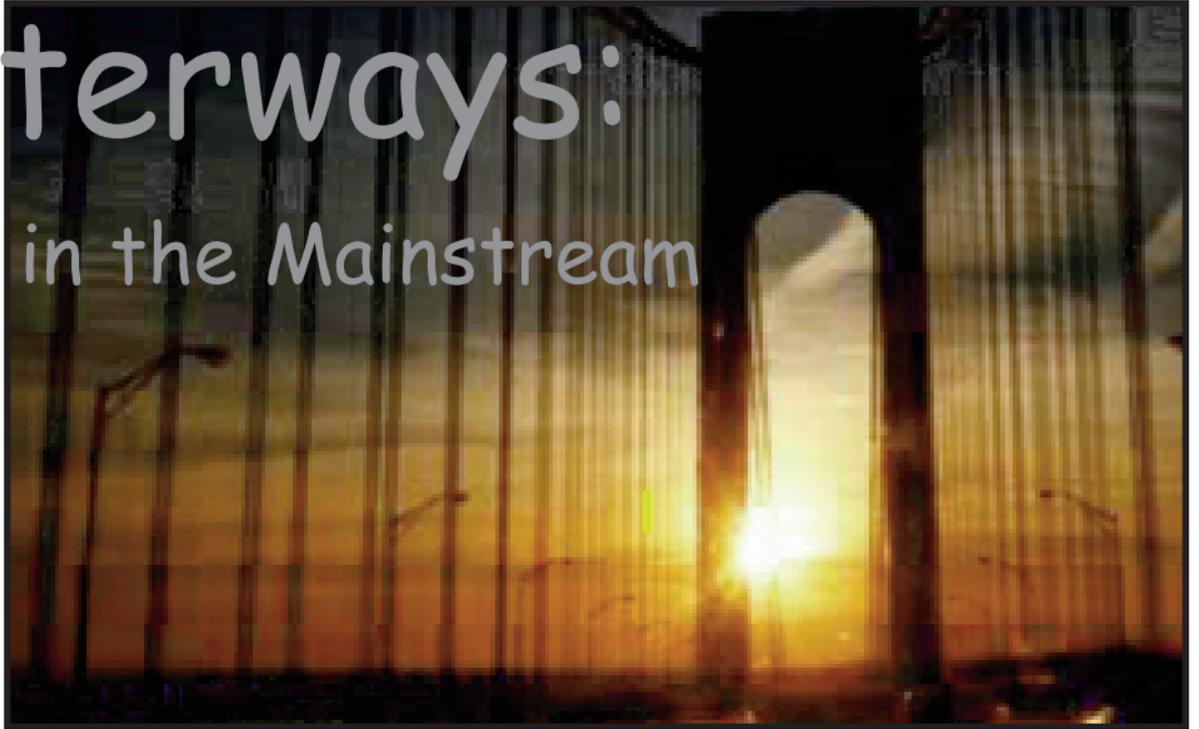


# Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

28



## Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 28, #10

Aren't there bigger things to talk about  
Than a window in Greenwich Village  
And hyacinths sprouting  
Like little puce poems out of a sick soul?

*excerpted from Scandal*

*Lola Ridge's Sunup and other poems (1920)*

# WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 28

Number 10\*

Designed, Edited and Published by Richard Spiegel & Barbara Fisher

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

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## Just Like That — Dave Church

I sometimes sit at the typer near my window  
Listening eternal to the hummmmmmmmm  
Of its idle —  
When suddenly  
Like  
SNAP,  
Words for a song are born (Mother wren  
  
Pulls worm from ground, slips into baby's mouth)  
  
Just like that....

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## Patricia Kelly

the cat cannot birth  
the last two fears  
greed and happiness

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## Meteor Shower — Lee Evans

Just before the alarm went off,  
I dreamed I threw the cats out  
Because they ate my salad.

At four thirty in the morning,  
We walked past the streetlights,  
Whose glare hid the meteors

That disappeared between Orion  
And the microscopic North Star.  
(Where was the Dragon? In his lair?)

No need to hurry; just observe:  
No sooner than we cry, "Oh look!"  
Our momentary life is gone.

I saw the Universe shoot past,  
And wondered that if we undressed,  
Would such a shower wash us clean?

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## Should you change — Sylvia Manning

dwellings  
 remember well  
 remember as well  
 old ladies in dark  
 summer shadows  
 cast by their long-  
 serving bodies,  
 recall even their walk  
 on the concrete past  
 you, when you are  
 somewhere new.

But remember them,  
 and the dwelling too,  
 with old windows  
 to the street  
 they moved past.

### **Alhambra on the Hudson — George Held**

The rising sun illuminates the eastern side  
Of the Great Schnabel's Palazzo Chupi.  
Its balconied terrazzos face south,  
Affording a view of rising Ground Zero  
And, to the west, the Hudson River.

What to call the arabesque palazzo's color —  
Pink, rose, ochre — depends on one's perspective.  
It stands out, that color, and it pleases me  
As I look out over my computer's screen  
At the building in its sunny warmth.

A testament to the Great Schnabel's ego,  
This pseudo-Italian palace towers well  
Above its neighbors, whose roof levels  
Once demarcated the West Village's  
Human scale. That was before the Great Meier's

Glass and metal high rise condos  
Turned West Street into the city's  
Riviera and broke the height line.  
Where five stories were once the limit,  
Now the sky is.

Enter Schnabel and his bid to build a tower  
Atop his townhouse. Even scaled back  
By city regulators, the Chupi towers  
Above all else on West 11<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Its luxury condos sell for millions

And it also houses the family and studios  
Of the Great Schnabel. The double-decker  
Tour buses will soon roll their gawkers  
Past this new landmark, a monument  
To the Villagers' nonconformity.

8-10-2005

## Open Phone — William Corner Clarke

I got tired of hearing  
Human voices  
On the phone  
So I changed my service  
To the Nature Only line

Now I hear flowers  
Whispering  
From the fields of Picardy  
The dripping of rain  
From the eaves of London houses  
The chattering of monkeys  
In Burmese jungles

Waves call me urgently  
From Puget Sound  
Seagulls  
Add their comments  
In the background  
I hear rocks crumbling  
On mountain trails  
The filling of tide pools  
On coasts  
Where no one goes

And in return they hear  
The rustle of poems  
As they change position  
On my desk  
The trickling of light

As it seeps from the pages  
Of books on the shelves  
The slow pulse  
Of a persistent memory  
Kept in a whisky jar  
The scratching  
Of stray thoughts  
On the windowpane  
The settling  
Of old photographs  
Heavy in their frames

First published in 'Fire' Issue #23

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## Bigger Things — James Penha

A pair of oyster shells,  
or clams  
or mussels,  
or rocking chairs backed up against a wall,  
or a cat curled beneath them,  
or one held by a tail,  
like you and this  
perhaps.  
Pots.  
Pans.  
Knives and forks.  
The glass frame atop the photo of a one-time lover;  
the teeth of a Sumatran tribesman  
in Alaska.

Carbuncles.  
Skeletons.  
A janitor's keys' ring.  
Toilets flushing in the north;  
flushing toilets in the south.  
Cries of a child at sunsets . . .  
bones of a beggar at roadside.  
Pocketsful of change.  
Scowls and curses.  
Motors and horns.

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## Julianna's Chair — Lavinia Kumar

The chair said it all. It was lying  
on the back seat next to her,  
and she, a young girl of nearly thirteen  
wondering how death became smaller than a chair.

In the car up front, whilst reading  
a "friends in remembrance" card,  
is her aunt, an older blonde driving,  
scheming her chance to seize the cherished chair.

But the chair is with Julianna,  
a gift from her canny grandma.  
Her aunt now on the phone in her car —  
gesturing complaints as only a mad woman can.

Her mother watches, smiles tightly,  
waiting for oncoming traffic,  
not rushing to the formal burial  
which was to come before horded anger

that even Julianna saw coming  
because of the furniture,  
fragilities of familiar fighting  
furiously loud, pitiless — tear to tear.

It was while Julianna was reading,  
sitting on the chair near the bed  
that grandma chose her for the chair,  
then told the sisters there's no need to share.

Which said it all. They loved fighting,  
as their mother knew full well.  
She, old dying woman, with wisdom,  
aiming for an enduring "fare-thee-well."

## Rescued — Geoff Stevens

Bulbs do not illustrate  
as well as neon  
with its flexibility  
its inert but bold colored  
tubular illumination of glass  
except when nature  
needs to speak out  
against the sterility  
of winter lingering  
or of lasting writers' block  
and then the green fuse  
lights its shipwrecked flare  
shouts loud with leaves  
waves a bold shower  
of life-saving florets  
into the cold Spring air

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*"With the help of God  
And a couple of cops"*

**Rosie's Words — R. Yurman**

My mother never swore  
but red-faced spat out  
"Shoot the Kaiser"  
"Go cook a radish"  
"Oh, sugar"

She glared at women  
who offended her  
"That one looks like  
something the cat dragged in"  
or "She's got some crust"  
And any woman who flitted man to man  
had "*schplikes*—ants in her pants"  
(thought her unmarried male cousin  
simply "gave another gal the gate")

No one I've heard since  
talks the way she did  
filling my childhood  
with bone-deep truths  
"Blood is thicker than water"  
"If wishes were horses  
beggars would ride"  
"For that and a nickel I can take the subway"  
When she wanted my hair combed fast  
"Give it a lick and a promise"  
Wearied of my endless questions  
"Why, why, why,  
why don't pigs fly"

"I'm smart all right" she'd say  
"Smart as ten cops"  
A friend once chided her  
"It's so easy to pull the wool over your eyes"  
"It keeps me warm" she smiled  
Then delivered  
her favorite exit line  
"That's my story  
and I'm stuck with it"

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## The Color Puce — Joanne Seltzer

Brownish purple, known  
by the French name for *flea*  
the nastiest of colors  
gives me the itch . . . yet  
whatever their color  
poems that come from the soul  
assume the soul's  
intrinsic worth.

Foxes will steal  
accessible grapes  
and poets pluck the poems  
they can reach.

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## Full Circle — James Kowalczyk

4:30 am

silence. I listen

he sits and puts on his boots

the laces click on our faded linoleum

five steps

he fills the kettle

the water boils

the water rushes

unlike the years he has worked

his eyes

where his antique exhaustion rests

close as he rides the F train to the city

upstairs in Carroll Park old men  
argue in Italian on the bocce court  
clutching D'Amicos coffee  
while the refrain of their debates  
ploys fortissimo then fades

wearing our black eye badges  
under imported cheese that hangs  
from the ceiling like heavy bags  
in a gymnasium where boxers  
pound their fists until they sweat

Patty boy, Sally Weasel and I  
zip 5-speeds around the old men  
as marbles snap in our pockets that  
are pregnant with piles of Mantle  
and Mays and endless summer days

6:30 am  
silence, she listens  
I sit and put on my shoes  
the shine contrasts with our stained carpet  
five steps  
in the microwave  
breakfast carousel  
spins very slowly  
unlike the year my daughter  
has had on this planet  
where I have become my father

## Lost Languages — Fredrick Zydek

What noise did they make to let others know a bear was coming their way? How did they elocute their words for unnatural instincts, imperfect justice, and the way light sometimes moves over water? Did they agree on what marks on paper or stone might mean?

Did they write things down or depend upon their memories? Did they use an alphabet or glyphs? What sounds did they make to call their children, say what lovers want to hear or cheer someone for bravery? Did they use past and future tenses or did all things

exist in the eternal now? How many expressions did they have for awe or turns of phrase to explore the things of spirit? Where did these languages go? Were they eaten up by a more popular tongue, lost in a battle with amoebas and germs or perhaps shed

in favor of noises that came more easily than those their mothers taught them? Dare we mourn or try to retrieve them? What if they knew the recipe for opening the doors to the sacred and something in the stars could remember every one of their names?

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4pm, The Marriott Hotel, San Francisco, California, July 13, 2007  
Paul Kareem Tayyar

I try to imagine my father, newly arrived  
From Iran, surrounded by flower power  
And psychedelic music, concerts in the park  
With Moby Grape and the Grateful Dead,  
Women with hair longer than their skirts.

"I didn't understand it, but I was happy  
There," he said this afternoon, when I called  
Him on the phone to tell him we were  
Up here, in the city where he met my mother.

"You didn't have to speak the language to  
Feel the love, you didn't have to understand  
The lyrics to listen to the music," he continued,  
Laughing. "They call it The City for a reason  
And you know what? They're right."

With that we said goodbye. I had dialed him  
Direct, without the calling card I had forgotten  
At home, but it was long enough to tell him  
That I was glad he came here when he did,  
And that my mother was here for him to meet.

## Young Man — Paul Kareem Tayyar

Take the herbs from the kitchen that you are certain to need  
Take the flowers from the garden that you planted yourself

In time you will come to a place where the hour is ready  
For the world you can make from the things you have carried

## perversities — will inman

i work with opposites because to me  
reality seems a function of paradox  
i wonder if rain falls backwards  
and realize almost at once  
that fog is rain falling up  
sometimes so is dew  
what rains up condenses,  
settles on surfaces  
oceanwater is not dew and damned if i know  
where it settles  
don't try to drag god into this  
god flows and lows and ups whereas  
oceanwater has a mind of its own —  
i wonder about vinegar

some things move big, others move little  
humans have minds of their own —  
try to stop vacuuming during lunch time

*monday, april 16, 2007  
as dictated by will inman  
to clyde appleton*

## Adopted — Ellaraine Lockie

The family flees my bedside  
when vertigo turns to vomiting

But the new stray cat stays  
Stares in hair-ball camaraderie

Watches with what seems  
to be unconditional incoherence

As I continually decline  
comfort foods and favorite snacks

Before she executes comprehension  
with dead center precision

When I return from the doctor's to find  
a bloodied mouse placed on my pillow

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## Bleecker Street - Spring — Fran Farrell Kraft

When I was in the Springtime of my life  
I lived in Greenwich Village and probably knew Bleecker Street

Well, not exactly Greenwich Village  
It's now called Greenwich Village North or Chelsea South

Chelsea was totally not in then so I just called it the Village  
and avoided revealing the exact location to people who might turn up their noses

Being across the street from the Village, I missed all the good stuff.  
Dylan Thomas at the White Horse Tavern and the Abstract Expressionists  
at that place they hung out (or was that the White Horse, too?)

I hung out with writers who never became authors  
and painters who were never discovered or had shows or reviews  
and was not radical (or possibly young) enough for Bleecker Street

Eventually I moved on to commerce and lost all sense of Bleecker Street

Most recently I remembered Bleecker Street when the Times  
reported that the aging (aged?) Yippies at 9 Bleecker Street  
might be evicted from their 30ish-year residence.

I wonder what happened.

October, 2001

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## Sleep Time — Hugh Fox

E-Mail after e-mail, phone, video-transmission and at night my bedroom turns into the hills of Bohemia and Rumania, there they are, the *glaneurs* gleaning in the harvested fields, vineyards, and then the gitanos out, sing-dancing, black raven-crow eyes and hair, always the same disbelieving — overbelieving smile, *la vie est plus que belle, c'est un miracle que jamais s'arret*. Life is more than beautiful; it's a miracle that never stops.

**On the film *Alice Neel* — Donald Lev**

Art in life, life in art . . . ok.

She painted people, as though she were inside them.

When the abstract expressionists took over the Village she removed to Spanish Harlem. Plenty to paint there.

She painted a lot, was unlucky in love.

Her two sons were loyal to her anyway;

there being reason for it to have been otherwise.

(A daughter, abandoned in Cuba, felt otherwise,

and ended her own life. Her daughter was not

enthralled with her grandmother. But this grandson —

who made the film — was enthralled; and what

grandchild wouldn't be, who had the companionship

of such a great, garrulous, energetic old grandmother, who also

delighted Johnny Carson — who I was delighted to see

6/07

**On the film *The Last Temptation of Christ* — Donald Lev**

To see into the heart of things  
is the quest of literature and religion.  
My temptation  
is to escape into flippancy.

1/07

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