

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

29



Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 29, #9

On an early winter night
two women went outside
to wash corn for soup.
When they saw Great Bear
silhouetted against an early moon
red eyes gleaming
in the lodge light.

Dennis Maloney

excerpted from *The Great Bear*

published in Pinecone 2 (White Pines Press)

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 29

Number 9*

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Great Bear — William Corner Clarke

I am the course
Of things
I am everything
Which is not known
I am the space where
Dreams take place
I am the gravity
Which keeps
All children
From drifting away
Sometimes
I am a great bear
With frost
On its fur

Quelites in Québec — Sylvia Manning

for Gloria Baez

I've looked everywhere here
for something free to eat, comadre,
and because of that I can tell you:
there are quelites.

Remember the morning you admitted,
in the yard overgrown after rain,
that you did know what they were,
after all, young amaranth coming up
so green and clean by the brushpile?

These in occasional unkempt yards,
Beaubien district, Montreal,
they can stay pretty all summer long.
They won't turn tall and tough
like in our rough early summers.

I don't take them all, of course,
but yes I take some, to put with rice,
and I take the memory of how

in the silence after you pretended
to never have been poor enough
to know what to do with quelites,

when you realized that I knew
you must know them, surely,

your face flowered with smile
when you repeated the truth, that
"Aye! Quelites! Benito liked them
in little taquitos of corn tortillas."

written first in Spanish,
July 30, 2007, Montreal

The Evidence of the Crab — James Penha

Petals of rain
strewn before the path of the storm
sunder the beach crowd who,

pulling on blankets to cover their nakedness,
thunder across the desert
to the caravan of cars.

Hiding with the dark,
a silver dollar son and I
stand ashore; the sea

collects the wind
to surge through veins,
churn out life and reign.

I am incited
but for the evidence of the crab,
a black wheelbarrow in the sand.

The tide's tongue
only plays at its pull
on me.

A Snowy Day — Samia Hasan

Cloaked in soft white fur
Snow besieges the bunny
Inhaling softly

Bunny — Samia Hasan

White as newly fallen snow

Soft and warm

Helpless and innocent

With few purposes in life

Geoff Stevens

No furrows in your brow
the sky is future clear
all illuminated to show
its dread meteors
its distant shining suns
and The Plough eminently visible
upon a field of blue
pointing directly to your guiding star

At Hog Island Oyster Farm — R. Yurman

prised open
in the dusty glare
the bi-valves lie exposed
within their gaping husks
pulsing gray and tan
food not pearls

squeeze a wedge of lemon over one
slip the shucking knife
across the chalk white inner shell
slide the blob of flesh
with all its salty juice
between the waiting teeth
onto the waiting tongue
chew it or swallow it whole

the choice depends
on the appetite of those
whose aching wrists
refuse to let
the crusted tight-lipped
skin-rasping shells
stay closed

A Mid-winter Night's Dream — George Held

That winter night
the Big Dipper
blazed so bright
all its water
couldn't quell the star fire

In the west;
you stripped,
your bare breast
in silhouette
against the rising moon

in the east;
then we two
sank to our knees
in the snow-
quilted grass,

till past all compass
points your embrace
drew us down
to form our own
constellation.

A Rain Myth — Sankar Roy

This is the home turf where
rain comes to live for days
and roosters gossip with wandering egrets
about too much greenness in the foliage.
The green blood clots on the branches.
Mother said—if you let a vine grow wild,
eventually snakes come to live in it. The mystery
propels my hands toward the darkness

that settles at the heart of the trees.
I always hope for some treasure. Before monsoon,
every summer, a troubadour used to visit our neighborhood
and solicit women to run away
after the melody of his flute. I have seen
my mother, aunts giving him food,
clothes, shelter for a little jingle,
for snippets of Lord K's love tales:
petals for the flame or for no one.

Old Spider Woman — Joanne Seltzer

This lovely land was formed by the spirit
called Old Spider Woman or Thought Woman.
By thinking she created the world.
But is she proud of her creation?

She is known for the tobacco men smoke,
for the corn women grind into grits,
for the power engendered when
this lovely land was formed by the spirit.

Sometimes her people forget
how dark the world before she began
giving birth to new gods.

Thought Woman dwells in everyone
from the Abenaki to the Tlingit,
in places holy and profane.

She is proud of animals and inanimate things,
of the constantly changing heaven,
of the milk-fog that flows from her breast.

But what will become of sun and moon
when no one is left to study the sky,
when Old Spider Woman looks at her land
and is no longer proud?

First published in 'The MacGuffin'

Seeing Is Believing — Ida Fasel

She watched
the sunset from
her city-high loft, I
through the niches of my seven
spruce trees.

Full blaze
or broken lights?
I put together gems,
enough to say I have seen the
glory.

Cloud Woman's Gift — David Michael Nixon

Cloud Woman, poised in a sky
empty of peacocks, poured a
waterfall down the red mesa,
forming a pool where wolf and wild horse
could come to drink, as sunset
shone through Cloud Woman's body,
warming her newly-made oasis.

Truth Is — Madeline Tiger

Wide, let the upswing swing up wide, once I believed touching the sky as a whole goal, today let flags over Tokyo and Morocco and Mountain Lakes flip in a frantic waving, for truth is not merely a child's swing up but more like the old inveterate river that holds clouds; they're allowed to float calmly, but the nights are deep and deep in my throat I find the name of a song which sings a poem is like a swing, a path is carved with tears of amusement, a set of beliefs is rooted in terra firma, and truth is cloudy.

The Bear's Paw Mountains — Ellaraine Lockie

Before the Cree Indians populated it and before my German Immigrant fathers settled on its surrounding prairie, the mountain range was named Bear's Paw.

Back when legends were birthed, the wandering Indians hunted wild animals on the same surrounding prairie—camping by Sage and Box Elder Creeks but boycotting the mountains because of the many bears there.

Finally famine forced one brave hunter into the mountains in search of food. When he returned with a deer draped over his shoulders, a bear appeared and with his huge paw pinned the hunter to the ground.

Brave One called on the *Great Spirit*, who rewarded him for courage and commanded Bear to unhand him. Bear refused, which incited the earth to quake in *Great Spirit's* thundering wrath, the heavens to fill with flashes of fury and one sacred arrow of fire to sever Bear's paw — releasing the Brave One.

There the paw remains today in the form of Box Elder Butte. The fault line behind marks *Great Spirit's* clean cut, and Bear's bled-out body lies immortal in *Centennial Mountain's* silhouette—head, nose, ears and spinal curve plain as the surrounding prairie.

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