# 2RV

13.4 (Summer 2009)

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# The 2River View

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new poems by
Walter Bargen, E. Louise Beach, Jaime Brunton
Alison Cimino, Lori Coale, Renee Emerson
Catharina Evans, Christien Gholson
Peter Joseph Gloviczki, Tawnysha Greene, Carolyn Foster Segal

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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, podcasting from Muddy Bank, the 2River blog.

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**Alison Cimino** is an adjunct professor of poetry and compostion in the Boston area. Her poems have appeared in *Borderlands Texas Poetry Review, Ibbetson Street Press,* and *The Cambridge Codex Project,* a visual art installation to promote literacy.

**Lori Coale** lives in Tucson, Arizona. She has previously been published in Drexel Online Journal and Spinning S Literary Magazine. She divides her time between her family and Vicious Circle Poetry Workshop.

Renee Emerson recently completed her MFA from Boston University. Her work has appeared in *The Blue Earth Review, Reed Magazine, The Santa Clara Review, Tar River Poetry,* and various others. She lives in Louisville with her husband.

**Catharina Evans** lives on a New Jersey sheep farm and is a graduate student of English literature and creative writing. She teaches writing in Queens, New York, but is feeling the pull to leave for the west. She plans to begin her PhD in 2010.

Christien Gholson is the author of *On the Side of the Crow* (Hanging Loose Press 2006) and the chapbook *The Sixth Sense* (Modest Proposal Chapbook Series of Lilliput Review 2006). His work has appeared in AQR, Big Bridge, Cimarron Review, Ecotone, Mudlark, Santa *Fe Poetry Broadside, Santa Fe Literary Review*, and *Sentence*, among others.

**Peter Joseph Gloviczki** lives in Minnesota. His poems have appeared in *The 2River View, 32 Poems, The Christian Science Monitor, Margie, The New Orleans Review,* and elsewhere.

**Tawnysha Greene** is a PhD student at the University of Tennessee — Knoxville.

Carolyn Foster Segal teaches at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. She writes humorous essays for education publications; her most recent scholarly work focuses on trauma narratives. This is her second appearance in 2River.

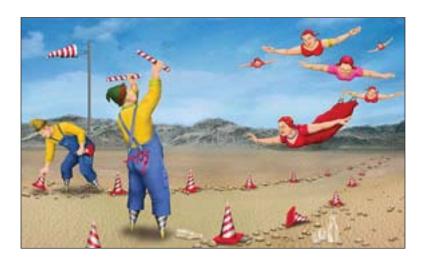
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## **Contributors**

Walter Bargen has published twelve books of poetry and two chapbooks, including *The Feast* (BkMk Press-UMKC, 2004), winner of the 2005 William Rockhill Nelson Award; *Remedies for Vertigo* (WordTech Communications, 2006); *West of West* (Timberline Press, 2007); and *Theban Traffic* (WordTech Communications, 2008). In 2009, BkMk Press-UMKC will publish *Days Like This Are Necessary: New & Selected Poems*. His poems have recently appeared in *New Letters, Poetry East*, and *The Seattle Review*. Bargen is the first poet laureate (2008-2009) of Missouri. (www.walterbargen.com)

**E. Louise Beach,** in collaboration with the composer Bryan Page, is the author of *The White Princess*. Based on Rilke's play of the same name, the 22 poem song-cycle will be performed in Los Angeles in 2010. Beach is also a translator and literary critic.

**Jaime Brunton** was a Walt Whitman Award finalist in 2009 and a Ruth Lilly Fellowship finalist in 2008. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *CutBank, Hotel Amerika, Poet Lore,* and elsewhere.



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## Carolyn Foster Segal

## Fitcher's Bird: A Love Story

I knew what my task would be. All those hours when my sisters and I stayed up late, telling stories, debating free will, my costume was there, in the back of the closet. I knew it would be up to me: it's always the third one. (The first one has the benefit of shock, the first turn of the plot; the second one, poor girl, gets at best a sentence, something along the lines of "and then the same thing happened to her.") And that's my cue; it's my turn to step out from where I've been waiting. I have only minutes to woo and undo the king, to find the pieces of my sisters and put them back together again. Then it's time to dress, in honey absurd, yes, but wonderful for the skin—and feathers and time to lure the unsuspecting ones (who never read, who never learn their lesson) to their fiery death. And the egg, you say, what about the egg? I'm certain this story has one. In fact—what did we just learn?—it has three, and I've one up my sleeve here, take it, it's barely bloodied, and you must be hungry after all this.

## Tawnysha Greene

## Crack in the Doorway

Grandma is seated in a pink
Nightgown, a thin tube running
Under her nose. Her two daughters brush
Her hair and feed spoonfuls
Of tapioca pudding into her mouth.
She looks at me, but does not
See me. They are speaking
To her, but neither of us hear.
I hear only

The clatter of jelly beans hitting the bottom Of a glass bowl and her voice Reading my letters as I sit in her lap In her rocking chair Next to the white trunk holding Old telephones and plastic pearls.

## Walter Bargen

## **Days Like This Are Necessary**

Fifteen men, the beginning of a pirate's song, and the dead man's chest, a premonition, a prophecy, a treasure too dark to be opened alive. Disregard that they are called soldiers dressed in combat fatigues, crowded into the body of a helicopter, their weapons on safety — a bad joke. They've been given leave, are being ferried to an airport, away from skirmishes, frontlines that are every street, alley, roof, door, window, and at that moment when the whump, whump, whump of turning blades is the air's homing heartbeat, a harvesting scythe, the helicopter missiled, is a flaming meteor, scattering fifteen men across a desert, others mangled in ways we are never told but know, as in the song fifteen men on a dead man's chest and a bottle of rum.

An Asian ladybug whirs onto my shoulder.
I'm surprised to hear the dim dental drill
of its wings so late in the year, and how it clings
to my plaid shirt. I carefully remove it,
send it on its way, an infestation
I can't battle, can't win, and live with,
accepting, admiring their tenacity.
It's unseasonably warm, wind from the south.
The crows are mewing like cats. Jays crowd
a dead elm, shrieking in defiance.
Small birds twitter their way through
the underbrush finding what's overlooked.
Leaves are falling casualties.
Shards of sunlight mark their down turning.
Days like this are necessary.

## Walter Bargen

## Refigurations

#### 1

Even after the girl who sits politely with one leg crossed over the other, print dress ending at her knees, in her lap rests a pair of flesh-colored plastic feet, so tranquil, as if they just returned from a stroll through fallen leaves, having kicked up a trail, feeling the earth turning cool and dormant, seeing a turtle back its shell into the mud of hibernation, a frog slow in its leap from the creek bank, as if the water were no longer a hidden place. These smooth-molded feet like a purse with toes, there resting in the folds of her dress, open below the ankles, the holes waiting for her to drop in the small change of her life, long after the blades swept down, the audience hears the dull impact: thunk, thunk, thunk, the targets deep in their seats, they see her hemline and what touches the floor, a space made for feet.

## Peter Joseph Gloviczki

#### Witness

They speak to me: The half-eaten chicken wing in its bright red Colonel Sanders box; the orange polyester shirt discarded on rail-road gravel; the Polaroid nude tossed from a car window into dry grass; the twisted neck of the coyote on the road's shoulder.

I hear them scrape across the sand outside the bedroom window at night, mumble words to songs hundreds of years old. In the morning I sometimes find them hanging in leftover spider strands stretched between the bleached branches of the dead juniper in the back yard. They look like empty flies; nothing left but transparent skin.

I bury them. They keep returning. Scattered rust-nails, a wad of used toilet paper, cigarette butts in tin foil, a black glove. I can feel them out there, hovering near the ceiling in every bedroom in town where young couples are trying for a kid, impatient for some seed to take, give them a new body to enter, begin again.

When I walk past the elementary school in town I scan the children's faces on the playground, look for the ones that made it back in human form. Some point, laugh. Some run. Either way, I want them to know I know who they are.

## Peter Joseph Gloviczki

## **Breakfast**

I pull the check out from under the coffee cup. This is not my mother's diner. We had bread in the mornings, bread by 5:30, we had bread that customers cut with their teeth. Tell me, she says, why you chose to let him die. I tell her after a while there's nothing you can do, that after a while the organs go rogue. She pulls out a pocketknife. She sets it on the table and lets it spin. I watch the knife make its little red circles, how the Swiss cross becomes a blur and then stops.

## Walter Bargen

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Not even the sound of one hand after she finishes speaking. The audience's stares amputated from their faces. Wrenched out of their seats, they remain seated. The shells of their ears washed up On another shore, deaf. Deep in the meat of their bodies they hear. From the bottom of their pockets and purses, the space between sock and shoe, something that will never shake free of their tweeds and blouses. It will be there on the drive home, and later after cocktails, the tiramisu will ooze in a way they've never noticed. For now she sits quietly on stage, in the glare that details the reconstruction of a flamed life. She is beyond friendship. She remains locked in her room. In front of hundreds. she remains behind the door of her skin, the frozen rippled topography of heat, her forged, fused face.

#### E. Louise Beach

### Tout un hiver sans feu

Film set in a Swiss canton. The camera pans charred timbers, a desolate farmer, cold on cold. The pretty young wife

no longer eats or talks. Holding hands beneath wool coats on our laps, we dream bleating cattle, screams, a stable door

jammed. Can any grief equal the grief of losing a child? It will sleet tonight while we are sleeping. He drove over

hard-packed snow to visit her in the clinic.

#### Christien Gholson

#### Witness

They speak to me: The half-eaten chicken wing in its bright red Colonel Sanders box; the orange polyester shirt discarded on railroad gravel; the Polaroid nude tossed from a car window into dry grass; the twisted neck of the coyote on the road's shoulder.

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When I walk past the elementary school in town I scan the children's faces on the playground, look for the ones that made it back in human form. Some point, laugh. Some run. Either way, I want them to know I know who they are.

#### Christien Gholson

## St. Graveyard Shift

Undressing in candlelight, I see the quick shadow-movements of a rock-cleft Madonna in the corner of the room. Some proto-Mary, flickering through a series of caves.

At this hour, blue-glint off a black dog's back.

My last boss told me he and his wife sometimes scattered cash across their bed, then fucked. He needed to confess this to me.

At this hour, the charred woman stirs inside her mother.

Every dollar bill I have ever stolen I've pasted onto my bathroom wall. When I move, I will slip out in the middle of the night, leave the bills behind. The landlord will spend hours — days — slopping the wall with water, gently peeling one dollar from another.

#### E. Louise Beach

## Intertidal

There's nothing in the room tonight but you and me and our pure silence tall as trees in a European wood.

Bats fly, black angels dispersing, coming closer.

In love with the man in the moon and snow, we sleep together but cannot speak; eat the quiet with meager, gnaw-toothed spoons; exist between tides, waiting for visions.

You burn like a saint. I burn, too.

On cobbles, anemones and sea stars between seas.

#### Jaime Brunton

## Returning

One's whole life can be taken up in this way — a near constant state of longing,

or of disappointment, which we called the same. And so we left them sitting there, under oak trees,

left them sitting with their want, they who went on about verbena bushes and falling leaves

so that bushes and leaves were never important, or indeed never were. This great fascination with things,

this dizzying elevation of stuff to extensions of our overstrained voices — such were our sweet miseries —

who would long for that precious stupidity, whose insides now turn aquiver to see it,

mute and inscrutable as a cow, in the faces of the young? But this, too, was a surprise, wasn't it, how the mind settles

only as water settles — on its surface — and how even now, hearing this, there is a real body of water we have in mind?

#### Catharina Evans

## The Nun

She is clear light and bald, and like my mother, and not.

I did everything wrong, kept my shoes on too long — looked at her hand over the soft dove of her mouth —

and she, she is like a thin column of milk in the throughway, or like a bent petal at the golden foot of Buddha.

#### Catharina Evans

## **Coming From the Doctor**

A girl I hadn't seen in months catches me by my coat sleeve — catches me picking at the full orange pill bottle in my pocket — while walking between the early trees of spring.

She tells me about the day she bought the drugstore shears that cut her hair to an inch within the skin — something shudders in the downy air and the planes of her face blaze yellow —

If I were someone braver, or more abundant — I'd lift her up with the wings of this chiming light — by the rumpled layers of her linen skirt — listen to this — we are sisters of the same sorrow.

#### Jaime Brunton

## **Speaking**

There was nowhere we did not exist.

There was a river whose fish no longer matter

mattered only a few times in the past.

There was and is the moon over various dark locations

some of which we never knew. There were and are long slow sounds about the moon

and those do not matter except in as far as they existed

will exist. Being long sounds and slow they take a great while to say

and we are in them a long time moving slowly toward each other and back to ourselves.

Being in ourselves we are pulled slowly along and side to side as if by the moon we say. We issue forth

long slow sounds occasionally as though speaking for the moon when we are speaking about it.

There were and are ourselves making brief appearances near rivers under moons. Speaking of rivers

we come to ourselves. Speaking of ourselves we come to rivers and stop.

#### Alison Cimino

## Lemon-Lime

Why this way with women? It seems force broke the pencil tip, yellow pencil, writing out our sallow lie.

Oh you in your mane of light, yellow hair and a doe-eyed look — How I, in my animal, wanted to strike and smelling my own fierceness, retreated.

Oh yellow heart that is she and me — How jealousy is a yellow dart, how like loneliness It glows phosphorescent bright and tart —

#### Renee Emerson

## **Visiting at St. Francis**

When the nurse gets out,
Mawmaw tells me she read
in a magazine there's healing
power in the noise we make.
Then she draws back her tongue,
funnels a moan
from the holding tank of her body.

I remember sitting hushed with her on the porch of the house she can't have anymore. Listen, and in the droning of the cicadas, we are still and close enough to hear the rattler nest beneath.

Slither-hissing in the coils, a little noise to mark the evening.

#### Renee Emerson

## **Storm Front**

I listen to rain falling down the chimney, rattling like bracelets on a bony arm. The wind sucks out air from the house, making the sound of fire where there is no fire.

I am on our red couch writing, you are in the bedroom sleeping. If the storm comes, it will come for us both, writing or sleeping, so I let you sleep, the better way to meet fate: with your eyes closed thinking of something else.

#### Alison Cimino

## Residue

So this is what I'm given — orange zest and oil trapped under my fingertips.

After the pulp and tincture of fruit juice on the tongue always the pith — The inside rind, white flesh — scraping it out with my front teeth; chewing it, tasteless as it is or bitter.

#### Lori Coale

## **All Things End**

the existence of fossils in distant time vestiges, nothing more than

dust of bones pressed against the form of memory what was it to have lived?

aching, rapt our bodies deny us immortality, life deepens

finally understand there is no meaning only the pressures of fuck

pull us through our biology shape us for love shape us for conclusion

an indention upon a bed smile, glance, whisper follicle, pore, membrane

we are made of even smaller things

#### Lori Coale

## **July Fourth**

We are aflame; candles, fireworks at intermittent times our fingers in bandages, bits and blisters pressed to lips as the sparks fall, curtains blaze against the pane of our bedroom window

combustible our blood our bones boil our essence, a wisp, a puff of nothing there flash of flesh dream of death cold stars strung against the mortality of our kiss

when I hear the explosion in the background

you know I come bearing gifts Blackcats and sparklers the hot, hot heat of your name burned into my groin how you stand at attention you patriotic son of a bitch how I love your display