

# The 2River View

5.2 (Winter 2001)



*Flight Into Egypt* © 2000 by Endi Poskovic

## **new poems by**

Richard Denner, Suzanne Frischkorn, William Holbrook, Katja,  
Petra Tasha Klein, C. E. Lennon, Dorothy Doyle Mienko,  
Christopher Mulrooney, Roger Pflingston, and David Wright



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Richard Long, Editor

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Katja

**Adult Club, NYC**

---

Down there  
on John Street  
*down* like on  
my body, you can take  
her legs and turn them to the light that's  
frequent, ethereal; you can mix  
partners none of whom would make it  
into a real movie, into your own  
movie, you can make your own  
a hundred moving body parts, white,  
black, not yours, *come*  
*to see us, we will let you travel down*  
and traveling light, the love poem  
you would have written if you'd gone  
another way, will fly  
like drops of water from your fingertips.

Katja

**Linda Sutton dies**

---

*radio producer, writer of 'Brenda Starr,' in divinity school at the time of her death*

Still I remember coming to the life  
courting the cancer even on the wire—  
balanced, waves passing right  
through me. I thought  
nothing of it—cut-outs, radio's fantasy  
unspoken like the pillowtalk of ghosts;  
that was my tragic error. Brenda knew

—watching me from the sidelines—  
how the hosts  
are all of us, with newsprint on our hands.  
All of us, who, as if in trouble, run  
hot in impossible clothes, through high contrast,  
face sharp with shadow. Look lively, sit, don't ask  
who comes forth in the dawn... Venus, no Starr,  
blocks all our light, whispers our lives awake—  
we fear her voice, the hiss  
on the unmarked dial  
some say are messages  
from Beyond. We take  
dots and we make a picture.  
So, with words,  
how will a prayer be their final form?  
We could argue all night. Brenda would say,  
Brenda would just—what



makes a woman real?  
When is she not  
a girl? When they say  
*cancer*, shaking their heads?  
Then there's the Sun,  
rising on every man who, every day,  
looks down to see the smudges  
on his hands guilty  
still as the Lady  
as the Starr  
writes in her notebook. What mere mortal man  
cannot erase, a stone pushed up a hill,  
castle of sand, made up of tiny dots,  
ink from the Pointillist beyond the stands...  
catch as catch conscience. What, have we forgot  
how, like the shadows on the wall, we took  
black/white and static  
till we Turned  
to Look?

Katja

**To James**

---

Your back long  
and pliant against me in bed; that  
is the heart of it. Holding you, I let go  
and drift off, loose, threads  
fanning out over water.  
What's repeated in the morning  
is your cool sweetness, freckled and smooth.  
I hold you like the back  
of my cello, that at my chest  
sang its warm phrases, why did I ever  
stop playing? Sometimes we don't  
know—why we turn away  
from what, despite everything, sustains us.

Music and imagined music.  
I don't have any answers. It's still true  
that when I hold you what I feel  
is light your chest keeps instead of words,  
leading and clear. So in my arms,  
like your laughter, let the light  
escape into my body when you turn  
your shoulders. Morning is your lips and eyes.

C. E. Lennon

### **Defining Memory**

---

Some memories  
are the sticky, wet  
of cancer, swelling  
to suffocate everything else;  
couched in words that matter,  
tweaked into a poem that  
slides into fits of discontented,  
blue, moody eloquence.  
Other memories  
are brightly colored nylon,  
filled with helium, rising  
high and out of reach.  
Or spread eagle, freefall dives  
into ethereal patches of mist,  
pinched into inadequate words;  
enslaved by the comma  
and the semicolon.

Richard Denner

**Hear them Buzz**

---

With the gums gone the  
words within words, no kidding,  
the birds chatting with other birds,  
are barely heard.

And though the nose is  
green and blue,  
it's much too hot to twitch.  
Nothing

stirs except a bluebottle fly.  
The eye in my head  
sees me coming toward the river,  
and a sound says,

*I will die outside your window.*

Richard Denner

**Persephone's Mirror**

---

*for Beryl*

I am that woman despised  
by all other women  
and most desired by men.  
I am tormented

by the hostile sex  
that saturates me.  
There are days and days  
when I feel ugly,

and no one likes me.  
You say within  
a golden goddess sleeps,  
although I am forbidden to see

anything but under ground.  
Unfolding with Spring,  
I yearn for whoever  
can understand my pain.

Suzanne Frischkorn

### **Secrets My Husband Keeps**

---

I plug my guitar into its amplifier  
minutes after I hand her the cell phone  
and wave her down the avenue.  
This October weekend she will not hover

around the PC like a drunk moth batting  
itself to death against a screen door.  
She left it all for stone wall silence.  
Our kitchen gleams with her absence.

Books remain on shelves, towels hang  
on hooks, kisses do not blow.  
In our queen size bed, suddenly generous,  
I conjure her return—skin fresh with solitude.

She'll be torn between kissing me, and a quick dash  
to the keyboard. Flush with the need to tap her fingers  
in a battle of punctuation, minefields of commas,  
but I am armed with full lips.

Suzanne Frischkorn

## **Spring**

---

Frigid all winter she starts with heavy breathing,  
finishes with a day drenched in moisture—  
orange tulips, pink dogwoods, purple lilacs, burst  
open in the rush. Nature shudders, then spasms,  
as she drips daisies and forsythia on the lawn;  
every moan produces more daffodils,  
and her hot breath makes them sway in the iridescent light.

William Holbrook

## **Above the Canals de Provence**

---

*Amidst the lustful fires he walks; his feet become like bronze,  
His knees and thighs like silver; and his breast and head like gold.*

William Blake

I.

I had told him of the matter in between the stars,  
That if there were enough of it, the Universe would collapse.

He asked me without guile whether this was bad or good,  
I told him that it just was; just as a tree was also.

This reminded me of the grand impasse, the great misunderstanding  
Between Man and Liberty; the problem of the one very hungry God.

II.

Winter on the beach, the sky is almost big,  
The palm trees and the lighthouse orange the clouds.

The sky that tempts the light off the bay till evening,  
Sounds of children on the sand, stoked with ice cream.

Through the haze of cold trees and roses all is wan,  
All is wannabee, want to be until the mauve turns blue.

III.

There is a red tip on the gray piece under the wing.  
This will do for now, though there is no word for it.

Does the un-named object exist. There is a knife wound  
In the thigh; it hurts; he limps; freshly bandaged.

When you love with a violent passion, all else  
You love with a cold flame that sears the flesh.



IV.

My love for snow shows how creating systems of measurement  
Can bring stubborn facts into being and then erase them.

City streams, the fluxes of senses and their convergence.  
Her sighs, even, were engorged and glowing as they swayed.

They were in the same place, stalking, each connected  
To another, so that all but strained intercourse was futile.

V.

Meaning streams through the ways of webs; read aloud  
Find that he was surely right, exposing the sliced flesh.

The rubbing of the fingers, the thumb and first finger.  
The sign of the transaction agreed upon by nod of head.

The sky was so leaden and so gray; I looked and looked,  
But could not find the author anywhere, long out of print.

VI.

That in built mechanism in the brain that knows  
Long before; that moves blood; that tightens tendons.

You see, I had paid her to play in Barcelona that weekend,  
Invested in her inaccessibility except for the transpiring.

The world is far emptier than we thought, far emptier  
Even than the red eyed blackbird could readily imagine.

VII.

I touched her just once, to make very sure that I was real,  
The shrank the size of the print, to fit us both on the page.

Even then I could see the tops of their heads, guess the down,  
The loose limbs cruising by themselves along the Canebiere.

The gallery of the imbeciles threatened again, so I wanted  
Then to go down to the beach and feel the cold darkening air.

VIII.

She is asleep now. I readily agreed that the best part  
Was the climbing of the stairs, the feel of the metal

Railing, the soft warm wood under foot, the echoing hall,  
The smell of disinfectant and of polish, the roughness

Of the obsession, addiction, the slave who tied me, forced me  
Compelled me to admit the affectionate gesture of the matter.

IX.

Dry, dry heaves; look; look, over your shoulder. Admit  
That you like your rough trade lucid, your lucidity very rough.

It is like this, it is the Sunday and it knows.  
Omar the generous, the other, smiles with pride.

The genius is in his white hat, the smile, no smirk, why  
Even the animals of night have it all figured out.

X.

Your whole life is but a few leaves, but that's OK.  
It is a start. Now I remember almost nothing of the rest.

Petra Tasha Klein

**In The Thin Light Of November**

---

Trees made to relinquish their color,  
stand, stick fingers in cold wind

A black bird sits on bent branch  
cawing again and again

Below, a stray dog watches him  
with sick, uncomprehending eyes

Oh, world of air, transparent,  
fleeting breath,  
How quickly, quickly,  
we move towards our death.

Petra Tasha Klein

**You Were Here**

---

The late afternoon sunlight  
falls silently  
breaking across my legs, arms,  
the shallow pool beneath my heart

With broken feathers and stiff wings  
I get up to shake the sheets  
howling  
soft as your mouth  
*come back, come back again.*

Stone of the lungs  
blood of the lip  
black smoke  
long cigarette

Cat at the window  
scratching for the moon

Come back, come back  
I promise to listen  
to all of your stories  
and hold them under my tongue.

Dorothy Doyle Mienko

**Estate Sale Blues**

---

it wasn't the way  
light slanted  
through stained glass

it wasn't the rose  
carved headboard or  
missing linen

it wasn't tinsel  
half moon garlands  
or glittered bulbs

it was the ruby  
pin in the hat box  
it's clasp broken  
and how it missed

three pearls

Dorothy Doyle Mienko

**First Communion**

---

I remember  
kneeling in my  
borrowed dress  
and veil, the bone  
and blood of Christ  
against the pink flesh  
of my tongue

and the image of  
my father's  
liquored face  
how he stayed  
in bed that day

Sacraments can't  
make a family  
function: when I  
was six Jesus,  
was just another  
disappointment  
dying on a cross

Christopher Mulrooney

**in there**

---

labyrinthologists may well repine  
there ain't no holt that can't be broke  
as the man says  
I beg to differ  
said that fellow from out of Iowa

I can show the way there is a holt  
can't be broke  
goes on and forever he says  
but the man from Iowa  
hasn't been many places  
beyond my farm



Christopher Mulrooney

**"the perished swans"**

---

here is the mort o' the deer and all that  
Soho declaims that  
everyone derides  
and there is deer meat tonight my dear love

here is the perambulant circumspection  
among the pinfeathers  
aswoop in the van

here is John Osborne gone to ground  
on Christmas Eve  
flinging a goodbye to this world

here is the lady all muckle and minx  
who lays the table  
with a course or two of mutton

Roger Pfingston

**Going Out for Wood at Ten Below**

---

The wind a razor,  
my eyes bleed tears.

Ahead, you walk  
like a man dying.

Snow swirls  
around us:

a cauldron  
of diced flesh.

Roger Pfingston

**For the Birds**

---

Stepping outside, ten degrees  
in a backyard gone crunchy  
with old snow, he carries a failure  
of popcorn balls stacked  
like geodes in a metal pan.

Not a one worth eating,  
his wife said. Never again!

As he rolls them, lopsided, light  
in the wind onto the picnic table,  
he wonders about the sticky threat,  
the cheap trick of such treats,  
fearing a ruin of guts and beaks,  
the imagined carnage still strewn  
over the lawn come spring.

David Wright

**American Gothic, Redux**

---

Vertical lines, hard  
glances, gray, gray,  
gray and a slight blue  
sky. Sunday clothes  
and coveralls. A broach,  
a pitchfork, round  
glasses. Gothic  
window, church-like  
between wife, husband,  
the same curve as their  
faces. Only one  
horizontal edge-porch  
roof right through  
their heads, anchoring  
the whole wide world.

David Wright

### **Wild Bird Feeder**

---

Eighteen inches of snow will not keep my neighbor from her twelve bird feeders—scraping the white dunce caps off their tops—pouring seed into metal pans and concentric trays and long clear tubes dangled from iron poles—stakes plunged in the snow, clear to the metal skirts she’s dressed them in to discourage squirrels. I’ve sometimes heard her beat on her window like a trapped bird, banging the glass to scare and curse determined squirrels that climb past her traps to feast. Today, her blue parka bright against the winter, she lets the gray tailed scavengers eat in peace, even peppers the snow with sunflower seeds so her enemies won’t need to climb the slick, black poles or drop boldly from the trees. Yet when they eat for just a while, grow confident near her feet, she stomps and yells, scattering them like the seeds she flings in fistfuls as they run. Trapped behind my glass, I know she is the wildest creature moving, feeding cardinals, crows, chickadees more than even nature would in winter, abandoning herself to care, to fury strewn and sewn across the snow, some eaten, some stolen, and still more wasted on the breeze.

*The 2River View*, 5.2 (Winter 2001)

## Authors

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**Richard Denner** lives near Sebastopol, California. For many years, he was the proprietor of Fourwinds Bookstore and Café in Ellensburg, Washington. In his spare time, he publishes dpress chapbooks.

**Suzanne Frischkorn** is the poetry editor of *Samsara Quarterly*. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals including *The Isle Review* and *Owen Wister Review*, and in the anthology *A Generation Speaks for Itself II*. Her books include *The Tactile Sense* (Alpha Beat Press 1996) and *Exhale* (Scandinavian Obiterati Press 2000).

**William Holbrook**, an engineer in Marseille, France, started writing poetry late in life. He finds that the writing is a good antidote to culture shock.

**Katja** is a neurologist, reader, runner, and expecting mother. At her website, [www.geocities.com/m\\_katja](http://www.geocities.com/m_katja), you can hear her read many of her poems.

**Petra (Tasha) Klein** works in Chicago. She has been published in various eZines, including *Conspire*, *Gumball Poetry*, *Stirring*, *MindKites*, *Snakeskin*, *The Adirondack Review*, and *Bluff Magazine*.

**C. E. Lennon** is a web designer and freelance artist. Her poetry has appeared in *Free Zone Quarterly*, *New World Poetry*, *The White Shoe Irregular*, *Countless Horizons*, *Friction Magazine* and *Niederngasse*.

**Dorothy Doyle Mienko** lives Grand Rapids, Michigan. Her work has been published in *Stirring*, *FZQ*, *Doomed City*, *New World Poetry*, *Eclipse*, *Late August*, *Poet's Canvas*, and *Niederngasse*.



**Christopher Mulrooney** lives in Los Angeles. His poetry, fiction, and translations have appeared recently in *ACM*, *Frank*, and *Nimrod*.

**Endi Poskovic** has exhibited extensively in virtually all major national and international print exhibitions throughout the United States, Australia, Cuba, Croatia, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Yugoslavia. He teaches at in the art department at Whittier College.

**Roger Pfingston** is currently online at *Poet's Canvas*, *PoetryNow*, and *The Adirondack Review*. His work is also in recent print magazines such as *Poet Lore*, *Wisconsin Review*, and *The Chiron Review*.

**David Wright** teaches writing and literature in Decatur, Illinois. His poems and essays have appeared in many places, including *The Midwest Quarterly*, *re:generation quarterly*, and online in *Thunder Sandwich*. His first book is *Lines from the Provinces*.

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2River is a literary site on the Daemen College webserver in Amherst, New York. The address is

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

2River publishes *The 2River View*, a quarterly journal of poetry, art, and theory, and occasionally publishes individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series. All publications first appear online and afterwards in print. Interested contributors can read the submission guidelines on the 2River site.

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