

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

28



#11

Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 28, #11

This midnight the moon,
Playing virgin after all her encounters,
Will break another date with you.

excerpted from *Time Stone*
Lola Ridge's *Sunup and other poems* (1920)

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 28

Number 11*

Designed, Edited and Published by Richard Spiegel & Barbara Fisher

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

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Poetry 101 — Dave Church

For poets to *poet*,
They must stay within themselves,
In the deepest waters of consciousness,
In the truest sense of *metaphysicalness* —
Relating existentially to their individual
Perception of the world in which they live.

Poets can be very boring people...

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My Father Takes a Call — Thomas D. Reynolds

On the first and second rings,
It is undoubtedly a wrong number.

After the third ring, my father glances up
To see if anyone will answer it.

My mother is at the end of the drive gathering mail,
And he gauges whether the sound can reach that far.

Realizing that it won't,
Or that the wind will not allow the sound to carry,
Whirring it away into the tall grass,
Or that she'll never make it back in time,
Even at a dead run ,
He waits for the caller to give up,
As they always do, eventually.

No one attempting to reach him can be as dogged as he
In his efforts to avoid being reached.

Except this one.

He should answer it.

He clicks "mute" on the remote
And pops one last cashew.

The phone lies prostrate
Beside the cactus.

The breeze from the window
Is blast-furnace hot.

Silence whips across thin weeds
Rising from the cracks
Of a desolate highway.

My father is a lonesome traveler.
The city lies a hundred miles away.
He has walked for days, years,
And before the abandoned gas station,
He stops to wipe away the sweat.
Kick the dust from his boots.
Fan himself beneath the faded sign.

And then he hears a sound
Coming from the pay phone,
And out of a duty only barely remembered,
And maybe not averse
To the sound of a human voice
Beyond the cries of desert hawks,
He lifts the cracked receiver.

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The Familiar — Lee Evans

Peek-a-boo, old friend! I see
you've waxed yourself to the full,
beside the right triangle
of the Best Buys store this evening.

You dance upon the phone poles
beside me on the highway,
and pole-vault with the aerial
when I turn the steering wheel.

Tonight before I doze off,
you're peering thru Venetian blinds,
where shadows stripe the shoulders
of the woman lying next to me.

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Whispers from the Pier — Patrick Carrington

Beyond the dunes there is a place
where jetty poles are snapped
and mark a death, graveyard on sand.

Like scriptless stones, they guard
the buried days. Split with salt,
they sag but watch. We were there
once, beneath the choking wood, dying
with the pier in shadows. No one

heard us, naked in the rain, whispering
the wind quiet, crying the clouds dry.
We could have been anyone. We could
have been old gulls. Or tides, eroding
legs and life, returning the dust.

Above our heads, the fleeing feet
tapped out our grief. They ran
to rooms in the storm, left us
to the dark, the swell, the grinding
rides. Left us, to the rotting heart.

One time, there was a peace
below the moon, when sky
and sea held hands. On the flat,
the boards drew breath and saw
the sky wheel spinning.

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Soup — R. Yurman

Now you bid me
—Come in, eat—
A soft buttered roll
Steamed prawns in
A basic white sauce
Good with so many dishes
Flavors that mingle
Textures that fill the mouth
Ease the stomach
A pale dry wine

No, my dear,
Not this time
I've grown content
with the homemade soup
I simmer daily in a large pot
thick stock
redolent with spices

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Oldie — James Penha

I press the vine
of my mind
for the wine
of a remembered song.

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Dunes — James Penha

Music of wave and wind
amplifies sunned sand
and I wish
for love and poetry.

Rock
and roll
rhythms
race me to the surf.

I see a bobbing face,
hear a voice,
dive into the blare and beat,
but impatient passion
forces the metaphor
before I am prepared
to smile and say yes.

Later alone
and air-conditioned
I write the poem

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Geoff Stevens

After a night of passion
the moon
head bowed in the early morning sky
blushes with embryonic revelation
reddens with the rising sun

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Soir de Paris — Susanne Olson

Perfume lingers
in the soft wool of her coat
aroma of elegance
sweet taste of desire.
Beauty radiates
woman's star-lit wonders.
Unknown worlds beckon
dreamt-of in adulation
of her exquisite style and worldly flair.
Bitter flavor of sorrow
of being left behind in silence
mingles with the scent of yearning
for existence
initiation into that wanton magic.

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moonlight your last night at cabin — Sylvia Manning
for Tony

our glowing as if clear glass tureen
or slender curving bowl
held for first moment of sharing
some gold colored liqueur
aged and with honey
moon

our late in our time in this place
this time
this still quite quiet place
where we slept without seeing yet
this moon

our assuring each the other
 in night dark morning
 that in the East first one
and then the other saw
this moon

after our sleep after earlier wonder
 for believing we saw stars
 above a rainstorm, then slept
then woke for nature's call to see
this moon

my dear one one, remember
 in noisy streetlight night
 where sky long ago became low
remember through sudden electric storms
 where mere ornamentals grow
remember in shallow nights apart

this one darkest morning
moon

even if all our years of moments
ended in a threatening rain
without hope for any truly perceived glimmer of stars
above the storm

without then any chance
of having you say, later,
in rich darkness,

"Look: moon shadows.
How strong it is,
this moon."

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Travels in Missouri - Joanne Seltzer

To experience a place
you have to make a commitment
of one complete moon.

You will witness the obese moon,
the anorectic moon,
the agoraphobic moon.

When you and the moon
do a belly dance
she will wave her purple cloud
through your red silk scarf
of earth's expression.

First published by The Arts Institute
in *Havens for Creatives*

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. . .And Cream — George Held
for Cheryl

June's full moon gets its name from the strawberry harvest
that happens every year at this time.

That lemon lozenge dissolving the night
In strawberry season gives pause
For thoughts about shortcake and cream,
Vanilla ice cream or Cheerios topped with red
Fruit, about strawberry blondes like Basinger,
Daryl the Mets' monster slugger, whom some fans
Cheered and others gave the raspberry.

Ever notice that the smaller strawberry tastes
Authentic, while the humongous ones grown to ship
Where berries are out of season have no flavor,

Aroma, or lush texture? Who ever tastes
A strawberry today like the ones we picked
In the Fifties, sucking our red fingers
Like a piece of sugar cane? Fruit then
Was seasonal—tomatoes from July
Through September, apples from then
Till December. Remember how they tasted
Edenically true?

Today's gassed, synthetically
Colored facsimiles remind us of our fallen
State. Even the moon bears garbage,
But the old full moon still tastes sweet
Dissolving the old night over the old
Strawberry fields, forever.

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A Translation — M. M. Nichols

. . .his curls like thick hyacinth
clusters/ full of blooms

The Odyssey 6.231 (Fagles translation)

When blossom shrouds the pear trees,
earth is deepening its bow to the sun.

We wake before today part
from the uneasy moon

in a room where hyacinth
has pushed aside the points of its own

shiny leaves, splitting them wide,
and become fresh, perfumed, purple

beard of Odysseus :

whose dreams, alphabet-oared,
have roamed the drowning years and come
to a teeming, tall city,
farthest cry across the western sea.

Sprung out of clay encirclement
from processed soil, we spy

his wily shade: this watered, curly bloom,
bought for a book-lined berth in rented rooms.

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The White Oak — Fredrick Zydek

It isn't white at all. Its leaves are brimming with chlorophyll. Photosynthesis goes on like crazy and the tree is as green as any fir, birch or stately poplar. At least the trunk of the white birch is white. The trunks of white oaks are as brown as sparrow feathers. The leaves aren't even white in fall. They may not become as bright a yellow or orange as maple trees and cottonwoods but white oak leaves do turn a brisk light brown more akin to a robin's breast than pumpkins. It's a slow growing tree with fine-grained

wood so hard it is considered one of the best for flooring and ship timbers. The great Charter Oak of Hartford was such a tree. In 1687 the charter of Connecticut was hidden in this tree after the despotic governor of New England, Sir Edmond Andros, tried to seize it by force. The famous oak blew over in 1856. They say the governor's desk was made from its timbers and that somewhere a baby's cradle is still graced with rockers made from its branches.

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Blind Mice — Rex Sexton

*"The world began
without a plan
and soon may end."
Moan the toxic winds,
As the children skip along
And sing their songs,
Beneath my window,
About witches, spiders,
Bridges falling down.*

*"Ring around the rosey (They sing.)
a pocket full of posey
ashes, ashes. . ."*

PLUTONIUM up...I monitor
The market on my new PC . .
POETRY down...OIL is still
Royal...ECOLOGY in Entropy ...

*"Oranges and lemons
say the bells of St. Clements"*

"Buy Sell Buy Sell Buy Sell"
I type in furiously.

*"I owe you five farthings
say the Bells of St. Martens"*

Dollar signs, like visions of sugar
Plums, dance before my eyes.

*"Here comes the candle
to light you to bed!"
The children sing.
"Here comes the chopper
to chop off your head!"*

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Or Get Out the Camera Instead — John Grey

You're a good lad.
Here, take the pistol.
Such fine wavy hair,
clear skin,
warm blue eyes,
who better to be
my assassin.
Twenty years you've been
on this planet.
I'm past sixty and counting.
Your life's ahead of you
like route 80 across
the Utah Salt Flats.

Mine is glaring into
its own shadows.
Once, you needed me
to do everything but breathe.
And what good am I to you now?
A rheumatic guide to my pistol collection?
Luckily, the most expensive one is loaded.
Nothing better than to be blown away
by a really good deal I made
some thirty five years ago.
Better this than banishment.
The usual falling out over time
can't compare.
Or even the facile recharging
of affection
at family get-togethers.

And useless wedding photos
On the mantle.
Snaps of grinning
toothless grandchildren.
Love conquers all, so they say.
And with a bullet to the heart,
it stays conquered.

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Tomatoes from the Garden — Bill Roberts

Grandma would feed me lettuce and tomato sandwiches, the tomatoes freshly picked from her backyard garden. Fresh petunias of every color decorated her back porch table.

I never wanted summers to end back then, but cold weather killed off the growing things in the tiny backyard where Grandma loved to work on her knees in an old flower-print dress.

She missed the bottom step into the backyard one day on the way to her garden, breaking a hip. Ten years in bed, without tending her garden, Destroyed her garden and her ability to think clearly.

Occasionally, I'd bring her a lettuce and tomato sandwich, store-bought, but she still loved it. Always she'd ask if someone worked in the garden And if the tomatoes had been taken from there.

I don't think it was wrong of me to lie, do you?

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CNN Version of the Slaying — Madeline Tiger

We interrupt this program, this war, this era, this millennium, this prayer
We interrupt this honor of anointing and following and boasting and fulfilling the boast; of foot beats and sword flashes and groans and roars of celebration, we interrupt these Amalekites and Bethlehemites and Israelites and Philistines gathering, gorging for the attack and the pull of the sturdy branch and the stretching of the leather thongs, the stone held, the stone nested, the stone pulled back, the muscular arms, The shining eye, the release and the flight
Of that stone.

We interrupt the story of the kingly brave boy and that huge horrific, drooling growling hollering hairy giant coming down toward David, shouting him down

The End of the Mind — David Michael Nixon

I saw the end of the mind
where a great abyss lay
and stretched beyond imagination.
Since I could not enter that void,
I turned and strolled back toward
the mind's center, but soon my pace
was slowed by a great welter of clutter:
endless golf tees, plastic flamingos,
semiautomatic weapons,
computers, TVs, magazine ads,
clear roll-on deodorants, beer cans,
until, stifled, I turned and fled,
desperate to struggle back toward
the abyss, where perhaps some entrance
could be found or forged.

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On the Film *La Vie en Rose* — Donald Lev

I thought I would play this record, this really good Piaf LP — I have a CD that except for "La Vie en Rose" has only more obscure Piaf. I could not find that LP! I went through my entire collection, which has so diminished over the years, as I have diminished over the years, but, though I am positive that recording is somewhere in this House of Usher in which I temporarily abide, I could not find it. Which put me in a mood - angry, frustrated, and of course very drunk.
Perfect

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Waterways will inaugurate its
29th year of publications with
a poetry reading at the
Saint George branch of the NY Public Library
5 Central Avenue, Staten Island, 10301
(718) 442-8560
on Saturday, May 17, 2008 from 2-4pm.

The free public reading will feature poets who have been published in
Waterways
& an *'open mic'*.

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