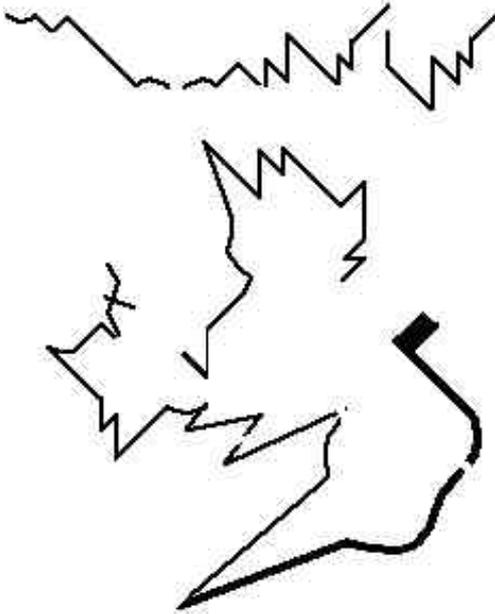


# The 2River View

1\_1 (Fall 1996)



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Poems by Virginia Conn,  
Dan Hall, Jordanne Holyoak,  
James Michael Robbins, David Southerland,  
Barry Spacks, and C. K. Tower.  
Art by Don Bied.

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**2RP**



# The 2River View

1\_1 (Winter 1996)

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## In a minute I'll tell you

Virginia Conn

---

I've worked this chip into a full  
blown crack, trying to blend  
it into the pattern. There's so much  
I can't afford to replace, starting a list,  
becoming anxious as the losses mount.  
I realize I've included your stereo.  
Before you, there was my clock radio,  
so static with abuse I was forced to move  
it out of my sleepy rough reach.

Without music, I am at the mercy  
of the EI, the garbage trucks at dawn,  
the downstairs couple who slam and shout.  
I know they're doomed, but should I say it?  
Such a treacherous topic to open with;  
how quickly it could turn.

I begin a different story, my back to you,  
trembling like Scheherazade,  
clueless as to where the ending comes.

## Swans

Virginia Conn

---

She is keen for the swans  
her face pressed to the window  
as the bus winds the river shored road.  
I first think she says swamp and look  
for alligators along the banks  
forgetting this is Southampton  
and I'm on my way to the A&P.  
Her accent makes it hard to understand  
all she's learned about swans,  
stars of her letters home. I picture  
a land swan bare, possibly Aegean,  
the wind temperate and lilting as her voice  
as if wind teaches us to speak.  
Her distress is more than they deserve.  
I tell her swans are mean and cranky,  
prone to nipping the hand that feeds them.  
Their beauty is in their leaving,  
the smooth glide of long wings across  
the water, and one lifts off over palms  
and gabled roofs to prove my point.

# Crucifix

Dan Hall

---

the radio preachers  
wish the romans used crucifixion  
as a means to terrorize the underclass.  
it's not so though.  
pilate didn't want to kill jesus.  
he couldn't believe the pharisees  
wanted his death.  
pilate let the people choose  
whether barbarus, a murder, or jesus, the blasphemer  
shall be freed.  
the people, under the sway of the pharisees,  
expressed their preference for the freedom of  
Barabus.  
the death penalty  
is always a terrorist toy  
of the lesser sovereign. always.

## Poverty Flats, Arizona

Jordanne Holyoak

---

population 45

Below red rock cliffs, in that county  
of wide-winged birds and wild honey,  
Vivian and I sat with big ideas  
circling our heads.  
We sprawled on a tufted slope  
just above a lazy windmill  
and acres of watermelons.  
We spoke of a life far from this jagged horizon,  
days from familiar voices,  
deep in a city of neon and summer.  
As we talked, we climbed out as far  
as we dared to the edge of our dreams,  
and trusted our bodies to tell us how far,  
how high to go. We could not undo  
what linked us to puberty,  
that new urgency rising,  
the lure of the beekeeper's son  
as he bounded nude to the windmill's deep tank  
below our thicket. He dove and dove,  
his legs the color of cream,  
his belly white as quartz.

*(continued)*

Talk stopped, the only sound  
the rush of air in our throats  
as we took in  
all that he was.  
Silently we urged him to stop  
and hoped he would dive forever.  
Pink neon was a color  
we wore home on our cheeks, the color  
of an evening which sent falcons curling toward us.  
Against stubborn cliffs, we screamed  
to be something more than fifteen,  
stuck miles from a good time,  
while we watched a windmill and falcons  
tighten their circles.

# Night-Blooming Cereus

Jordanne Holyoak

---

Vivian and I conspired and freed old Giles  
from the nursing home where he'd spent all his life,  
and we had worked our days.  
The escape was madness gone sweet.  
The open boat unhitched us from that lost place,  
set us drifting.  
He took in the liquid conversation  
of oar and river, and the mossy greens  
which blended into dusk.  
Mouth ajar, he bloomed before us  
like the desert spectacle of cereus  
waiting for the moth.  
He bloomed childlike,  
easy to the sights along the river:  
his first cow, limpid-eyed and chewing  
where fireflies threw glitter at the bank.  
He batted twisted hands to make applause.  
All those years he'd been budding,  
wanting to wax white, to scent  
a moonless night, July,  
but needed a cool summer dusk,  
fireflies, and luna moths.  
This night they flapped  
and fluttered their hairy wings  
around the half-dark  
searching for nectar.  
We knew this couldn't be forever.  
so we kissed him, felt his beard  
prick our cheeks,  
Then gave him wine  
and saw the beads of starlight on his brow.  
We watched the night-blooming cereus,  
a spiny tube of dingy green,  
open in its single, strange awakening.

# Impomu

art by Don Bied

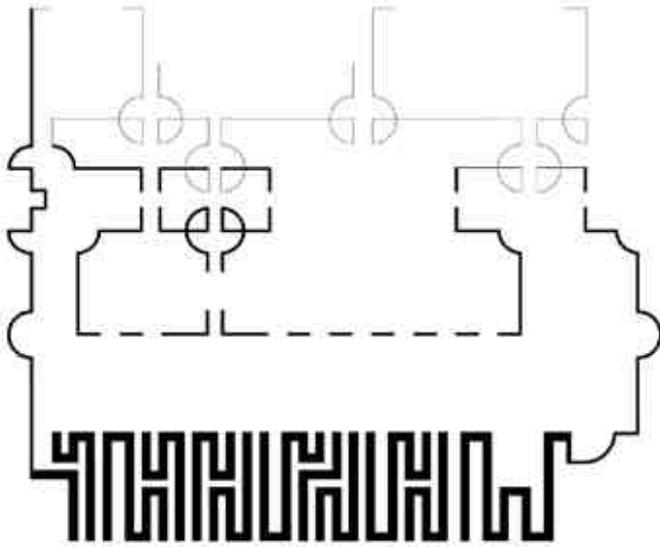
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The images here are from Don Bied's *Impomu*, an idiosyncratic alphabet which contains characters of his own design, as well as characters from other contemporary alphabets.

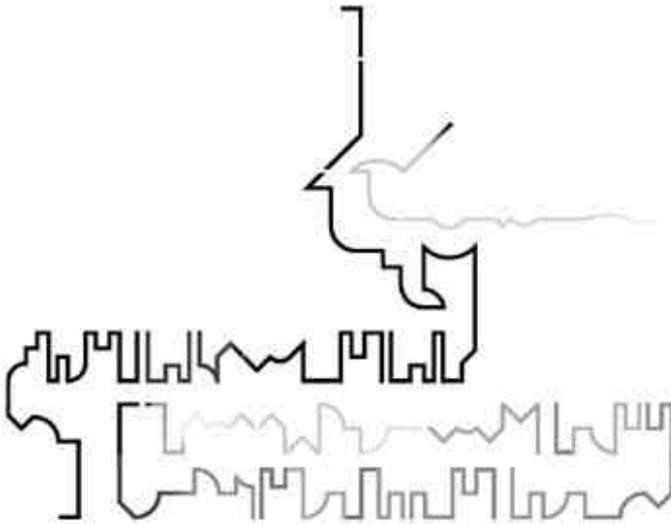
*Impomu* is like other traditional alphabets in that its individual letters can be used to create communicative structures. Individual characters can combine to create character units. In some cases, these character units can be seen as referential and/or symbolic. Unlike the Greek alphabet and its descendants, Bied's characters do not represent sounds. Like most systems of communication, *Impomu* is in a continuing state of revision and will continue to be so as long as it is in use.

*Impomu* does not produce a specific literal narrative although a grouping or line of characters could represent a human perception or quality. What constitutes *Impomu* as an alphabet is that it is made up of basic elements (individual characters) that are the building blocks of a system of communication and study.

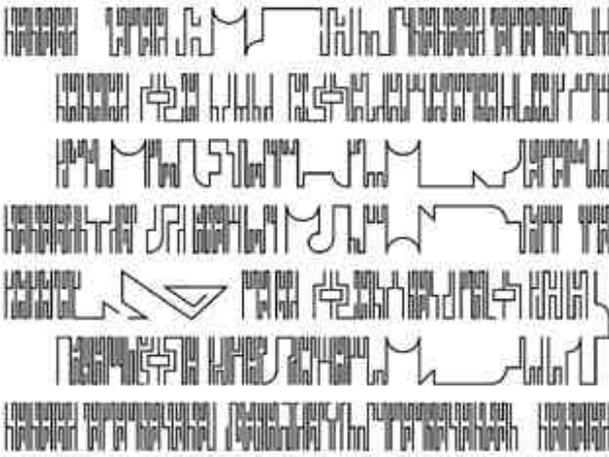
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- ETSETA/LAS



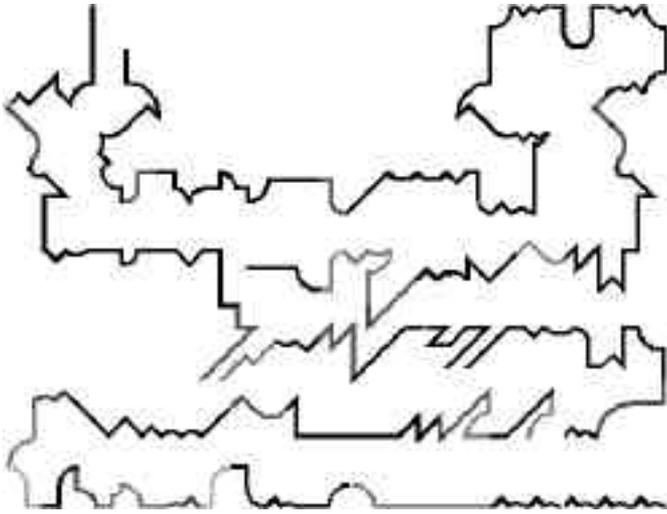
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HAGLO/SIM/3 © 1996 DON BIED



ETSETA/LAS © 1996 DON BIED

## Calm Sea Under Clouds

James Michael Robbins

---

In the Caribbean,  
the sky is only  
a reflection of the sea.  
If it should try to be  
different by adorning itself  
with clouds, the sea becomes slate,  
and the sky comes face to face  
with irony.  
Forget about cause and effect.  
Forget your logic—it will not serve  
you here. You can only know  
that when one speaks of blue  
here, the sky is mere afterthought.  
And now, the calm sea  
under clouds, the sky hard  
to imagine, as though  
it is by the undulation  
of water that we know  
clouds, the gentle surf  
saying see what else  
I have made for you.

## Grace at the Isle of Palms

James Michael Robbins

---

There is peace to an island—simple plot  
Separate, cloaked in ocean yet true to  
The notion of terra firma, though not  
So sure fire, familiar with the power  
of water. Here, the supple palms tower  
Over sand, and (you feel) stand for something.  
Strangers can come here and become less strange  
Until they find themselves part of the place,  
Belonging here and, finally, to each  
Other—more like family, or the way  
Sand belongs to the beach. Then it hits you,  
How the palms, the waves, they're all of a grace,  
And you turn, like the jester pelican  
That takes the air and there becomes a king.

# The Myth of the Millionth Wave

James Michael Robbins

---

It begins with the loneliness  
Of the solitary figure in the cliffs  
Staring as the waves swell  
Toward their deaths

The unbearable waiting  
For a return from the sea  
Even when it is known  
There is no return

That grows and is dashed  
Over and over  
On the rocks of the mind  
And grows again

Until belief in the vigil  
Becomes more than the vigil itself  
A reason for expectation  
And the counting begins.

# Synchronicity

David Sutherland

---

Father,

If there is an existing standard,

you should be referred to without modification

Respectfully: when neither subject nor object has  
noun,

the formal "I" is applicable

Example;

"I" have space,

"I" have eyes,

"I" have teeth in an empty skull.

Goliath takes possession of the first

and pins the hare with a superlative of the second

(the soft objects - adjectives), as for the rest,

fuck it,

the alternatives are none.

## Free Thursday

Barry Spacks

---

Free Thursday at the Art Museum  
you stand so long before a painting  
of four tipsy monks on a bridge in a gorge  
that when this homeless fellow comes close  
to hit you up for some change you whisper  
“How much?” “What?” How much do you want?”

This stops him. He tilts his head like a bird...  
you're either nuts or a pervert...he starts  
to slide away. Then stops. Whispers:  
“How much you got?” — and you want to give him  
everything: your three credit cards,  
impeccable credit rating, job,  
Volvo, laptop, gift of gab.  
In shame you slip him a dollar. He nods.  
Outside the kids are climbing the statues;  
outside it's happening: play of the fountain:  
wind snapping ten-foot banners: birds  
cheeping in trees like cascading pennies.

## What's Left

Barry Spacks

---

The house of memory clears its burdens...  
she hasn't thought of you in years —  
wouldn't be able to pick you out  
in a naked two-man lineup.  
And so, what's left? The thought, like trance,  
of how her beauty moved you once —  
how you'd blaze and melt, blaze and melt,  
at the touch of her lingering hand.

## Midnight Concerto in A Blue Major

CK Tower

---

*What! all this for a song?*

*William Cecil*

He says, "Just sing," but I'm afraid tonight,  
of losing my voice, to that cat's eye which  
shines slanted, in this gauzy midnight expanse.  
These things are supposed to inspire. Instead  
I'm left with chalky discontentment. The breath  
of night-wind rhythms, stirs my fear of  
falling, displaces my sense of reason with a  
chill embrace. If I close my eyes, and listen  
to that natural sighing, perhaps I could  
join that enchanted whisper. But what  
of the deep blue allegro creeping through these  
tilted synapses? Won't they set my song  
off key, pursue my heart with their dusky  
requiem, tell me there is no reason to sing?  
With doubt and fear in tune, I replay their same  
tasteless melody; a song for a soul so  
poor, it fell in love with melancholy.

## ILLUMINATING

CK Tower

---

*...it is in the touching of one with another  
that we become most fully ourselves.*

*Marilyn Sewell*

I dip my fingers into the water,  
and wonder at its smooth warmth. I feel as  
I always do, when the sun lazes on  
the other side of the world, that the moon  
is a more compassionate companion,  
more subtle in its revelations, like  
you. I did not know when you opened your  
heart, like a hesitant flower, spilling  
over on a wind-tipped stem, that our in-  
tangible boundaries would wound me, as  
if I'd caressed a thorn, instead of a  
silky petal. And still, it was never you who fed my  
weakness. I craved the light of your world. And  
you shined on me like this pale distant lum-  
inary, treating me as an equal, not like  
the day-tripping suicide dream, I was.

## The 2River View

1\_1 (Fall 1996) Contributors

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**Don Bied** is an artist in Buffalo, New York. He has had solo exhibitions in many galleries, including the Burchfield Art Center in Buffalo, the Castellani Art Museum in Niagara Falls, and the Condeso/Lawler Gallery in New York City. His upcoming show is January 1997 at Gallery Juno in New York City.

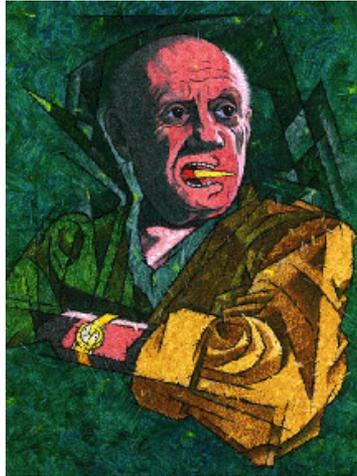
**Virginia Conn** is a native of Chicago and a graduate student at SUNY Buffalo. She is the editor and cofounder of *WORD OUTA BUFFALO*.

**Dan Hall** is a native of Los Angeles and law student at Loyola.

**Jordanne Holyoak**, a native of the Gila River Valley of Arizona, now finds herself stranded in the cold reaches of Indiana, where she teaches blind people and works as a lighting de-

signer and botanist. She is editor of *THE FREE CUISENART*, which is produced by Creative Coalition of Artists, an organization fighting censorship on the internet. Her chapbook, *GERONIMO CLAN*, won the Giovanna Award for poetry in 1988.

**James Michael Robbins** lives in Austin, Texas,



Picasso by Don Bied © 1996

where he does a five-mile walk around the town lake just about every morning. He is editor of *Sulphur River Review*.

A novelist, singer-songwriter, actor, **Barry Spacks** has taught literature at MIT, and is persistently a Visiting Professor at U.C. Santa Barbara. He has recently discovered Net publishing after seven paper-text poetry collections— including *SPACKS STREET: NEW AND SELECTED POEMS*—and has poems out or forthcoming on the Web in, to name a few, *Blue Penny Quarterly*, *X-Connect*, *Mississippi Review*, *Zuzu Petals*, and *Snakeskin*.

**David Sutherland** is a current member of The Academy Of American Poets, with a collection soon scheduled for release by MP Publishing of Norfolk, Virginia. His poems have previously appeared in a number of journals, magazines and reviews such as *The Trincoll Journal*, *Oyez Review*, and elsewhere. Additionally, his work has been translated in German, Spanish and other languages for overseas distribution.

**CK Tower** is from Lansing Michigan. She attends LCC (previously attended Wayne State,) and is president of the college's creative writing club. Her works have been published internationally, as well as in several internet journals. She welcomes visits to her Jasmine Room.





# 2River Poetry

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**The 2River View**, a journal of poetry and art, is published by 2River Poetry, an internet literary site on the Daemen College World Wide Web server. 2River Poetry also publishes individual authors. These collections, as well as the most recent number of **The 2River View**, can be accessed at

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

All mail is answered within a day or two.

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