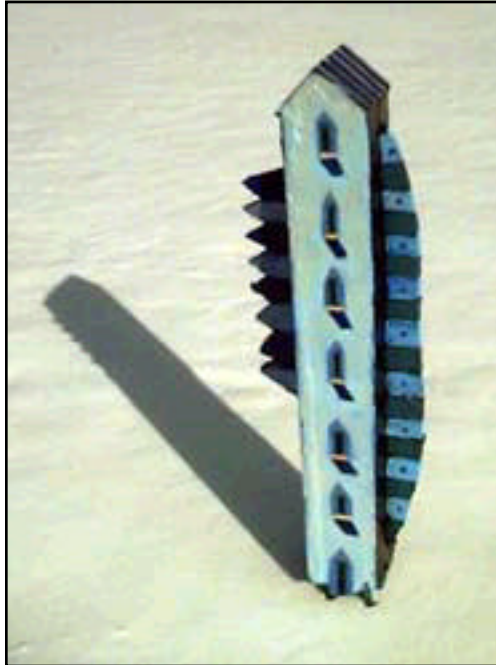


# The 2River View

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**

3\_2 (Winter 1999)

Blue Building, Red Building, Yellow Building  
© 1999 by Mark Flowers

*2River View, 3\_2 (Winter 1999)*

## **Contents**

---

### **hortensia anderson**

Swimming Pool  
What Little I Know

### **Gregory Betts**

In the Glare  
Rumpled Sweater

### **John Bush**

nothing really significant to say

### **Catherine Daly**

Our Ghost

### **R. Virgil Ellis**

The Strange Man  
Womanslide / Manslide

### **John Horvath Jr**

Four-Wheel-Drive Pioneer  
Railwalker

### **Marie Kazalia**

Quasi-Memorial  
overheard words

**Linda Leavitt**

Ice Cubes

**Jessy Randall**

Trapped in Oz

Scarecrow #2

**Michael Rothenberg**

May Elegy for Allen Ginsberg

Allegra Wong

The Hearse



## **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

## **Rumpled Sweater**

Gregory Betts

---

I wear a rumpled sweater  
every night

                                  green sleeves  
tawdry wool  
                  offering bold strings  
to every autumn night  
          aged to the limit

the cuffs are stripped, splayed  
          an odour lingers  
around of dogs, sweat, and forest  
  floors

it is the only thing that remains  
          from the start of one voyage  
                  to the next  
that will never change

## 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 gilt);  
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 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.

**Allegra Wong** is completing an MA in English and American



Literature  
and  
Language  
from  
Harvard  
University.  
She is the  
founder of  
*ReadingWrite*,  
an on-line  
creative  
writing  
workshop.

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

<http://www.daemen.edu/~2River>

For information about submissions, please visit the 2River website, or send email to

[2River@daemen.edu](mailto:2River@daemen.edu)

All mail is answered within a day or two.



**2River**



**2RV**