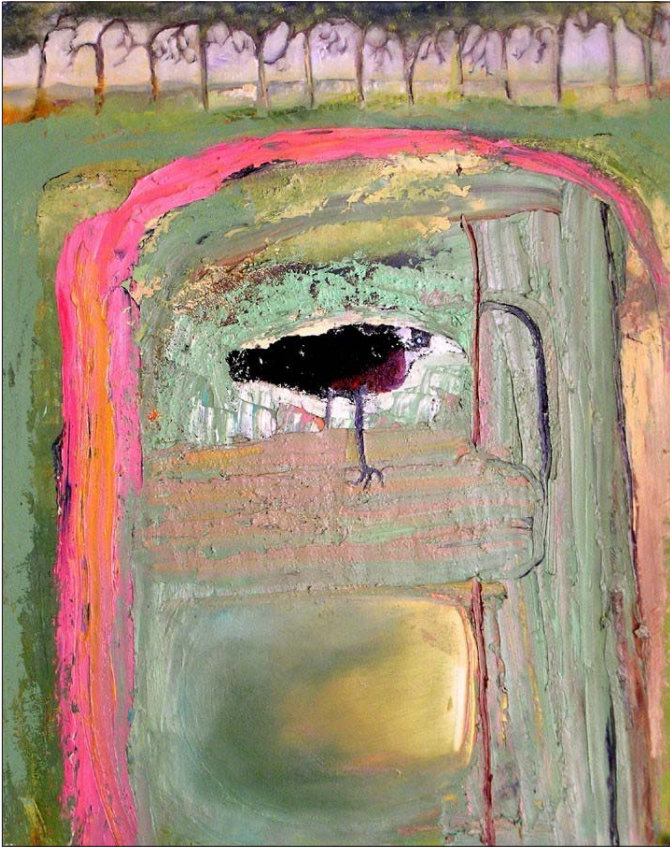


# The 2River View

11.4 (Summer 2007)



*Gathering Strength* © 2007 by Megan Karlen

New Poems by Philip Brady, Therese Broderick  
Ryan Collins, Lydia Cooper, Michael Flanagan, Nancy Henry  
Laura McCullough, Karen Pape, Petre Stoica, Sally Van Doren



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*The 2River View, 11.4 (Summer 2007)*

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*The 2River View*, 11.4 (Summer 2007)

*Philip Brady*

## **Carmel**

Why do we turn away from the eternal?  
Robinson Jeffers asked. The Pacific surf,  
crashing against the inscape of his skull,  
washed off brine and starfish, and left,  
turn from the eternal. Frail vowels  
spiral into a cerulean sky  
so vast it seems almost believable  
there is no other we. No turning away.

I am in thrall to an inhuman voice  
chanting the mantra beyond silence:  
turn eternal. Drown your secret loss.  
Let every moment achieve utterance.  
Even the stones of Tor House mark the seconds  
between the rasping slant rhymes of the ocean.

*Therese L. Broderick*

**Pandora**

“snowflakes . . . cause chaos”  
*Baedeker’s Greece*

It’s not a box she holds,  
but a sloping jar  
formed from clay  
and baked in the sun.  
And as she tips it  
toward her, curious,  
one mild vice flutters away  
like a snowflake  
and then harsher ones

and then—blizzard.

On the hills above the bay,  
sunflowers, olives,  
grapevines on arbors—  
all vanish in a white siege.  
And a fine frost lays upon  
her face—  
the first woman’s all-adorned face—  
so that she can see, then give a name  
to every crystal’s  
stark inscription:

—envy, greed, theft,  
pride, apathy, rage—

Shivering, she lets go;  
the vast swirling settles,  
the suddenly heavier horizon  
shudders.

Still inside—  
her thin, receding  
icicle.



*Therese L. Broderick*

**These Seven Years**

In some past self we hardened  
Around the deepest stone  
Within us which we must now  
These seven years  
Bring to surface with blade  
Or trowel. Raised, felt, it will  
Settle atop the ground, guardian  
Of our flowers, fending away  
The wind and rain. Like mounds  
In a rock garden, evident  
And intentional, what we raise  
Becomes then what we step upon,  
Where we balance for another age  
Before releasing our next stony thing:  
That quick beetle, pebbled,  
Hiding beneath.

*Ryan Collins*

*Dear Davenport—*

It's a full lemon moon & I'm stuck in your  
crawl, an otter caught in your lock & dam. Lock-jawed,  
bridging back & forth between your valleyhands. Years  
later & I still struggle to be ambidextrous. A good little  
drummer boy. My hands aren't as wide as yours & aren't  
you a slippery one indeed? I've learned well the where-  
withal. I know how your habits make the children heavy  
bored. I was one of them, but I'm all grows up & grows up.  
I know they'll learn to taste the air around them. Learn their  
way between bridges & to firmly shake you w/ both hands.

There but for the grace of god,

Quad Cities

*Ryan Collins*

**Dear Rock Island—**

Sadly unwinds the smoke from bbq send-offs. Ending in dis- less than beginning. Friends, as you said, touch land & fly away. So we work, learn to second guess less than before. We accept consequences of living in the old fire hazards. Our blood's still clean & no nostalgia or legal speed takes us anywhere back. But somehow we share a language. We speak Esperanto & bear across—we learn to love the waterways, which bend us as much as they're bent. Some get remissions, others terminal. Others just born delivery boys & sacrifices. It's been too long since we've seen anything but double, seen anyone anywhere but off. Still we make & manage contact.

Don't fear the reaper,

Quad Cities

*Lydia R. Cooper*

**A Bird Fell Out of Its Nest**

And we chased the bird,  
torn newspaper  
flapped across rotted  
pine roots. We caught it,  
pinned it to crusty dirt  
with a sharp stick. *Look—is it—?*  
Each quill like plastic  
fork prongs, soft gray  
skin stretched over  
squirming guts,  
pulsing  
slower,  
the rhythm bulging out  
and in.  
Then the stick pierced skin,  
yellow oozing  
onto broken pine leaves.  
*Is it—*  
We turned  
the bird over, changed  
into something  
(we knew suddenly, became all wise)  
*—dead?*

*Lydia R. Cooper*

**The Flame**

We lick ice in summer,  
our heels making soft dents  
in street tar

like dimpled water thick  
with rot, froth-laced. Melting  
ice dapples

knees soft with bruises  
and pre-pubescent downy hair,  
fresh scrapes

and scars still smelling  
of raw soil and dandelion  
milk curds.

Our lips turn numb,  
our words slur into vowel slicks  
and stumbles. Giggling,

we act out tragedy.  
Some day our old shades  
will hiccup through

aneurisms, slur  
and melt like waxworks, then harden,  
grow cold.

Ice melts on hot  
young skin. We burn  
like flame

dwindling a matchstick  
down to its  
stub.

*Michael A. Flanagan*

**late**

out the window  
the dead horizon,  
late silence and  
all again what it  
most often is, the  
world letting time  
slip into repetition,  
the pain maybe in  
that really there's  
not much wrong in  
your life, small  
things but your  
head fills, bangs  
into nothing until  
it becomes difficult  
just to walk thru  
a room, rise from  
a chair, in a year,  
you'll find the  
same hour, the  
same girl you  
never talked to,  
the same watch  
you lost when you  
were twelve, now  
the eyes begin to  
close, you turn  
off the lights, you  
move toward the  
stairs, somewhere  
a thousand voices  
sigh, the night  
hears its rumors,  
the days go on

*Michael A. Flanagan*

**the woman outside my window**

while her husband talks  
to her i start to imagine  
she is thinking about  
licking the nipples of  
a girl she kissed when  
she was in the 8th grade,  
her best friend, a girl  
she hasn't seen in 40  
yrs., how much she  
would like to grab  
that hour again, just  
a small bit of time,  
a moment in the  
past, to see if  
maybe it would  
have unfolded into  
everything, any of  
the secret songs that  
have run thru her  
head all these years,  
wanting so much  
to take them out,  
let them breathe

*Nancy A. Henry*

**Mae**

You looked at my mother  
when I tried to kiss you,  
I could see you were afraid,  
when you said no, little miss  
when you told me you were very dirty  
you who were so clean  
that if black could be scrubbed off  
I'd have seen clear through you.  
Clean enough to make  
my school-day lunches with your hands,  
to wipe my dirty face  
when the neighbor girls spit at me  
and dragged me through the blackberry thorns  
and fire ants.  
Fat girl, got her period,  
serves you right.  
Mae; clean cool sheets  
and singing Lord, lord  
till I feel asleep,  
taking my trouble from me,  
soaking my shame into your own skin,  
not telling my mother anything  
she didn't need to know.



*Nancy A. Henry*

**Valedictory, 1977**

No one would have thought it possible of our old gang,  
all these triumphs  
Rhonda and Jerome finally doing it  
on her parents' bed while the first string watched  
I remember her saying it felt good  
and doubting her  
but then there was Michael,  
his brain knocked all over the place  
in his skull, six months and three days in rehab  
and the limp that won't go away; we dedicated  
the tenth grade chorus recital to him  
and Tina sang the solo, before she gave him back  
his ring. Yes, Jon, who burned down  
the equipment shed where we all kept our dope;  
he survived our shunning and made it up to us  
on senior skip day, six cases of beer  
tied to the old innertubes on our river run.  
We all made it through alive but one;  
Randy, flipped out of that flatbed in the sandpits,  
on the wrong side of a rollover,  
how his mother cried for that bully, her sweet baby.  
Melissa, stabbed fourteen times  
by that crazy on angel dust,  
you will not believe she survived it  
when I tell you  
how she crawled across the bedroom  
to the phone, how he came back in, saw her still breathing,  
and stabbed her again.

*Kathryn Kirkpatrick*

**Artemis**

She knows better. She always has.  
Icicle at the eye. No tears.

No man will ever cause her to doubt.  
Herself. Bristle of fearlessness.  
A face full of planes. Tufted pride.

Behind her the bare branches of winter.  
A crescent moon.

But the coldness is not, has never been,  
brittle. Beneath the sheen of iceflows  
she is bear-hearted, lynx-limbed.

What woman would not trust herself  
to this? Not safe haven exactly. Rather  
a welcome danger.

*Kathryn Kirkpatrick*

### **Changing Woman**

She's as old as she looks  
and younger. Her delicate jawline  
has yielded to certain strength.

A river has washed her.  
She has lain in the bed of it.  
In drought. In flood.  
Water and the lack of water  
have carved her.

Tell her your income  
and she'll know how you've spent  
your time as she knows the state  
of your heart, what you have done  
with your wounds.

And if you have spoken to the eternal.  
And how you hold the unloved.

If you're brave enough,  
ask her what she sees.  
She may answer.

She may ask you  
what you plan to do  
before you finally die.

*Laura McCullough*

### **A Dirty Poem About Oral Sex**

A poem is a public space, the camera telescopic and dependent upon angle and focus. Here, there is a woman's mouth all O and invitation, anonymous, and non-demanding; there, see a man's hand around his cock, so hot, it's cold and dangerous; take it, baby, and like it. They're aware of being observed by us in this poem, by society; they wear clothes of erotic power play or are imbedded in a feminist neo-capitalist narrative of sexual currency or a Baudrillardian simulacrum of symbolic exchange—there's a mouthful to swallow. I hold that on my tongue and think of Baudrillard on his knees, his head bent over my back, the nails of his hands digging into my palms, the lens of this poem zooming in on our beautiful knuckles and freckles and spots and scars, and one finger, whose is it? With dirt under the short nail, a small arc of accrued black: sweat, skin, particles from the garden one of us knelt in earlier that day, and you, who watch us, who is reading this poem, I see you lift your hand to your face and run your thumb nail across your lower teeth to clean it: we're glad you see us because we can not see ourselves.

*Laura McCullough*

## **Statistics and Grace**

Once, I stood behind a woman who didn't have enough money and had no cards to back her up. You could feel the heat coming off of her, a subtle stench like a feral cat in a cage. She grew loud, and when that didn't work, quiet. I wanted to give her what cash I had, but the anger in her was a barrier I couldn't pass. According to the US census, less than 10% of the population has a masters degree, less than 1% a PhD. By the look of her, what did she have? I don't know, but she didn't want my charity. At home I get down on all fours—no, that's the wrong phrase, a cliché, meant to provoke notions of power or prayer or dogs—I lay on my side, knees tucked under me—have you ever seen a baby sleep—grateful for the suck and the pleasure of pleasing. I've got money in the bank, though not a lot, and a master's degree. I'm safe; I know who I am; here, let me make you feel good, too.

*Karen Pape*

**Every Day Things**

The illicit rooster  
Crows down the block—  
It is winter, displeasing—  
But he is dutiful  
If not kind. My cat  
Foregoes birds—  
The flocks of transients  
Too much— prefers  
His hunt bird by bird.  
I am bathed in light,  
Working—the sounds  
Of urbanized nature,  
The hum of engines,  
the bare branches  
at my back.

*Karen Pape*

### **Midnight Souls**

When midnight darkens my soul, all hope  
Seems barren, somehow lost, I cry out  
To a clockwork's God, railing His scope  
So narrow, so unforgiving—my loutish

Heart won't let me let Him in. Instead  
He is my enemy, not my dearest friend.  
The bleakest hours come when in a crowd  
When loneliness can't recognize common

Souls in pain. In the funeral of life  
We lose our way, letting the dirges  
Play, forgetting ourselves a higher way  
To dance the dance of grief, then leave

It all behind, forgiving ourselves, loving  
God with open souls and outstretched hands.

***Petre Stoica***

*translated from the Romanian by  
Adam J. Sorkin & Ioana Ieronim*

**insomnia**

long night endless night  
insomnia steals in through the keyhole  
steals in through the chimney licked by the moon  
steals in through the switch on the bedside lamp steals in  
through the weave of the curtain

escaped from the wardrobe a vulture  
drinks the last drop of water  
under the window a horse keeps neighing  
in the attic the scrape and gnaw of rats

you've been betrayed by your lover by poetry by Flemish painters  
you've even been betrayed by an orange's scent  
nobody throws you a life jacket  
in this night this dreamlike fiesta

insomnia endless insomnia

and all at once the bells' tolling at dawn  
rattles the window and the bed the walls  
crash down on top of you  
and you fall asleep amidst the rubble of the hours



***Petre Stoica***

*translated from the Romanian by  
Adam J. Sorkin & Ioana Ieronim*

**the dead of this house**

eternalized in slightly dusty frames  
they wait for contemplation maybe pity  
on the part of the guest lodged in the main room

one of them used to be a rich farmer  
married to a peasant woman who was rich as well  
another worked in offices in the city the tip  
of a gold tie pin still gleams  
yet another served his country as  
a courier in a horse relay his stallion  
strains forward ready to jump out of the frame

and yet another  
my grandfather's cousin's brother-in-law  
wandered Europe his whole life  
returning home at a ripe old age  
with a bunch of violets

*Sally Van Doren*

**All, Free, Clear**

I washed time and while the suds  
floated like clouds

in the basement sink, the dirty water fled  
through the drain's dark hole.

I thought I knew you once; things between us  
were clean. Look at these stains.

I bleach, I soak, I agitate.  
Twenty-two years spin by.

We're wrung dry, still soiled, half our lives  
caught in the lint trap.

*Sally Van Doren*

**Fight**

You ask me  
to say yes  
but not  
one million  
yesses will  
fill your  
well of nos.  
I won't die  
hauling you  
out. Stay  
down there  
and see if  
anyone  
else can  
draw up  
that empty  
bucket.  
The rope  
is taut  
with its  
weight.  
Will we  
cut it soon?

*The 2River View*, 11.4 (Summer 2007)

### Contributors

Philip Brady—the author of three books of poetry and a memoir, *To Prove My Blood: A Tale of Emigrations and the Afterlife*—teaches at Youngstown State University, where he directs the Poetry Center and Etruscan Press, and plays in the New-Celtic band, Brady's Leap.

Therese L. Broderick—resident of upstate New York and recipient of the 2006 Intro Journals Project Award given by the AWP—has had poems recently in *Barnwood* and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.



*Sprung* © 2007 by Megan Karlen

Ryan Collins is a former editor of *Columbia Poetry Review*. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Black Clock*, *Keep Going*, *Word Riot* and *Verse Daily*. He works as the Literary Arts Administrator for regional arts non-profit Quad City Arts, and plays drums in the rock band Sharks.

Lydia R. Cooper will receive her Ph.D. in English Literature from Baylor University in 2008. She has written and published on Cormac McCarthy, the subject of her dissertation.

Michael A. Flanagan—born in the Bronx—recently returned to the states after living for six years on a small Island in Northeastern Canada. Poems of his have appeared in small press periodicals across the country.

Nancy A. Henry, a five-time Pushcart Prize nominee, lives near Portland, Maine. Sheltering Pines Press published her book *Our Lady of Let's All Sing* in March 2007.

Ioana Ieronim is the author of ten collections of poetry. *The Triumph of the Water Witch* (Bloodaxe Books, 2006), translated with Adam J. Sorkin, was shortlisted for Oxford University's Weidenfeld Prize. Other books include *41*, *Dragon Kites over the Mountains*, and *Escalator*.

Kathryn Kirkpatrick lives in North Carolina and is a Professor of English at Appalachian State University. She is the author of three collections of poetry: *The Body's Horizon* (1996), *Beyond Reason* (2004), and *Out of the Garden* (forthcoming 2007). She is also the author of two chapbooks *Looking for Ceilidh* (2004) and *The Master's Wife* (2004).

Laura McCullough is the author of *The Dancing Bear* (Open Book Press, 2006) and *What Men Want* (XOXOX Press, forthcoming 2008). Mudlark recently published a collection of her prose poems, *Elephant Anger*.

Karen Pape teaches and writes fiction and poetry. Her poems have appeared in publications such *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review* and *Perigee*.

*(continued on next page)*

## ***The 2River View*, 11.4 (Summer 2007)**

### **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.

### **About the Artist**

Megan Karlen has been in numerous group shows along the east coast, as well as solo shows in New York and New Jersey.

### **Contributors (continued from preceding page)**

Adam J. Sorkin's recent translations include Magda Cârnelci's *Chaosmos*, translated with Cârnelci (White Pine Press), Mihai Ursachi's *The March to the Stars* (Vinea Press), and Mariana Marin's *Paper Children* (Ugly Duckling Presse). Sorkin has received funding and grants from the NEA, Rockefeller Foundation, and Witter Bynner Foundation.

Petre Stoica has been publishing in Romanian since 1957. The translations here in *2RV* derive from *The Master of the Hunt Visits* (*[Vizita maestrului de vânatoare]*, 2002). Stoica has won numerous literary prizes including the Writers' Union Grand Prize and the National Mihai Eminescu Poetry Prize.

Sally Van Doren is the recipient of the 2007 Walt Whitman Award given by the Academy of American Poets. Louisiana State University Press will publish her winning manuscript, *Sex at Noon Taxes*, in March 2008. Van Doren lives in St. Louis, Missouri, and Cornwall, Connecticut.

Richard Long  
[www.2River.org](http://www.2River.org)



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11.4 (Summer 2007)

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