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
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.
Contents

Peter Joseph Gloviczki
A Brief Series of Accidents

Richard Freed
Departure
Home

Libby R. Friedberg
Archeology
New Year’s Day—1991

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.


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.
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.

Jeff Friedman
Luna Moth
The Survivors

Stephanie Lynn Keil
Funeral for April and May

John McKernan
The Melonoma Is Red-Orange
Missing Photograph Is Found

Rob Talbert
you jumped

Richard Krawiec
cut branches
silence, stillness

Blake Lynch
Key West
Three Birds

Paul Piatkowski
The Full Lynching
Stomach Pains

Brian Trimboli
Four Eligies with Florencia

Florencia Varela
Four Eligies with Brian
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.*
**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.

**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 trail’s end
where night no longer embraces

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 dahlia. 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.
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.

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
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.

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.
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.

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.

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
**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

---

**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.
**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.

---

**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  
uts 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.
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.

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.
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

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

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

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

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?