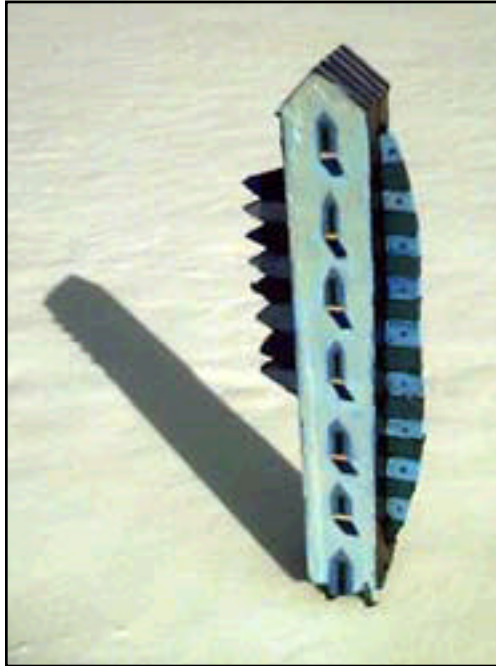


The 2River View

3_2 (Winter 1999)



Art by Mark Flowers

POEMS BY hortensia anderson, Gregory Betts, John Bush, Catherine Daly, R. Virgil Ellis, John Horvath Jr, Marie Kazalia, Linda Leavitt, Jessy Randall, Michael Rothenberg, Allegra Wong

The 2River View

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Blue Building, Red Building, Yellow Building
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Swimming Pool

Hortensia Anderson

Someone said say
it's a good day
for drowning

and the pool
was a liquid
turquoise

with a little
gold creeping
over the edges
of giant palms
I took his hand

and led him drugged
to the scalloped

shell of water's edge

and with my palms
I pushed him in.

As he dropped
the sun on the
surface went wild
the dark palms
grabbed at his
sinking body
frantically.

But as he hit
bottom, like
a lucky coin
the pool went smooth

and everything
went back

to normal.

What Little I Know

Hortensia Anderson

Not blue
until after death
maybe,
but salty wet
I dive in —

it is dark,
the moon shut out
by black curtains.

That's alright —
I control the
uncontrollable:
our tidal waves
and rhythms.

At this moment,
I know and I know
for a fact
that you are the
white of cream,
eyes and hair
some strange gold —

I have bodies
of water in the
fridge, they take
the curved shape of
glass, they effervesce
when opened,
somewhat like you —

if this is a
vice,
I may have gotten
a lot done at once —

You, love,
are more than a bit
bloated —
take these pills,
you'll pee it out
in the morning.

In the Glare

Gregory Betts

I'm well aware that she believed me
 20,000 feet over the Arctic
 sheer glare of the sun
 and ten thousand miles of glacial rock exposed
 the plane reflected from the snow
 her face beside me
 where we were carved into the stone
 ice surface
 from so high I saw her face
 carved there forever

nothing really significant to say

John Bush

08 / 28

Ahead of me
the azaleas brown in the sun
and the little red anemones that
Popped open yesterday
wilt and sag in the gradual heat
like a dripping tongue warm with thick slobber.
As I sit here on the tailgate of my dad's Ford,
which is white, flaking, and bubbling at places
where the rust is eating through,
(He hauls a lot of pipe, scraping the paint sometimes)
I look across the street to an empty house that has just
started being built.

It's just a framework of pine now, no insides yet,
But the view from here is fine.

I drink my Budweiser.

I just turned 27 yesterday
and declare
that I'm old enough
and sharp as new sand.

I can carry every pound, which is steadily
increasing—stir words—watch talk
and avoid each regret.

I guess I'm on a lucky streak.

And as I sit here, I rub a fingernail I just chewed
between my thumb and forefinger
and flick it away like a finished cigarette.
I look at the whorled pad of my finger
recalling what I just proclaimed
and slowly admit things still aren't clear

When I look up to watch that bare house
an empire of gnats dot the heavy air
two feet in front of my face.

I casually split them with one sweet fanatical swat of my hand
like Moses divided the red sea
But as soon as they part,
they reappear vibrating
like atoms glancing off of each other.
They look like a hum.

In the distance I hear the tiny
Forays of a weed eater and
its unsteady inflection,
even like a hawking and clearing of a throat sometimes.
The engine choking on too much gas or a clog of dust
I guess. Maybe the dumb ass doesn't know how to use it.

Anyway, I turn to flesh tomorrow with a clear mind of
yesterday, maybe
(to keep me on wry,
to follow a bright line
around the world and up)

08 / 29

Today is hot and pressive, too,
ground up and swelling like a stomach full of wine.
It is humid, almost greasy,
like the time I went fishing and caught that catfish.

That day fishing in the big sun
I squatted and pulled the fish out of the water, writhing
on my stringer,
heavy,
until I clubbed it against a sharp rock in front of me.
It almost slipped
away from me, all the slime on its skin.
I plunged it into the water, sliced it neatly open,
right down the snow white

belly that was soft and bloated like a pustule.
The blood seeped through the clean cut
like the blood seeping out of a teenager's throat.
Roe squirted out in clumps.
I peeled the skin back
and at places the skin tore.
I pulled the guts and insides out,
and flung them from my fingers black with blood.
I could see the white whiteness of the backbone.
Then I washed it in the muddy lake.
I can still feel that ooze and
I remember its clotted eyes,
a thin membrane covering the meaty gelatin.
They swiveled in their sockets
when I pushed on them, still staring
wide, gasping, drying in the air.

I feel the breeze slip by me now,
it is about to rain.
The cool dampness of sweat and mist raise my skin.
As I sit on this new ground,
licked by the wind and tasted
I see the rain start to blacken the street in front of me
and pock the dust on the ground beside me.
The rain covers the
tracks
traces
memory, but

What of it? where will it go? And what can it really do?
Well, don't ask me. I'm still thinking,
but I think I'll write a poem and send it in.
At least I'll get it
out and half-way over with. Besides, maybe they can
read it at the supper table

Significance

teleology

winnows hope's tegument,
leaving it vulnerable and soft—

eschews the goings on in the mind,
leaving obscured impatience

frustration
kinetic-fears.

And an abundant moment to rethink.

Our Ghost

Catherine Daly

I.

It indicates change. It changes.

Your desk chair was next to my chair, at my desk
at the foot of our bed.

I saw it and woke you.

How could I have carried it
without scraping it along the floor?

You passed the spot coming to bed. You didn't see it then,
before you took off your clothes in the dark.

The chairs looked like we had been collaborating,
looking or working together
at the computer — a sign?

II.

It comes to you.

You bumped into the hallway
and called my name.

You closed the windows and checked the locks.
Why did you think it was something, and me?

III.

It comes when I'm distracted.

I was polishing the dining room table.

While I could have put the bottle of polish there,

I would have spilled polish.

Maybe I

wasn't looking, dropped it,

put it up while wiping the floor,

didn't look.

We left. When we returned, the bottle was
in the center of the table,

perfectly upside down, uncapped.

IV.

It is a new place.

The wind slaps the blinds shut.

The Strange Man

R. Virgil Ellis

This little girl skips, and jumps,
turns hand-springs on the playground,
her school day done.

Now a busy man
strides late from his car
to his Friday volleyball.

He sees a daughter of years ago—
except she's not that busy being happy—
she knows just what to do.

Just the other day he walked
holding his grandson by the hand.
A young woman smiled at him.

He wonders as he goes by
if there'll be enough friends for a game.
He hears a car door slam

and the lock snap.
Glancing back going into the gym
he sees her in the car looking at him.

Womanslide / Manslide

R. Virgil Ellis

there's a light shinin' in the window
you can see in the daytime
and there's an act you can see in the dark

a kind of a pantomime

you got to start looking inside your mind
don't you know it's full moon
and you say not now when there's mean
money-hungry dogs barkin at me
hey i'm a treed raccoon

you're the one inside got no place to hide
no more camouflage acts
get the dread outa your ass climb up the hour-glass
you gotta face the slippery facts

but just when you think you've climbed high enough
you get snagged on routine
walk the dog wash the car take out the trash
comin' down like a guillotine

mandalas in your eyes flash you the signs yes yes yes
there really is more
and the lonesome voice in your mind says hold on goddammit
i've heard it all before

the glass got slippery sides your whole body slides
like it's made outa soap
you wanna stop tryin' part of you is dyin'
you feel so lazy you're losin' hope

open the jar close up the bar
you got to love one another or drown
rework your fate it ain't too late

and it's the only show in town

there's a moon shinin' off the window
and sand runnin' out of the glass
but you're out on a limb
is it the wrong branch
hey it's an avalanche

pantomime in the nighttime so fast
sandslide
landslide

womanslide / manslide

Four-Wheel-Drive Pioneer

John Horvath Jr

Even in the swamp I am a city boy.
Three tons of machine against nature
primeval thrashing, sucking me under.

I will conquer cypress knee and sawgrass
to build a small solar cabin. To escape
the siege of the city I will make a road.

Gravel from mountainsides in Georgia,
loblolly from the Carolinas, slate from
Tennessee riverbeds I'll bring the swamp.

I will crack oystershells on weekends
away from busroutes and timetables,
if someone comes to pull me out.

Railwalker

John Horvath Jr

Walking along the rails with my stick
I watch birds rise ahead and scatter:
I am measureless, something imagined
that draws panic, causes migrations.

Where sunlight dances through shrubs,
there is a dream of movement; swallows
and sparrows and crows rise together—
a moment of thought and they're moving
to another place out of harm's way;
armies amass like that—their souls
are mixed tribes, crow and sparrow.

My soul yearns for mixed tribes,
and my soul is against them.

In my thought of leaving here — I am my father,
his father, and his, thinking through comings
and goings on rails, on wagonwheels, and...

I am
This, my moment of thought,
my dream of movement.

Quasi-Memorial

Marie Kazalia

full photographic reproduction
of the Vietnam war memorial
with all the names
in black & white mounted on the lawn
at a University
I happened to be passing
on my way
from the library and stopped to reflect
stunned
tears came to my eyes—
Interrupted
by a cautious to-get-her-story
feme-reporter
questioning whether I had some dead relative
listed there or friend or former lover
suffering over
She didn't understand
when I told her No
I just felt
Period
Feelings
Didn't tell her about my poetic romantic nature
Didn't understand my own depression yet either
She thoroughly disgusted
thinking me some kind of a nut
slammed down her caution
made some annoyed comment
femme-brutal as only to another female
the blonde news-whore flounced away
taking my moment of contemplation with her

overheard words

Marie Kazalia

conversations forced to overhear
through the door of my room
alone
I can't day-dream away
things intruding on my thoughts
On the antique tram one day
little boy whining over and over
Mama they don't have no seats
they don't have no seats here
walk past a man squatting on the sidewalk
sketching a tiger from a magazine photo
reminds me
in past times artists often poor
so they could do their art
now the homeless do art because they are poor
to make a few nickels selling
or art for therapy
sketch draw and paint fast
to get out a finished product
sometimes wrestle with a bit of anxiety
through images
making choices on paper
boxed in from making few in their lives

Ice Cubes

Linda Leavitt

1.

It is after midnight
when she crashes into my room
her small body awakened in rage;
muscles, knotted tight,
drive her forward to my bed
not to cuddle
but to seethe against me

anger for the
most benign imaginings
incites her to tears
you don't let me sleep enough!
your computer screen is too bright!
you never buy me what I want!

kicking, crying,
she drags me
into her abyss
where her childish fears
bring forth my own tears;
she pulls the covers over
my head, screaming
grown-ups do NOT cry!

talk then, Athena talk, I say
tell me why you're really angry
no more crap—tell me the truth.

my life is terrible she cries
my family is split, my life stinks!

I have no answers no solutions
my sheltering arms, rejected,
are no longer enough.

2.

Twenty years ago I had a roommate
an ethereal woman with an understated intellect
and ideas I then laughed at; I think of her now
and how she handled anger

3.

Do you want to throw
ice cubes in the bathtub? I ask
This startles Athena,
stops her crying;
why? she asks guardedly, *what good will that do?*

You'll see... I smile and lead her to the kitchen,
open the freezer door, hand her the ice tray.
She follows me to the bathroom
Together we dig our nails
into spaces between plastic and ice
grab the slippery cubes and
with arms raised high
send them crashing one by one,
shattering against porcelain steel;
the thundering racket resounds, satisfying

a harmless catharsis
rage vented
no one hurt;
damage not erased
but temporarily bandaged

then, with icy hands held forth
she falls against my chest
allowing me, finally, to hold her
in the sheltering embrace
she used to welcome.

Trapped in Oz

Jessy Randall

We tried everything to get here
We didn't know Oz could change
Eyes squeezed shut,
stepping onto the secret staircase
with fingers crossed, borrowing
from other books, mothball dresses
caressing us in the wardrobe, so
disappointed to feel the wood with our hands

Until finally I made it
disembarking from the elevator
into an imaginary land

Everything is alive here,
singing rocks, warbling litter,
from my motel I hear this
infernal racket all night long;
I can't sleep; there's no tv
but plenty of pollution

Dear Dorothy
I am rolling up this message
and tying it with string
and next time a tornado comes through here
I plan to throw the message in
and hope it gets to you.
If you can get me out of here
please do

Scarecrow #2

Jessy Randall

This way is a very nice way,
he says, and then leads me
down another path, peeling
the cornhusks down and down.

May Elegy

Michael Rothenberg

for Allen Ginsberg

Chips of light in cypress coming along way back there
Streets hustled on wheels
Rubber souls, leather heels
Steel concrete
Pedestals climbing...
What have I returned for?

To watch barefoot son walk over longest mile in whole
wide century?
Oil changed. Teeth cleaned
Home again after 6,000 miles walkabout
San Francisco to Indiana to Nashville to Miami
Miami to Nashville to Indiana to New York
To Indiana to Nashville to San Francisco

On road with cell phone that's when I heard he died
Hawk feather rearview mirror, wind blown
Mettalica thunders carnivorous interstate power grid
Driving truck stop chicken sandwich to blue nights
Mildewed Florida motel room. Bodyworn bloodstained
bed sheets
I slept in the other bed

1 a.m., just
in from Gallup, NM
Greeted by low growling black lab, neck hair raised:
“Hi, Standley, remember me?”
All house sleeping. I put Queen on stereo loud
Pick 6 year old son up from bed. “We will, we will rock you!”
Rocking him back and forth under confused gaze of Standley
Then Nancy comes turns music off

Another time in May, all's clear
Nancy and Cosmos gone to choir for few hours
I'm distracted by fat pink and blue markers
Sort through mail. Automobile insurance
2 speeding tickets. 6 tickets to 3 Cyndi Lauper shows...

Remember, Allen
I went to pick you up at Denver airport
You told me you wanted to meet Ma Rainey
I told you I wanted to meet Cyndi Lauper
Allen Ginsberg, dead at last!

3:15 p.m at a Tennessee payphone
I find out from Nancy
Finally, I said
I dreamed of you, Allen
Outside of house on Miami Beach where I was born
Spoke. You didn't understand what I was saying

Called Wanda
in New York, still Tennessee payphone
Bleak funereal rain under
Mrs. Winners' Chicken and Biscuit sign
MIX IT UP, TEN PIECES ONLY 8.95

"It will be a different world without him"
No longer phantom father interjecting self in my poetry
You had terrible taste in poetry, Allen!
I was hurt you endorsed Antler!
Then had chutzpah to die during National Poetry Month!
Allen, come back, I miss you, you were great!
Howling loud after death
Lung memory swollen bigger than life telling
us to speak up!

Self-promoting, Allen, dead at last
Naturally self-promoting organism full of success
Speaking through final poems
Breathes before coma to ten thousand disciples of Allen
I won't forget you read my Russian journals
Told me you dreamed them
At Naropa marked my poem "New Country" so it
would be right

Verse line, verse, your body
Burns on pyre, sending your body
Down floating, burns, East River, now
Wondering if fair young angel boys will sing
Your songs in heaven?

The Hearse

Allegra Wong

Rusty gold chrysanthemums; empty
Wing chair; mantel, run with length
Of bittersweet, columned with slender
Poetry volumes (titles shedding their guilt);
On the windowsill, a pair of gray gloves
With cloth-covered buttons at the wrists:

Somehow this Kertesz photograph
Of an October parlor window
Reminds me of the August midnight
In the Hixville pine woods here
Just outside my bedroom when
Some boys left a silver hearse.
It was my mother's, burned,
Sooted, and the throat where the casket presides
Was choked with scorched silk,
But some of the window chrome was still intact.
It must have been
The hour the nighthawk swoops
Whooping and shrieking...
Startled—as anyone would be
Confronting a hearse in moonlight woods
And a band of black-coated men and women
Hurrying up from Trout Brook
Through the pines toward the village,
Strangers who have trespassed these woods
For centuries.

But it is the chrome which suggests my mother,
Makes me think of the shine
Of her back brace, a shine,
Like haiku, that waits between the slant
Of desk front and Hamadan or
Is glimpsed in window light ashen mornings.

Makes me think of her '56 Ford Fairlane chrome
Glistening winters among the bare oaks
At the end of Jonquil Path, past
The vandalized moss-covered sepulchers
And tombs, near my sister's grave, ice-sheathed
Pine cones glinting in the wreath strung
To the back of her granite stone. The wreath's
Red ribbon flared, and in the winter afternoon sun,
The thawing ice wet the granite, stained
My mother's gray gloves, as she finger-traced
The epitaph *I sigh for thee.*

Makes me think of her last days
And her steel walker,
Burnished with fall sunset, as she stood
Beside her rust-colored wing chair
At the bow window (run with strands of
Bittersweet)...her left hand's needle-bruised fingers
Relaxing their handle-grip and disclosing
The imprint of my dead sister's palm in hers.

Her steel walker, stainless,
Outspread-hearse-like-in my attic,
Makes me think of angel wings and flight.

The 2River View, 3_2 (Winter 1999)

Authors

hortensia anderson is a lower east side, new york city poet. Her work includes *Trust*, published by Fly-By-Night Press; *georgia on my mind* and *awareness of rose*, by Imp Press; and *beg, borrow or steal*, by Betty Elyse Press.

Gregory Betts always looks forward to summer excursions in the Canadian mountains.

John Bush lives in Georgia, where he teaches English and coaches debate. He vacations during Christmas in the Florida Keys and spends all other vacations in the Georgia Mountains, trout fishing.

Catherine Daly teaches the UCLA online poetry workshop and works as a computer engineer supporting the space shuttle orbiter.

The foreword to *The Blue Train*, a first volume of poetry by **R. Virgil Ellis**, was written by William Stafford. Woodhenge Press published his second volume, *The Tenting Cantos*. *Open My Eyes*, an album of performance poetry, has been aired on National Public Radio and on WNYC. He has often given performances on Wisconsin Public Radio's Hotel Milwaukee. His work with Dangerous Odds is aired twice-monthly on WORT in Madison.

John Horvath Jr has had poems on the strange and stranger appear since the 1970s in Australian, British, Canadian, and US magazines. He is is Editor of PoetryRepairShop.

Marie Kazalia was born in Toledo, Ohio but has lived her adult life primarily in the San Francisco bay area , with the exception of four years in Japan, India, and Hong Kong.

Linda Leavitt is a graphic designer/editor, a mom, and a self-proclaimed beach bum. She hosts the on-line poetry magazine, *Free Zone Quarterly*, featuring the work of little known writers and artists.

Jessy Randall, now a rare book librarian in Philadelphia, was nine years old when she wrote her first poem. The poem, about the death of her hamster, remains unpublished.

Michael Rothenberg is editor and publisher of Big Bridge Press and Big Bridge, a webzine of poetry and everything else. He is more recently editor of *Overtime, Selected Poems by Philip Whalen*, due out with Penguin Putnam, Inc. in 1999.

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2River

About

2River, a literary site on the Daemen College World Wide Web Server, publishes *The 2River View*.

2River also publishes individual authors. These collections, as well as all issues of *The 2River View*, can be accessed at

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2River@daemen.edu

All mail is answered within a day or two.

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