

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

29



Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 29, #7

A bird came down the walk

He did not know I saw

He bit an angleworm in halves

And ate the fellow raw

Emily Dickinson

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 29

Number 7*

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Buteos — Scott Owens

They are not strangers here.
They circle high but clear,
measure each stroke,
as they bank and turn,
waiting for prey
to stray into the open.
They are not strangers here.
They belong here,
lonely birds of death.

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...

Atlantis — William Corner Clarke

It's an autumn day
In New York
And I'm standing, staring
At remains of worlds
Previous to this one
Lying crushed and fused
In the sidewalk
Glittering like iron pyrites
In the rays
Of the late afternoon sun

There are microscopic hieroglyphs
Overwritten by the ramblings
Of the weather
Rivers, forests, animals and oceans
Swirled into stone

And seasoned by fire
Esoteric symbols
Emptied of Gods and meaning
Flattened and preserved
Like dried flowers
Inconceivable machinery
For travelling between stars
Ground into filings
And mixed with the dust
Of philosopher's bones
All by the bus stop
On Sutphin Boulevard

It's just gone 4 p.m.
And the 29 bus arrives
With a picture of Stone Henge
On its side

Hip-Hop vibrates the windows
Of the pawnshop down the block
Marvin Gaye is in there somewhere
Along with a snatch
Of Delta blues
And some sand from the Sahara

I've been carving reliefs
On a rock face
In the Valley of the Kings
I've been standing on a crag
Above Loch Tay
Watching a falcon
Catch its prey
Now I'm leaving Jamaica
Heading home

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The Last Human Inhabitant — Thomas D. Reynolds

I saw him once charging after a wounded pullet,
His rusted hatchet clipping a wing instead of the neck.

Undoubtedly some city boy back to nature
Who didn't know a chicken's neck from his ass.

The poor bastard had to be awful hungry anyway
To be willing to risk a tooth on those scraggly hens
Clucking and coughing around the old cabin,
The one where your daddy was born.

No one had lived there for as much as twenty years,
Yet generations of scroungy bitties still lingered
Around the door frame waiting for your grandma
To walk out with a handful of leftover cornmeal.

Seeing that graying hair pulled back in a ponytail,
They must have thought it was the second coming,

The legend of which was passed from hen to chick
For twenty years while roosting on rotting fence posts.
For as near as I can figure, he stayed there two weeks,
The lopsided chimney trailing wood smoke
Though the majority came from doors and windows
Since the chimney was plugged with about a thousand
Birds nests in addition to a couple dozen squirrel skeletons,
So no wonder his exhaust smelled like scalded beans
Along with a few other peculiar perfumes, ah hum.
He was the last human inhabitant of the old place,
And I reckon he deserves a bit of respect for that,
A lonely old squatter gazing up at the stars all night.
Wandering the woods where we once hunted,
Laying hands for the last time on the doorframe
Before like a ghost or a wandering circuit preacher
After a sermon walking down the road with head bowed.

Osprey — Lorraine Jeffery

He fell like God's hammer,
and slapped the water
with a sound that snapped
all heads to the lake.

A shiny black gargoyle of parts and angles
wrestled in the circling water.

Then, the great ebony wings
pushed the air down
in one stroke,
and rose high above us.

The silver dash of the fish
hanging from his
comma beak.

Geoff Stevens

Attacked down in the earth-worming subway
the old bird strikes back with his walking stick
making the feathers fly
the squawking robbers flee
on their battered wings
their talons drawn

Patricia Kelly

halting steps

a bird-shaped shadow

on the patio

When I Think of Those Doves — Lyn Lifshin

those pale shapes,
still, not brash as
jays or flashy but
eating what
the other birds
leave behind,
crumbs, a few
drops of water.
When I think of
July vanishing,
how I haven't
checked the death
anniversary for
my mother's
August death,

how the news
seems too much,
I look for the dove,
I think how like
this small shape
my friend with so
much nightmare
to deal with seems
who finds joy
in a few small
seeds
the rocking chair
and a crow's fading caw
rest stop

Bon Bon — James Penha

What lies within
this dark
and luscious
chocolate
will slake my thirst
I think
it drives me mad.

The Park — Fran Farrell Kraft

Seagulls visited my little park today
as they do from time to time.
They arrive in a flock of white wings,
wheeling and swooping and circling

above the benches and bright play things.
Unlike the pigeons they temporarily displace,
there are no stragglers struggling to keep up.
Between circuits they ground in a snowy crown.

The gulls have now returned to the sea.
Local pigeons are back and celebrating.
Less disciplined and more varied
with shades of silver and gray and flashes

of white underbelly, they also cavort,
but small groups break off to establish
their own orbits, each group followed
by two or three furiously flapping fowl.

Can these be the baby pigeons
that no one ever seems to see?

Sometimes a Raven — Joanne Seltzer

Sometimes a raven
flies along the path
a woman walks.
"Stalker!" cries the woman.
The raven answers
c-r-r-r-r-u-k.

The woman, grown pale,
changes direction,
provokes the raven
to shadow a new path
as it sweeps back and forth
in mock attack.

The raven continues
back and forth
back and forth
above this one woman
at this one time
in this one place.

The woman recites
a litany
of mythopoetic
epithets:
Bad Omen, *Great Spirit*,
Nevermore.

And this one raven
dark but somewhat comic
surrenders its essence
to metaphor,
terminates
this brief relationship.

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