Contributors

Richard Freed works in Iowa State University's program in Rhetoric and Professional Communication. Since 2001 he's been writing poetry now and then and has published in *The Adirondack Review*, *The Melic Review*, *Octavo*, *Blood Lotus*, and here in *2RV*.

Libby R. Friedberg (1920-2006) grew up in the Bronx and, in 1940, graduated from Hunter College (CUNY) with a BA in English Literature. In her mid-life and later years, Friedberg discovered and "allowed" her poetic voice, but never published beyond her Bergen County Ethical Culture Society newsletter. The poems here represent her first exposure to a wider audience.



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Jeff Friedman is a core faculty member in the MFA program in Poetry Writing at New England College. His fourth collection of poetry is *Black Threads* (Carnegie Mellon UP 2007). His poems and translations have appeared in journals such as *American Poetry Review*, *Margie*, *The New Republic*, and *Poetry*.

Peter Joseph Glocviczki lives in Minnesota. His poems appear in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Margie*, *Modern Haiku*, *New Orleans Review*, *32 Poems*, and elsewhere.

Stephanie Lynn Keil lives in Summerville, South Carolina.

Richard Krawiec has published two novels, a story collection, four plays, and a chapbook. His poetry appears in *Blue Moon Review*, *many mountains moving*, *Shenandoah*, *sou'wester*, *Witness*, and elsewhere.

Blake Lynch has poems in journals such as *Chelsea*, *The Fairfield Review*, *King Log*, and *The Oak Bend Review*. His plays have been performed at The Institute of Contemporary Arts in London and at Tisch School of the Arts in New York City.

John McKernan is a retired Comma Rancher. He lives in West Virginia where he edits ABZ Press. His most recent book is *Resurrection of the Dust*.

Paul Piatkowski lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and teaches in Welcome. He has had poetry published in *US 1 Worksheets*.

Rob Talbert is a former corrections officer, now living in Virginia. His poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Ninth Letter*, *the Portland Review*, *Southern Poetry Review*, and others.

Brian Trimboli is taking his MFA at New York University. He has poems published and forthcoming in *Natural Bridge*, *Puerto del Sol*, *RATTLE*, and *The Pebble Lake Review*.

Florencia Varela is completing her MFA in creative writing at Columbia University. Her work has previously appeared, or is forthcoming, in journals such as *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *Drunken Boat*, and *Paterson Literary Review*.

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About 2River

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry and art, quarterly publishing *The 2River View*, occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series, and, more recently, blogging and podcasting from Muddy Bank. Please visit www.2River.org to read the submission guidelines.

About the Artist

Mitko Zhelezarov is a 1988 graduate of Colleges Pedagogic of Fine Art, Bulgaria. He lives and works in Plovdiv.

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