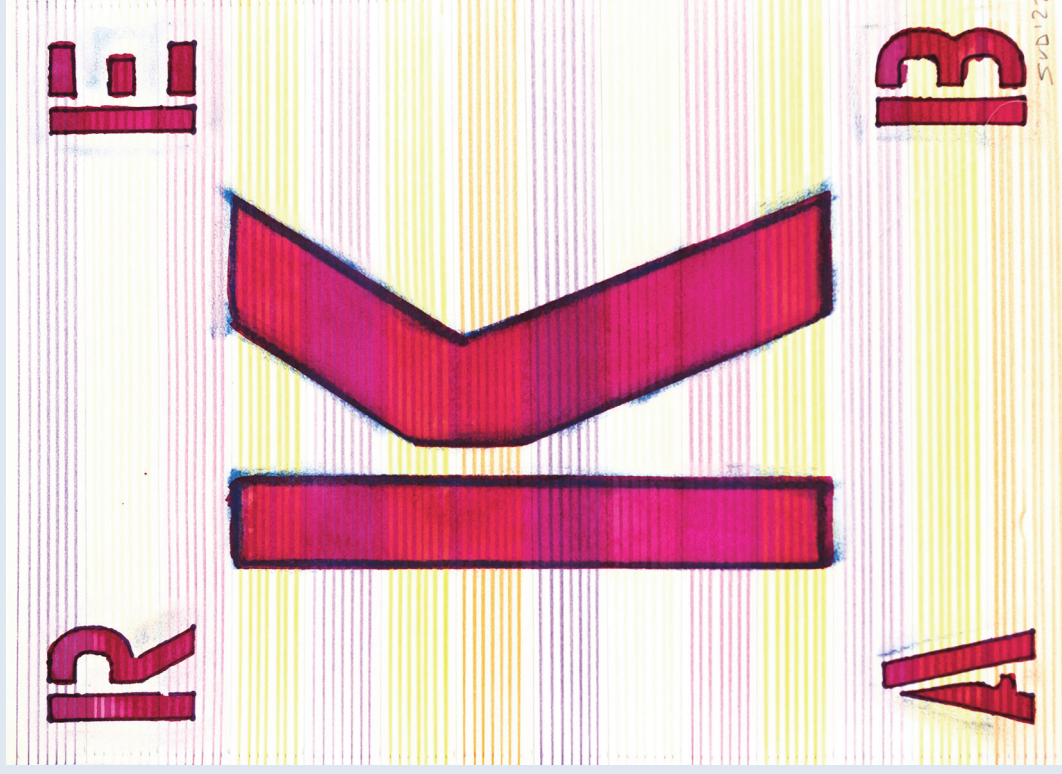


2RV

29.3 (Spring 2025)

The 2River View

29.3 (Spring 2025)



2River

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new poems by

Julia Ross, Lawrence Bridges

Barbara Siegel Carlson, Dennis Cummings

Nicelle Davis, Jessie Anne Harrison, Michael Lauchlan

Cecil Morris, Yoda Olinyk, Kimberly White, Marina Hope Wilson

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About 2River

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry and art, quarterly publishing The 2River View and occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series.

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About the Artist

Sally Van Doren is the author of four poetry collections, the first of which won the Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets, and a practicing visual artist who formalized her training at Hunter College and The School of Visual Arts.

Anagram Titles

ABEKR
AEHRT
ELMNO

2River on Social Media

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Dennis Cummings has lived in San Diego County his entire life. After working in the flower growing and shipping industry for forty-eight years, he is now retired. He has poems in *The Baltimore Review*, *The Portland Review*, *Witness*, and elsewhere.

Nicelle Davis is a California poet, collaborator, and performance artist. Her poetry collections include *The Language of Fractions*, *The Walled Wife*, *In the Circus of You*, *Becoming Judas*, and *Circe*. She teaches at High Desert Middle School. website

Jessie Anne Harrison (she/her) is a poet from Houston, Texas, now in her final semester of a Creative Writing MFA from Arcadia University. Her poetry can be found at *Anodyne Magazine*, *The Prose Poem*, and elsewhere.

Michael Lauchlan is the author of the poetry collections *And Business Goes to Pieces*, *Sudden Parade*, and *Trumbull Ave*. *Running Lights* is forthcoming from Cornerstone Press.

Cecil Morris, a retired schoolteacher, has poems in journals such as *Common Ground Review*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Rust + Moth*, and *Sugar House Review*. *At Work in the Garden of Possibilities* is due this year from Main Street Rag.

Yoda Olinyk (she/her) is a writer, editor, and workshop guide from Canada. Her work has appeared in many journals, and she is the author of two books.

Kimberly White the author of three novels, the latest being *Waterfall Girls* (CLASH Books, 2021). Her poetry has appeared in *Cream City Review*, *Does It Have Pockets*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Northern California.

Marina Hope Wilson is the author of *Nighttime* (Cooper Dillon Books). Her poems have appeared in *\$*, *Bicoastal Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in San Francisco and works as a speech-language therapist.



AEHRT by Sally Van Doren

The 2River View, 29.3 (Spring 2025)

Bios

Julia Ross (she/her) is a poet and special education professional in Austin, Texas. Her work appears in *About Place Journal*, *New Verse News*, *Rise Up Review*, and elsewhere.

Lawrence Bridges has poems in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and *Tampa Review*. He has published three volumes of poetry: *Horses on Drums* (Red Hen Press), *Flip Days* (Red Hen Press), and *Brownwood* (Tupelo Press).

Barbara Siegel Carlson is the author of three poetry collections, most recently *What Drifted Here* (Cherry Grove, 2023). Her poetry and translations have appeared in *Acumen*, *Lily Poetry Review*, and *Verses Daily*. She edits poetry in translation at *Solstice LitMag*.

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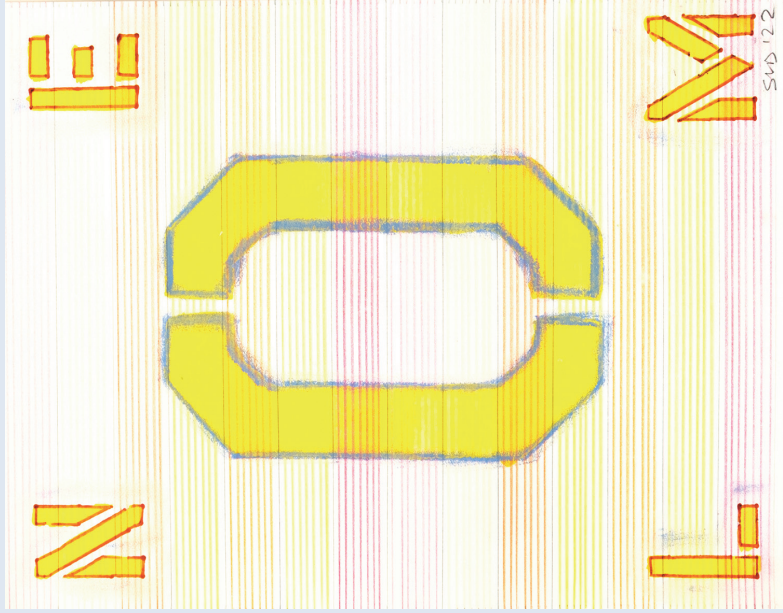
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ELMNO by Sally Van Doren

The Carnivores

One cat drags in so many mice
I check under the table before sitting,
for fear of squishing my toes into
the guts of some freshly killed creature.

The other cat's murders are limited to crane flies
and moths, and the plastic packaging she drags daily
from the waste basket, whining as she goes.
How I do love these soft bodied assassins.

Even as I scribble notes on empire and meat
and masculinity, even as I study the forms
of gentleness and its transformations,
I make this violence possible.

Every day, I send my wildness out.
Every day, I call my wildness back in.

And I am just one person.

Marina Hope Wilson

The Animal

I wake up thinking of boy and the cat—
how his grandmother boiled a pot of water,
and he didn't want to say so, but still remembered
all these years later, that she hated the cat
so she heated the water and poured it, scalding,
over its fur, and how it screamed.

Who boils the water, considers the steps,
does the awful thing?

The boy, he tries to blot it out. But still
he grows up and carries the cat with him.

He can't for the life of him put it down.

Julia Ross

The week I keep my government job but you lose your gender

we endeavor to fuck the algorithm:
send each other nonsense phrases about sourdough
until our news feeds are a blur of dead-looking women
kneading in long skirts. You learn

twenty nine uses for discard
& give your starter a name: I mull the perils
of over-proofing & end my journey
before the first loaf. Soon the women

& their scoring knives will turn on us:
in ASMR-optimized whispers
they'll assure us the revolution begins
at home. We'll find ourselves nodding along

before we realize they mean less
like multicultural picture books
& more like throw away your birth control.
We'll say things like *this is how they get you*

but still quietly feed the beasts
that bubble and ferment in glass jars
on our counters. It feels weirdly good
to be watching something grow.

Lawrence Bridges

The Healing Beach

This day will be over soon? Deep French horns and fog. There is no corner in these hours to turn to or to hide behind, like an expectant flight recessed in a travel day that doesn't count. Why is my first word "courage?" It is still dark, and the rote visuals start in the kitchen we worked so hard to get with ample time to reach out with a phantom limb for any task, to roll down to the beach and read, to mind the clock and say again it's fine. The wrong day began with the wrong questions. A space ray can't hurt us any more than it has. If you get up with it over, you've found a reasonable beginning. Pull a shroud over screens, sounds off; roll back to the healing beach.

Kimberly White

Dinah in Her Dirty Tent

I am not the one who calls it dirty
for I am as clean as anything else
in a desert world
and as dirty as everyone else
born female
Locked inside my cloth walls
with the red metal scent
of my blood
the sounds of sandstorms
whipping the tentcloth
in snapping waves
Heat presses down
like a boulder
I lie flat
to save my breath
as the river inside me
refuses to be dammed.
I myself refuse to be damned
by someone else's book
whose condemnations were drawn
in someone else's blood
spilled in the dirt by hands of war,
the same hands which lock me
in my dirty red tent.

Kimberly White

Reinterpretation of Stolen Scriptures (Psalm 120)

In my distress, I cried in my dark room, where comfort and peace lean on me. Deliver my soul, oh my gods, from the winds of war and hearts of stone. I know them every day, oh my gods, those tongues those minds those souls bathed in hate. Sharp arrows of the weak, with tongues of fire. If I don't feel sorry for me, neither does god, any god, and I don't leave myself behind wherever I go. The hatred in my world is well known to me, to all of my kind, yet I know my own peace in the face of their wars. Everyone who hates but also loves knows the same peace.

Lawrence Bridges

Love Song with an Ocean View

Still in lockdown. I'm completely disorganized and here in pajamas. Normally, when I see no contradiction, I'm missing life. For business owners, it's like holding a burning stick of dynamite while the fuse plays out faithfully, as long as the fuse grows faster than the burn. Toss it before the rain stops! All this time, people have been weeping at windows for sunsets, perfect space station light on rising, white ocean calm. I stop fiddling and rush to wax and wash my car. Everywhere I look, there are people in light fit for photographs.

Barbara Siegel Carlson

Epistle to the Late Fall Weeds

At dawn you glow,
along with the stones in the dirt road.
Each hollow seed is

a soul partly returned
from the other side.

I can't know
each of your lives
any more than I can know mine.

At the pond my shadow disappears.

I wait for another life
to grow from this one,
watching you lightly sway
as the ducks take off

disheveling the water and spreading it
in soundless tones
that call our lost shadows home.

Yoda Olinyk

A Pause, A Sprint

rain fills my shoe or maybe
blood. in another dimension,

i just take the shoe off and slip
past the crack on the sidewalk

my skirt stays put and i go home
to eat nachos with all of my friends

in this dimension, i quit
drinking years earlier

i save myself from all those gross
college boys, except for that sweet

one named gavin—the one with thick
rimmed glasses who kissed me and said

i guess i'm in love. or was it me who said
that? the next morning in his filthy bathroom

mirror. why else would i fall into the trench
of a man after nine glasses of homemade wine

if it weren't for love? why else would i wear
a skirt so tight i couldn't run?

Yoda Olinyk

Death Bed Art

Sitting by his wife's bed—she was dying—Monet noticed her skin blooming into a brand-new shade of blue. A blizzard of gray and white and purplish-blue. As she choked her final breaths, Monet fled to retrieve a canvas. He painted her final moments. His wife. Blue. On her deathbed. Some say he missed

her death
because he was busy painting it—
but I think he was as close
to it as he would ever get.

Barbara Siegel Carlson

Found among the Lost

Not my glove but my empty hand.
Not my empty hand, but the opening
in a pocket where the chill slips through.
A ring, a necklace with its gold
medallion, the last watch
my grandfather bought me, my grandmother without
saying goodbye.

Papers recording the passages
of those I loved. Papers that crumble
at a touch found
in the drawer of a forgotten desk.
Beside a bench in the cemetery, among
the patches of moss, white violets. A flutter
without a voice or name—

Not bewilderment
but breath of the wounded, unrequited,
rising. Not lost but given the scent
of what blossoms.

A corner where one can come
and go. Places for the soul to lie down
and be gathered.

Dennis Cummings

Delivery

After the flowers were bought
at the night market in L.A.
we laid them out on the warehouse floor
in newspaper-wrapped bundles
ready for the day's orders.

We were in the low rent district,
the building's ruptured double door
locked with a chain at night.
A little after dawn I'd load the bobtail
and drive through the inland valleys
and beyond, to the foothills climbing
into a low cordillera
through a region of red boulders
where gusts would rock the truck.
Below, the desert was checkered

with canal-fed cotton
and half-mile rows of sugar beets.
A milky ribbon of insecticide
lay above a field of melons.
On the other side of the highway

a broken kite twisted in a ditch.
From a mile away
at the sweltering Alamo Stockyards
I could hear the cattle bellow
as the loading in a trailer began.

Cecil Morris

Grief Is a Mischievous Child

Grief is a sneaky sucker
who hides at the end of the hall,
around a corner, behind a door,
still, patient, waiting
to spring out and shock,
to make you gasp again
at loss almost outlived,
to make you quake and sob
again where you would rather not.
Grief, the dark shape of bat
at twilight passing face, eyes,
too fast, too close, to see
aright, more startle than sight,
delights in dark on dark.
Grief, the sudden drop
of an unseen curb or step,
the halted plunge, the almost fall
followed by clumsy stagger,
returns your dead, not quite ghost,
to shake you into sorrow.
Grief thinks it great fun
to surprise and surprise,
the joke that never gets old.
Grief is a sneaky sucker,
a mischievous child,
but you hold it close, love it,
because it is your own.

Cecil Morris

After Our Daughter's Death at 39

Our daughter's organs arranged themselves alphabetically and then by height, shortest to tallest, like school children after recess late in spring, a little breathless, a little sweaty, reluctant to enter the classroom and take their desks again.

They were done with books and learning, sick of spelling bees, exhausted by multiplication and its arduous undoing. They wanted summer's idyllic idleness, its sleeping in and afternoons splashing in the pool.

We imagined watching them from the porch, tired ourselves, and ready at last to see them take their leave, to see them make their way in the world, to become astronauts or doctors or ballerinas or fire fighters or anything at all,

but our daughter's organs, colonized by cancer, can not parade their ways to other lives in futures far and wide. In quiet coming on of dusk, they dropped to the ground as lifeless as the clothes our daughter no longer needed.

Dennis Cummings

Night Runner

On sleepless nights
I circumvent the jack-hammers,
the asphalt rollers – huge drums
that press and level hot black gum.

Dodge the strobes
that flash atop A-frames,
run past pop-up sprinklers
and curtained rectangles of light.

Inhale diesel fumes
at the edge of the city
where bulldozers are starting up.
Jog this fogless morning

until a trail is reached
that ascends the foothill's summit –
from where the valley is surveyed
as if I were an explorer.

These runs are getting harder
with my worn-out spine –
a rusted bicycle chain
that won't straighten out.

A van the color of nopal
raises dust, cresting the rise,
and something says they're not coming
to bring me water.

Nicelle Davis

Latchkey

The waterfall is frozen in place. Breath exhales into small storms, interrupting stillness. Deer leave their small hot pellets in snow before disappearing into dry brush curved into a shelter.

It's quiet,

except for thaws near the soft flesh of ground. Barbwire along property lines is easy to step over with new heights of fresh powder laddering against edges.

It's possible to believe in a cold and distant god, sun reflecting off beads of water.

Nature doesn't care about you yet holds you at center. You

stole a handful of grapes from your friend's kitchen before wandering slowly home. The green skin of some foreign summer breaks between your teeth.

No one asked where you would be, and you didn't tell anyone you were going

Michael Lauchlan

Sensus Communis

My old black lab was skunked and her six hundred thousand brilliant olfactory neurons were screaming with a stench from hell and her furious dog-shaped hide contained only skunk.

Wild with it, she flew past me, got through the storm door knocked over chairs, rubbed herself against every surface, and tried to dig through the mattress on our bed. Before I could drag her to the garage

she wrecked the house. Knowing so little of grief, I screamed at her. She's three decades gone now and tonight I'm limping down Exit 202 on a blown tire, hearing the horizon growl.

Michael Lauchlan

Getting a Drink

and the usual crowd was there--St. James Infirmary Blues

Like the last speaker of a lost tongue
a singer braids an account and a guy
at the bar says Hey this

sounds familiar as it should
being so very old--a deathbed song
a blues compendium When I walk

home through a hot Michigan night
the road hisses past squat
houses in a quiet evaporation of hope

as in a mountain village where the lake
has shrunk and tributaries stammer
and the one well's so deep

that words for rope and thirst
echo the squeak of a turning winch

Nicelle Davis

There is a Song Sung Below Us

In the shadow of trees there is an implied depth,
a door in the floor with a dark stairwell leading
into a cellar. Here lives the god of the ground,
with a face like a frog and breath that can bring
back the dead. In a flood, even the living can
see her. Drought is a form of drowning. Sweat
pools. She uses these sweet reductions to can
summer peaches. Her name is translated to egg.
When she walks, you hear the jangling of keys.
Her name translates to willing. Dogs accompany
her through the damp shelves of storage. Here
is a place you will never go hungry. She hums
a song you wish your grandmother would have
taught you. You know it like you know your
own birthing. When you hear it you can't help
but cry until the river surges and covers you.

Jessie Anne Harrison

Big Girl Job, Little Girl Sorrows

I'm twenty-five and still get sweaty hands
Standing in an elementary school cafeteria,
And I dread walking past those short tables,
Certain I'll overhear the sixth graders
Whispering about my frizzy hair and glasses.
When I'm handed a tray with nachos and beans,
I'm embarrassed that the lunchroom monitor
Knows my name without having to ask—
I am a teacher,
The monitor is my coworker,
And I am a thousand miles away
From Mrs. Roman's fourth grade class and bullies,
And I'm still going to eat lunch in the library.

Jessie Anne Harrison

My Younger Self Doesn't Want to Meet for Coffee

And between you and me, it's for the better.
She doesn't want to know she made it to 25,
Nor could she handle the fact that I drink black tea now,
And I'm not getting married in the temple,
And I stopped caring if skirts reached my knees.
I know she's embarrassed that I know
Just how often she throws her lunch away
And runs to the library to read,
So even if all of these things weren't true,
I wouldn't put her through the pain of seeing
Another adult with kind eyes smile
And know she's angry and aching and absolutely
Not planning on making it to college alive.

But if, by chance, she did show her face
At the coffee shop she would feel
A twinge of sin for stepping in,
I would hold her hands,
Ignoring how cold they are,
And I wouldn't promise her rainbows or sunshine,
But I would tell her that when she makes it to me,
She's finally able to withstand the weight
Of breathing and her lungs aren't collapsing,
That she has too many people
Who belong in her wedding party,
That with all the heartbreak and therapy sessions
And nights trying to make constellations in the ceiling,
There are finally photos she looks like herself in,
Poems she wrote that people find worth publishing,
And some nights where she sleeps,
And she doesn't even wake up screaming.

She doesn't want to meet me for coffee,
But I will keep waiting for her anyway.