

The 2River View

10.3 (Spring 2006)



Golem © 2006 by Liz Amini-Holmes

new poems by
Paul David Adkins, Michael Estabrook
Christien Gholson, Marty MConnell, Brent Pallas
Sam Pereira, Evelyn Posamentier, Heather Rounds
Kris Saknussemm, Mike Young

The 2River View

10.3 (Spring 2006)

ISSN 1536-2086

The 2River View, 10.3 (Spring 2006)

Contents

Kris Saknussem

Why I Love Demolition Derby

Paul David Adkins

The Sins of Paul

Haggai 1:4-5

Michael Estabrook

birdseed garden

only a rock

Christien Gholson

How the Tundra Swan Showed Me Where Home Is

How Fall Came This Year



waiting © 2006 by Liz Amini-Holmes

Marty McConnell

reluctance

what would charisma do in the pack of a pickup truck?

Brent Pallas

Finding His Way

The Stone Age

Sam Pereira

Blue Flames & Anger

What Happens When You Leave

Evelyn Posamentier

Toska

Heather Rounds

Absurd Gesture

This Is a Picture

Mike Young

Because It Was Drizzling

Why Is Nothing On Our Stove

The 2River View, 10.3 (Spring 2006)

Kris Saknussem

Why I Love Demolition Derby

First of all, girls with big tits.
Secondly, the sound of dog box thunder cars
getting push-started by station wagons
in the gladiatorial twilight on the edge of abattoirs and railyards—
then the satisfyingly orgiastic cracking
of compacted bumpers andSP accordioned metal,
crunch of collapsed door panels
my old Chevy lurking between the stalled wrecks,
waiting to gun it again and strike—
an evil black El Camino winning the crowd over,
finally limping off to die in cloud of smoke on the perimeter
all the brightly colored carcasses suddenly springing to life
then grinding to a death halt in a whoosh of fire extinguisher foam.
Climax red lights in a hot brown haze of adrenalin and gasoline,
the stinging dust stinking of exploded radiators and burnt rubber
and girls with big tits spilling beer with their applause.

Paul David Adkins

The Sins of Paul

I Timothy 1: 15

. . . and it's not because of sex
or murder, or knocking off a bank.

It's not because I blew off church
or showed up, stinking drunk.

It's not because the Playboy channel
played in my motel room,
with my aging wife asleep
a thousand miles south.

Sin is simply pulling my hand
from God's and taking off like a two-year old
down the grocery aisle. It is
doing, saying, thinking everything
I should not have done, said, or
thought. For instance,

it was me knocking down doors,
was me barking questions,
me arresting Christians,
setting houses on fire,
burning.

Paul David Adkins

Haggai 1: 4-5

It's amazing the flaws
you never would have known about
if someone didn't care for you.
If someone important didn't see
potential, no one would care
that you put your shoes on backwards,
 misbuttoned your shirt, or
stepped outside wearing red sneakers
and green pants. It's the classic
stubborn son versus his
 perfectionist dad. How their relationship
throughout the years never changes
except the son gets a little
less patient. And the penalties
are steeper, sharper. The father
wants his son to depend on him
 for everything. While the boy
wants to depend on himself.
Because there's nothing quite his own
like his own mistakes.

Michael Estabrook

birdseed garden

I don't know what
the plants are growing
down in the shade beneath
the bird feeder
but they're growing
they're growing
so I haven't the heart
to clip them back
or pluck them out
or cover them up
with peat moss
or mulch because
they're growing.

Michael Estabrook

only a rock

Every time I walk past
the little garden area
in the front of the house
alongside the front stoop
outside Robin's window
my eye catches
this craggy dark brown rock,
all alone in the midst
of my wife's azaleas and rhododendrons,
boxwood, hibiscus, and holly bushes.
It doesn't move, obviously,
or change shape or color
(except when it is wet from the rain)
yet every time I pass
it catches my eye.
I feel stupid,
looking down at it constantly,
it is only a rock after all,
but it is what it is
and maybe I shouldn't feel so stupid,
especially seeing as it will be here
in this little garden
on this earth
long after I am put to rest beneath it.

Christien Gholson

How the Tundra Swans Showed Me Where Home Is

Circling together off-shore,
four white and one dark, long arc
of the neck dipping back
to black water

Raising black beaks up
to falling snow—black
as the world from which they drink—
water sliding down the long throat

Then, slow-dipping again into that other world:

(to them, an extension of this one.
As if we could put our hands to the night sky,
plunge them in, feel around, know objects on the other side
only by touch—
like the blind man with the black dog next door,
feeling his way down the dry grass path beside the house,
on his way to the liquor store)

Black beaks down there, sensing a network of ice-branches,
and further below, a rock-face
staring back—a mountain lion's eyes
fading into criss-cross ice-crack lines.

Homeless. Not homeless
(How connected to the man selling a homeless shelter's newspaper for a dollar
across from the Boulder bus station?
People passing all day he said—not one taker. Me thinking
how hard it is trying to simultaneously be seen
and keep out of sight.)

Christien Gholson

Homeless. Not homeless.
Come down from the arctic tundra, on their way
to Texas, the Baja peninsula. The whole flyway
an extension of their bodies like
black drops falling from black beaks

back. Arc
of return—the way we return
to bed each night, under a metal roof
that bucks and rattles as if it were being re-forged
by the constant wind chasing snow down from the Divide,
through the stars.

Christien Gholson

How Fall Came This Year

1.

Smoke blew through the room. Then,
a vase made of dead leaves. Crickets
bore tiny holes through the clay all night:

A crack in the sky, a saxophone behind adobe,
pink clouds from a backyard dog,
crying. Coyotes

hung their shadows on a phone line, went looking
for red wine. Leaves imitated the dance-steps
of the dead. Seven vultures were spinning

a halo around one crow. The crow cried
for something broken, blind, full of
blue flies. Why did everyone remain

inside? The end was beginning again,
making a play for my dead grandmother's
fingers. The sun was out walking

with smoke, smoke and bone,
did you see? She was here, holding
a smoldering juniper stick, shaking it

at the dry creek bed across the street. Did you
see? Leaves are now water; water,
smoke.

Christien Gholson

2.

In the plaza, an old man turned, looked
behind him. No one he knew. I was a hand
that slipped on a rail; all stairs dis-

appeared. The dead were smoke
in a cold rain. They ran with whatever
water was running. Why did everyone

remain in their cars? My grandmother
was the Jemez Mountain range seen
over the shoulder of the one hawking newspapers

over the hospital road. She blew sage
into fire. I was the black edge
of an aspen leaf turning too fast. The end

was beginning again. Fallen apricots
mimicked a crow's joke. Color
of a broken body, turned inside

out. All night the wisteria kept whispering
through the front door, *Survival is not
enough, survival is not*

enough.... Its leaves became
water; water became
smoke.

Marty McConnell

reluctance

You can have Gertrude Stein's brain or
Cindy Crawford's face, but not both.
Which do you choose? But maybe you
don't appreciate Gertrude Stein's writing,
maybe you don't find Cindy Crawford
beautiful. Then do you choose neither,
choose your own brain, your own face?
But others find one brilliant, one stunning,
mightn't you be happier if people found
you brilliant or stunning, mightn't your life
be easier or at least different? Or do you
think you are happy. Do you say, I like
my brain. I like my face. Here you've been
given this extraordinary chance for
something altogether else, something
altogether new, and you choose neither?
The same same? You call that happiness?
Satisfaction, maybe. Which is not the same
thing. Not at all.

Marty McConnell

what would charisma do in the back of a pickup truck?

what a drag to be a man
in a drab man jacket, blue
black blue, tie a splash, pastel
or red / what a shame, the weatherman
's a eunuch, cold front moving, mouth
of rough marbles, full stop. tonight
ride with no shocks, the truckbed
slick with saliva, something; oil, extra
rain, the teeth wriggle orgasmically, a junkie widow
in her husband's blood, baby's first piss, grins
sweeter than a president shot
during sweeps week, hotter
than molasses on fire.

Brent Pallas

Finding His Way

for T. Burch

Following his footprints afterwards
they saw the long trail of a stain
where he began upstairs. And looking back
they almost smiled thinking how
he must have sat there holding the gun just so.
And still it went off leaving him only blind
but still breathing. And he must have known then
how he had not done what he needed to do.
His mind a mess making its way back down
those steps where the extra shells were kept.
Knowing this
was just another mistake he had made.

Brent Pallas

The Stone Age

There are Stone Age people living now,
In the Space Age....

—*Survivors of the Stone Age*, R. Marcus

They don't know what they're missing
raincoats, spiral notebooks, hockey
on Saturday afternoons. Living deep

in the woods, picking up whatever falls.
Shy as children, distrustful of strangers.
Without the glint of choice they marry young,

carrying whatever's needed, snaring
whatever comes. Old at thirty. No seeds
of possibility bloating pockets, things to bring

in from the rain. Dividing the least stem
of existence with a dull edge, waking, eating,
sleeping, leaning close for warmth.

Sam Pereira

Blue Flames & Anger

He walked into the living room
Like he owned it, which
He did back then, along with
Her and their son, James,
Named after him; a gift
From his wife, on a day
In November. 1997.
A burner now flared in the kitchen—
One of those medium
Blue flames gas companies
Like to show when flaunting
How dependable they can be.
He had been dependable,
Draping a chocolate cloth coat
Over her shoulders and taking her
Out for chili and beer. Somewhere
In the evening, the beer
Always went to his head,
And he'd hit her just
Enough to draw certain
Handfuls of tears, leaving her
Skin pink in the morning air.
He was always sorry. Always.
If she'd walk through the door
This minute, he'd want her
To know how sorry and
That the coat still looked
Like mink on his beautiful girl.

Sam Pereira

What Happens When You Leave

It had been her
Midwestern recklessness
As a girl, that sent
The mysterious shivers
Up her spine tonight.
Once, in Cincinnati,
Overcoming sizeable odds,
She jumped into a truck
And simply pointed north,
Which brought her,
Falling drunk, to this
Dakota bar and grill,
Where two Dakota men
Played pinball, waiting,
Just waiting, for someone
Like her to come
Into their lives. She
Smiled her Cincinnati
Smile, which brought them
To their knees, bells ringing
In the hard Fargo night.
What followed smelled
Of a stale, drug store perfume
And day-old Pabst, pooled
Next to the bed, and two
Dwindling sighs at sunrise,
Wondering what happened,
And if the third sigh
Made it home okay.

Evelyn Posamentier

Toska

Toska

i went out again the other day looking for grandmother
on the internet & found toska feuchtbaum
instead, a 7-year-old girl, whose shy smile
was captured in the photo her father clutched
all those nights of not knowing, on the run.

the smile of surprise, perhaps a birthday party
later that day, not quite yet the end of vienna.

went out again the other day looking
for grandmother on the internet & saw
toska & her mother at the bahnhof
being shipped east to poland, held out till now.
same train as grandmother & grandfather:

the startled testimony of the photos of children
whispering shoah.

went out again, grandmother, looking
for you on the internet, & waited patiently
for the images to load on the browser.
this time it is the transit camp itself, typhus & all.
& still there is no word from you.

Toska, Again

this time, toska, i printed your picture off the internet
finding you, as i do, every time i go out looking
for grandmother. toska feuchtbaum, born april 8, 1935
in vienna, austria. that shy smile, fulfilling
the testimony of children's destinies.

when i dare, i insert your image beside one
in my head of grandmother, & both of you
nod to the future.

Evelyn Posamentier

Toska at the Bahnhof

peek at sobibor on infoseek
(knock, knock, is grandmother there?)
& find the cybrary at remember.org
all calling, all silent.

the water ripples, the sky shudders in response.

toska at the bahnhof, toska on the page
of children's testimony (click on next ten, always
to the next citation) knock, knock, is
grandmother there? peek at sobibor

on infoseek, deportation statistics & the staccato
list of operation reinhard aktion dates.

toska at the collection point, grandmother
between the pages of a prayerbook
(daughter already escaped with photo)

peek at sobibor on infoseek
(toska & grandmother on the same load)
both last seen at the bahnhof: vienna, may 12, 1942.

Heather Rounds

Absurd Gesture

Outside, the morning seems
as alive as it deserves to be.
I lean over the sink
and watch the children of 4th street
out the window, earthworms
sticking to the soles of their feet, trying
to catch sparse raindrops in their hands.

I seek out the tiny and quick
turning of their fingers, the swallows
in the wobbling oak's limbs,
the squirrels at the roots un-holing
the earth, and the cricket's song arched
like a strong grin above it all.

Everything alive, everything moving in its own direction.

And then there is you and I in the kitchen,
and the heaviness of eggs in the air,
the basset asleep at your feet.
There is me glancing at your dozing face,
and the sound of me trying
to shake the stillness from your eyes.

There is the sight of me acting
the way an absurd woman might,
if she was to chat with a mannequin.

Heather Rounds

This Is a Picture

of two sets of legs, in the coppery thickets
at the edge of a lake. A floral dress
is trying to escape the frame.

There is only the illusion of the glare and bolt of sun
as it is seen in the shine of four legs.
There is only the sense of lower forces, such as those
that ground the feet to the floor of a lake.

There is no suggestion of blood colored mountain stones,
no traipsing bodies, no birds east or west, no sign
that bones are being steadied by the crooked finned trout
circling the muddy roots at the toes.

No sign of the melancholy that finds its way
into late afternoons, even on the happiest days—
splitting itself at the knees,
the sun burnt tops of feet, and onward.

Mike Young

Because It Was Drizzling

Because it was drizzling
while I waited for a bald man
to finish with the ATM,
I sang *The Boxer* into my fist.

*My winter clothes and wishing
I was gone, going home.*

At the end, his back to me
and his shoulders sopping,
the bald man said

*you've got a great voice
for that song, it's a hard song
and well—it's a great song
isn't it?*

*Sure, I said,
shy, uncertain, a boy.
Then, as hard as I could,
Thank you. Thanks.*

Because it was still drizzling
after he left, as I checked
my face for pimples
in the ATM safety mirror
wired to the alarm.

Mike Young

Why Is Nothing On Our Stove?

You like the way I
burst in? I thought
you might. I did it
for you. If I'm hardy
har har and you're a
squelched hum, what will
they say about our kids?

Shall we have them
in motels, stapling
our gods to vacant
signs? Shall I buy
the laundry soap and
liquor, while you
beg your mother (red
and plump) for a loan?

You like the way I
taste your fingers
in ten easy slurps?
What's with the tissues?
What's with the smell
of fish from the next
apartment and why is
nothing on the stove
in our tiny kitchen?

The 2River View, 10.3 (Spring 2006)

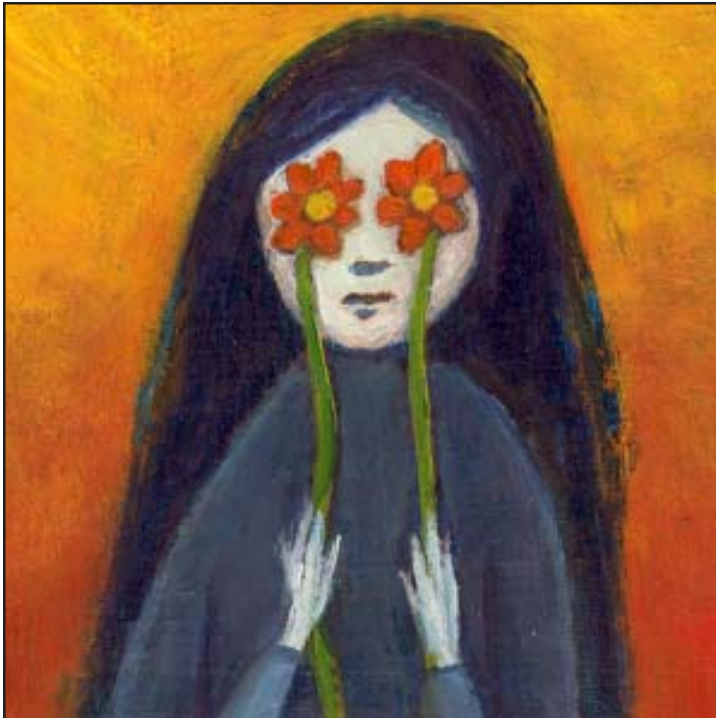
Contributors

Paul David Adkins holds an MFA from The Washington University in St. Louis. He has pieces published in *Ancient Paths*, *Chattahoochee Review*, *Delmar*, *Rock & Sling*, and *Sow's Ear*.

Michael Estabrook is a marketing communications manager for a tiny division of a gigantic company, where the stuffy air and florescent lights are killing him. He plans to retire in ten to fifteen years. His poems appear in *Tryst* and *Oyster Boy Review*, among others.

Liz Amini-Holmes is an illustrator and painter. She has worked for magazines, newspapers, record companies, and book publishers. Her paintings have been exhibited at various San Francisco Bay area galleries.

Christien Gholson is looking for a magical rabbit hole out of the Permanent War Economy. His poems and stories have appeared in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Big Bridge*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *Lilliput Review*, and *Mudlark*. *On the side of the Crow* (Hanging Loose Press, 2006) is a collection of his prose poems. Gholson lives in New Mexico.



floser girl © 2006 by Liz Amini-Holmes

Marty McConnell received her MFA from Sarah Lawrence College. She co-curates a weekly reading series through The louderARTS Project. Her work has appeared in *13th Moon*, *14 Hills*, *Blue Fifth Review*, and *Lodestar Quarterly*; and in the anthologies *Homewrecker* and *Will Work for Peace*.

Brent Pallas lives and works in Manhattan as a freelance designer. His most recent work has been or will be in *Innisfree Poetry Journal*, *The Missouri Review*, *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, and *The Southern Poetry Review*.

Sam Pereira teaches middle school English in California's San Joaquin Valley. He has two books: *The Marriage of the Portuguese* (L'Epervier Press, 1978) and *Brittle Water* (Abattoir Editions/Penumbra Press, 1987). His third book, *A Café in Boca*, will be published by Tebot Bach sometime in the next year.

Evelyn Posamentier lives and writes in California. "Toska," along with "Heinz Rosenberg on the Platform" in an earlier issue of *2RV*, is part of a series of poems appearing in *3 A. M. Magazine*, *Drunken Boat*, *Ducky*, and *Parthenon West Review*.

Heather Rounds lives in Baltimore, Maryland, where she is an MFA Candidate in the Creative Writing and Design Program at the University of Baltimore. Her poems have appeared in *The Baltimore Review*, *Karamu*, *The Plastic Tower*, and *Poet Lore*.

Kris Saknussem is the author of *Zanesville* (Villard Books 2005). *The Austin Chronicle* called it "the most original novel of the year." *Booklist* praised it as one of most important works of the last decade.

Mike Young often loses his fingernail clippers in Ashland, Oregon. His stories and poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *3AM Magazine*, *Opium Print #2*, *Pindeldyboz*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *Whistling Shade*, and *WordRiot*. He co-edits *NOÖ Journal*, a Northern California literary/political magazine.

The 2River View, 10.3 (Spring 2006)

About 2River

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry, art, and theory, quarterly publishing *The 2River View*, and occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series. All publications appear first online, then in print.

Richard Long, Editor
2River
www.2River.org

2RV

10.3 (Spring 2006)

2River
www.2River.org
7474 Drexel DR · University City · MO · 63130 · USA