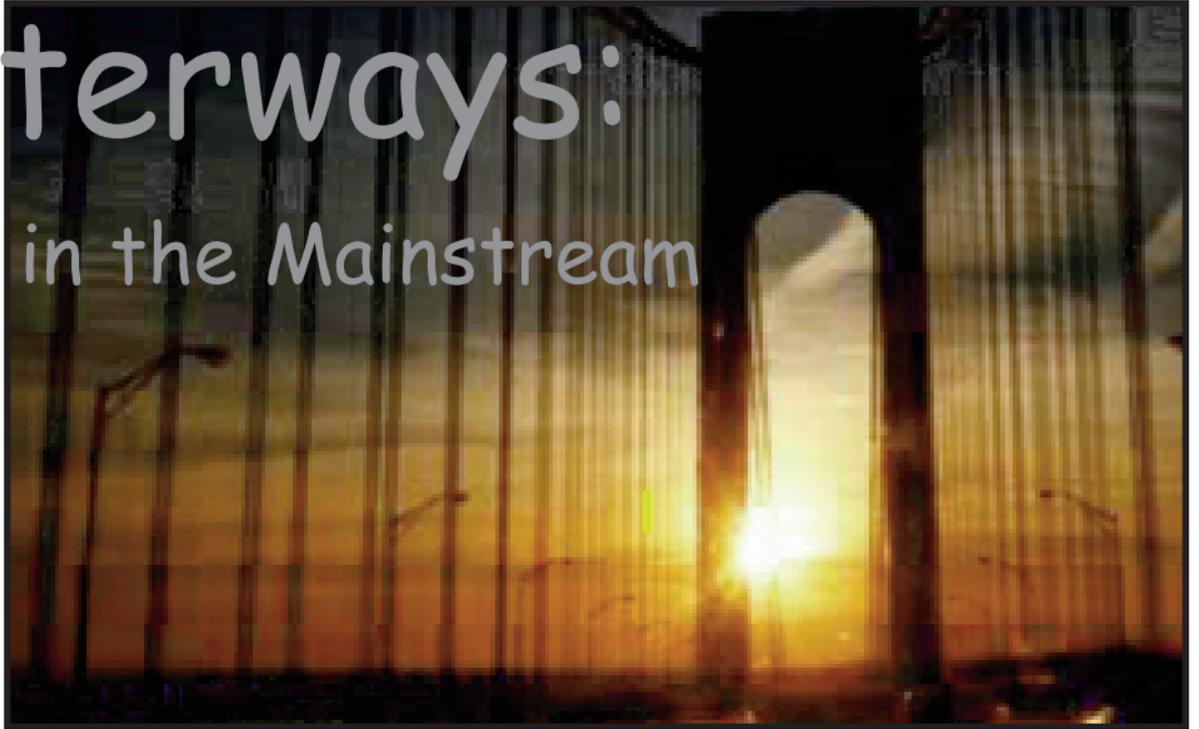


Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

28



#2

Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 28, #2

Centuries shall not deflect
nor many suns
absorb your stream,
flowing immune and cold
between the banks of snow.

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

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 28

Number 2*

Designed, Edited and Published by Richard Spiegel & Barbara Fisher

Thomas Perry, Admirable Factotum

c o n t e n t s

M. M. Nichols	4-5	Sam Calhoun	15-16	Hugh Fox	24
James Penha	6	Geoff Stevens	17	Bill Roberts	25-26
Thomas D. Reynolds	7-9	Ellaraine Lockie	18-19	Donald Lev	27-29
Mary K. Lindberg	10-11	Anselm Brocki	20-21	John Grey	30-31
Joan Payne Kincaid	12-14	Susanne Olson	22-23	Barbara Fisher	32

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Cradle Song — M. M. Nichols

Six dozen years and more it took
my memory

to arrive, listening, held
on her shoulder:

Rock-a-Bye Baby
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock...
Rest, rest on mother's breast
Father will come to thee soon
Oh, blow him again to me...
Sleep, my little one
Sleep, my pretty one
Sleep

She wasn't too shy then to sing,
or too mad.

Did she know if I understood
the words? or think

I'd ride
hundreds of moons to hear her

singing again
in my mind's cozy, incandescent room?

and rest alone,
sad for her shortness of life,

and sing away
the pains of growing older.

A Fire to the Point — James Penha

after a photograph by Dorothea Lange

Her face flickers like the candle
melting into a self
set on a corroded ring of fingers
in a dry wind
dissolved by the hunger
of her children hugging her
for a bit
but a candle's fate is darkness
and cold, a pool
as profound as the wax of an ear that hears
a daughter moan,
a son whimper,
an infant silence.

January Night at the Folks — Thomas D. Reynolds

With the furnace out
And snow in the forecast,
They huddle around the wood stove
And journey into 1897.

The surrounding houses dissolve,
Leaving a thin horizon of white plains.

Wind lurks around the timber,
Drawn by the lantern light,
Howls echoing into the ravines.

Like a gray horse gaunt with starvation,
The bare oak branch nuzzles the window pane,
Begging for sustenance.

How did pioneers stay engaged
On such a night?

Could the same collection of stories
Suffice to stem the tide of loneliness?

Could imagination surge yet again
To create a new even if wholly fabricated tale?

Perhaps contrary to history,
The pioneer's fortitude was not fully tested
By flood, famine, and deprivation.

Only by such a dark night of the soul,
Glancing into the countenance of a spouse
Who has fitted the last puzzle piece
And now stares into your face,
Daring you to be interesting.

The Hudson in Winter — Mary K. Lindberg

A winter that broke all records. Air so
cold warm became forgotten memory.
Like eggs of a giant god, snowstorms laid
impregnable walls of white. I wrote.

At night, circles of snow-laden ice gorge
the river, now a moonlit bridgepath
fit for ghosts galloping to a natural
palisade. I rewrote the letter. Were we

as frozen as the river? You knew.
Sun and moon climbed over a floor
of sparkling rings, shining the world new,
like the days we walked on water. Circles

rubbed each other, forming Gothic lace.
The post office was closed. Hungry eagles
perched on river rings, stalwart before
trolling icebreakers. They made me think

about you, visor of dark hair strutting
across your face. When I looked up, the
ice began to move. I made a mess, had to
write your address again. Black wet waves

appeared, melting the white valley like
silence in music. I stood in deep snow to
mail the letter. When the soggy stuff
melted all over your name, I took it home.

Survival of the Fragile - Joan Payne Kincaid

How can you find
what you were before?
the fragility of definitions: breath move your feet
what indicator could there be
a holiday invasion war-like
like going around stations of the cross
or sitting in a class where the teacher dictates the mind;
day to day boredom stifles impulse
why must you write when it is Christmas
or try to save it under file or rem activity?
Quo vadis vanish quotidian coma
he wrote about the daily trivia
she called about the war
a few cards remain to be sent

any energy that had been is gone;
they asked if we were on a journey to oblivion
tedium and everyone making suggestions
still on a Sunday around a Sunday close to Christmas
Baryshnikov and Kirkland are careening thru
Nutcracker ethereal as birds
and there comes a lightness of poetry in space
the situation owns you.

Yawning links to now, lost again black out
if it's one thing against advice it's that no one values it;
on a rainy night before Christmas Eve
piles of essentials accumulate helpless
as incoming tidal lips accelerating;
she asked why they didn't perceive;
the answer was sleep-walking delusion brainwash

the way things tumble in a machine
or conflict between passionate ideals and self-protecting bureaucracy . . .
that you can sail thru the air on someone's fingertips
yet someone some TV airhead talks of being tall and blonde
(like Giraffe she goes to Africa to measure
their eyelashes)!!! Who said if you're happy
you've got to be missing the point;
there is something about a Parson Jack that smiles
walking thru the park today crawls to be with children;
she loves the world with passion
and was bred to chase with hounds;
some times when she's alone out doors
I suspect she searches horses in her mind.

Tredegar — Sam Calhoun

I took the familiar path,
an old railroad grade leading
into a forest where the sun
disappears beneath the canopies
of tall pines;

Crossed the stream on
a fallen tree, and pushed
back the brush guarding the
entrance to the abandoned
iron mill and sat

down on a granite stone.
piles of slag and broken
bricks litter base of
the remaining stone walls, degraded
from years of weathering.

Like a book exposed briefly,
it's preface train wheels,
on the factory line used to transport
supplies to the main route across
the rotted bridge.

And by shovel or by hand,
we'll blow the dust from
the cover, remove the
pages of leaves until we reach
the chapter summary, all that's left
for us to read in a mountain of blank pages.

Geoff Stevens

On the river's deserted mud
the imprint of a bird's foot
hopping until it stops
the mark of failure to find food
a trademark similar to that of an inept handyman
that treads in his own cement.
This is not the weather
for working out of doors
the black icy waters
flow between banks of snow
and centuries of undesired results.

Birds of a Feather — Ellaraine Lockie

Each spring the hummingbirds hover
over the same place on my patio
Where twenty-four years ago hung
a red plastic feeder filled with sugar water

Four or five fowl generations later
through some unfathomable feat
these offspring flutter wings over
empty air in worship of this sacred spot

And I wonder if my great grandparents
fed off the magnificence of the Rio Grande
Where it divides New Mexican high desert
Blood of Christ Mountains on one side
and burnt amber sunset on the other

Where I am blindly led year after year
to be lit by the sun god's torch
To burn Taos fuel
To feel the whisper
of angel wings on my back

Likes — Anselm Brocki

If happily married older couples eventually start to look like each other because of all the years of lighting up each other's mirror neurons & cheerful parts of both their brains and contracting the same loving smile muscles of their faces, which has been tested by comparing before-

and-after photos, then surely
those in a toxic marriage —
like that of Sonya and Leo
Tolstoy full of turmoil
to the extent of his running
away and dying alone of cold
in a train station in winter —
must start after years to look
alike with lined hateful faces,
if they can stand to look at each
other, even across a candlelit
dinner table for two at Tolstoy's
country estate Yasnaya Polyana.

December — Susanne Olson

Darkness invades my veins
frost covers my eyes
lost days like shadows barely exist
nights endless shiver, naked.
To what end will this lead, how soon?

Yet not the end, days will brighten
wood smoke scents the evening air
clouds bare now and then a star.
Dead leaves decay to feed the earth, and snow
is nothing but a blanket. Where
lies the road from gloom to light?

Soil's frozen crust hides seeds in sleep
slumber waits for spring's first ray, dormant
sprouts dream summer's short delight.
Covered by ice the brook keeps murmuring
its song, vision of freedom's tumultuous
play. Will there be hope, be life?

Not death awaits me, love will blossom
lift into strength, fill with new blood.
The cedar tree, arms green through dark
and cold, reaches for breath. December
far behind, I touch new joy
and with the mockingbird, the water-snake
I dance the sun, I sing the rain.

Highway 17 — Hugh Fox

Coyote-evergreen (Pasa Tiempo Drive) mountain-hills,
eating the Apples of Immortality, sanity a new roof,
oatmeal flax strawberries for breakfast, whatever-scampi
for lunch, Cabrillo College fog burnoff

Territory

Sect

Less

Language

Credo

dozing into resurrectionless
as-long-as-I've-got-left-ness.

Waterways
Vol28 No2

My First World War — Bill Roberts

My playthings were heavy toys of war.
Lead soldiers in Hun's gray or SS black,
Their crooked rifles raised to misfire.

Battleships and flattops in red, white, and
Chipped blue settled to the bottom
Of the suds-filled ocean in my bathtub.

The to-scale model planes were embellished
With rising suns and swastikas on wings and
Fuselages, menacing bad guys in the cockpits.

Heavy tanks and armored trucks scurried back and
Forth across enemy lines, having difficulty
Telling which was friend, which was foe.

A careening Red Cross ambulance, filled
To capacity with the warfront wounded,
Was always overturning, spilling out bodies.

I personally invented the feared atomic bomb,
A heavy brick, that crushed all of these toys,
Ending the first of my world wars.

On the Film *The Madness of King George* — Donald Lev

I thought I would check out
my favorite queen's former realms
so I rented *The Madness of King George*.
Some mess! Did she have her hands full!
The crazy husband, the nerdy son
(fifteen kids she had. Fifteen!)
who became regent and gave us all that furniture —
I don't know which of the Georges, maybe all four
gave us that elegant architecture around Washington Square.
So a total loss it wasn't.
England got out of the slave trade, a bit of a plus,
and set fire to Washington, not necessarily a plus.
So history marches on, and Queen Helen (Mirren)
certainly improves *her* lot!

3/07

On the Film *Volver* — Donald Lev

I think

Penelope Cruz,

the star of this,

wears too bright a shade of lipstick.

I liked looking at her sister/daughter Sole better

(Sole, it is revealed rather matter-of-factly, so you

almost miss it, is her daughter by her father, therefore

also her sister) come to think about it, it is probably the

young daughter of Penelope that is also her sister — subtitles

can be confusing. In any case, the men, what there is of them,

in this film are only good to butcher, refrigerate, and bury

next to their favorite fishing holes.

There is a bit of magic realism, I guess, in that
grandma returns (*volver*) as a ghost, only
she is just pretending to be a ghost, well...
some critics say this is one of the best of the year,
but I don't think so.

1/07

She's an Artist Now . . . Because She Said So — John Grey

Cliff drops a foot or two in front of her.
Easel shakes in wind, begs her find an inside studio.
And sun is riotous and hot, sacks her cheeks,
scorches her legs.
But she loves the air, that nothing by definition,
that everything in reality.
She's with the canvas no one can intrude upon.
A face gives quite a performance. Self-portrait.
Took a dose of ocean breeze so she could see straight.
Ruffled hair that seems as neat as summer.
Sad eyes that give such intimate pleasure.

And a mouth wet with gratitude that the brush
chose her expression.
So it's goodbye to forty four years
on the verge of a complete waste of time.
It's step back from the edge, turn to talents
Abandoned in grade school.
Whatever churns up inside, she thrashes out.
Whosoever drowns in her oceans,
Her ripe hands rescue in paint.
She brushes longing away like sand-flies.
And desperation is the dog she chases with a stone.
A pale woman on a cliff,
who could be dazzling her friends with sea-scapes,
discovers it's the sea-scapes that cry out for dazzling.



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