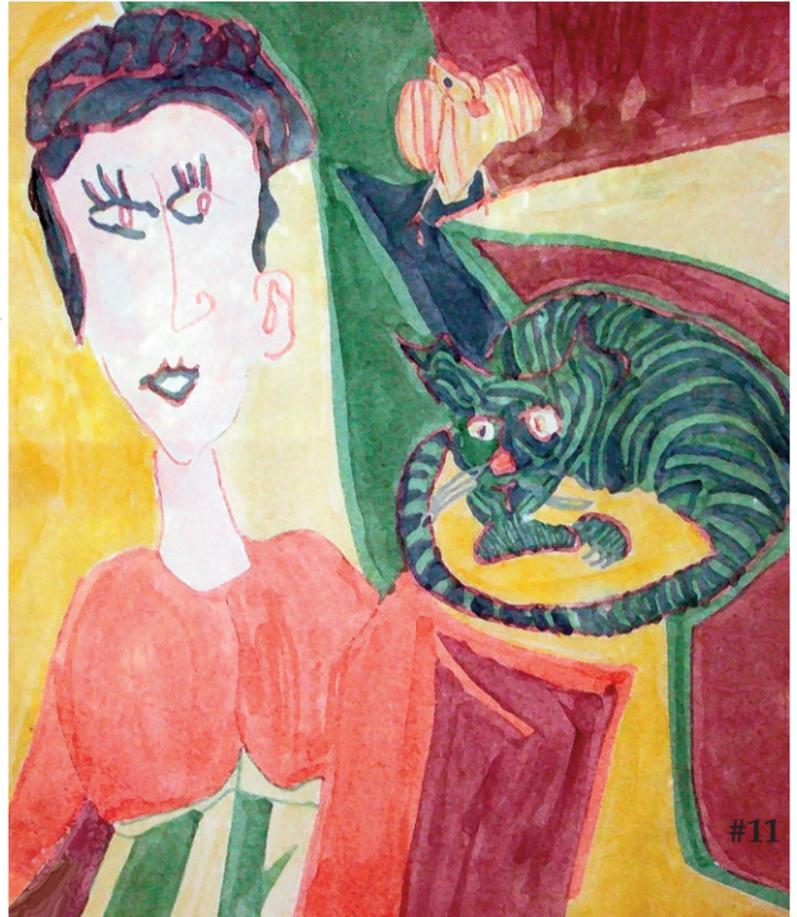


Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME
31



#11

Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 31, #11

I float my arms,
I take Pavlova's attitude toward a flower,
fragrant to my outstretched fingertips.

Ida Fasel

ROSES

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WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 31

Number 11

Designed, Edited and Published by Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

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Talking to the Ghost of Jerry Garcia – Robert Cooperman

Walking out of the office supply store,
I see him and do a double-take,
and before I can stop myself,
I gush, “My god, you look like
the ghost of Jerry Garcia.”

For an instant, he eyes me
as if I’m mad, or despite
his age, beard and tie-dyed t-shirt,
hasn’t heard of that Pied Piper
of our electric-music youth

Then deciding I'm most likely
harmless, he smiles, and brags
"I am Jerry Garcia, in the flesh,"
my turn to wonder how crazy he is,

until he confesses,
"Actually, my name is Jerry,"
and in a gesture of old hippie
fraternity, holds
out his hand to shake
in that secret greeting
of brothers, and not narcs.

I smile as if after inhaling
a giant toke of excellent grass,

“Nice to meet you, Jerry,”
“Likewise,” he grins,

and we continue our separate paths,
music beginning to bounce
in my head, and maybe in his,
years and years disappearing.

Headwaters – Scott Owens

Moving backwards
towards the source
there is always the
fear the river will dry up,
turn to creek, then
stream, then gully.
Tracking the spill
of water over rockdome
he finds a pool
with nothing flowing into it.
Thinking he has
reached the end he sits

on the rocks and
stares, watching the worlds
reflected there,
gray symmetry
of trees bending
and crossing like fingers,
sun pulsing in
quiet curls of color.

For days he thinks
of nothing but this pool,
sky opening and
closing behind him,

each night his face
held in the moon's
liquid O. When at last a cloud
breaks on the
mountain's side he rises
and climbs the
slick stair of raindrops
into the endless
sea of sky.

To Being – Bill Freedman

After the heart, the sirens,
the disappearance and return,
my grandmother, gray face and arms of fishnet,
sat in her high-back chair and seemed content.
The point: not speech, demanding or complaint,
but quiet being in a high back chair, like cliffs.

I never saw her stand or walk.
But there was no wheel chair,
she slid to sleep somehow
while all were in another room,
and her bed was slept in.
Look, I'd cry, like a bear or dwarf each morning:

The sheets are rumpled, the quilt turned back.
She has been here, unnoticed and is gone.

I could have hidden, watched,
stalked her shuffling, slouching secret
and grown less wise.
Not remembered her,
arms lion-pawed,
hard on the arms of a high-back chair,
as a monument.
To even this is life and is enough.

Dreams to Match – Robert L. Brimm

We are all in a race with time,
consciously or not, hurrying because
we don't know how much we have

left to spend, when the sands forming
the cone of our past will halt their
steady climb and slide because of some

accident, an illness gnawing silently
inside us now, or when our sands,
those allotted to us, will simply

run out; meanwhile, we scamper
under sudden flicking light arriving
to measure these, our fleeting days,

against long, empty nights until time,
our time, is up, and our turn comes
to accept the gentle swirl of darkness.

Oh, but let there be life, abundant,
rich with meaning, full of prospect,
dreams to match each trickling grain.

Stone Boy – Thomas D. Reynolds

The anonymous boy
Above the grave

Turns his face
To the sky.

In eighty-two years,
He's never been angry,

Or touched his cheek
to trace one tear.

He's never outgrown
The small gray suit,

Or watched the daisy
Fade in his grasp.

There's nothing left
But to wait a while longer

For boys to gather
At the bottom of the hill,

Running in circles
And calling his name.

The Star Pit – William Corner Clarke

High up on No Name Mountain
Just below the summit
And shielded from the sun
By a sheer rock wall
There is a tarn so deep and dark
That it's said that any star
That passes overhead
Is captured in its depths

It's also said
That on certain days
When the light
The moment and the angle

Are all just right
You can see them shining
Down among the waterweeds
Like silver coins
Of scattered treasure trove

But no one goes up there
There's only rain and ravens
Hawks and lichen stones
And yellowed grass, all ruled
And rivened by a bitter wind
The perfect place, in fact
For storing
Stolen stars

Props Person – H. Edgar Hix

She works at the Guthrie in props
painting, pounding, repairing dreams.
Never on stage, she is always on stage.
When the actor rises from behind his desk,
she is what he splays his hands on.
When the actress sips from the fluted glass
it is her lips adding to the seduction.

Her hands are a little rough and
her T-shirts a lot speckled.
The warm teen body is being replaced
by growing accustomed to graying hair.
She rides the train home to St. Paul.
Her heart continues to beat in hammers.
Her sweat is wash on plywood flats.

French Lessons - H Edgar Hix

We are all the cat lady.
They say we all have souls
but I know we all have strangeness.
Cats eat and sleep, mate and find
sufficiency in their own eyes.

We're the ones who need houses
full of sufficient cats.
Cats we nurture and neuter
as they destroy furniture they recognize
for purposes other than sitting.

As a child, I believed that cats spoke French.
In Second Grade the school taught us some French
and I tried it out on the neighborhood cats.
In the Third Grade I realized they didn't speak French.
I am still not sure if they understand it.
I, with five cats in their home.
I, who live with the dream of having reflective eyes.
I, who know I am the cat lady,
making me wiser because I see my cats.

Baklava – H. Edgar Hix

Thin, thin layers
of cake, thinner
than the rings of trees;
thick as honey.

This is how the years have been:
an expensive delicacy
I buy at the fair
and restaurants.

It is never made at home.
Flaky biscuits are made at home.
Honey and butter are added at home.
There are meats and vegetables at home.
Honey is the common stream;
honey and thinness.

Flesh and Stone – Mary Erickson

You rub your bare feet along the shoreline,
its water-smoothed stone slabs
folded one over the other
as piled bolts of cloth.

Unbroken waves like a washboard
have scrubbed sharp edges away
leaving an inviting path for you.

You recognize yourself in the lap of lapping –
how you are made of water
and need it to cleanse your body.

Your flesh calms as droplets trickle across skin.
You bend your toes, tracing washed stones
as you are washed.

Visions of White Lilac – Arlene Mandell

In this strange in-between season
vivid green weeds and velvet moss
thrive on chill nights, endless drizzle.

Random daffodils bloom where squirrels
once buried them. A rosemary bush
puts forth fingernail-sized violet flowers.

From the kitchen window, I watch
a bare-leaved lilac, lime green buds
swelling, and when I close my eyes

the room fills with intense fragrance.

Oh What the Body – Michael S. Morris

Oh what the body knows of itself
throwing up its hands
in discomfort, roiling
inwardly. Oh what it knows
of itself is devotion itself
finding the knees seed the earth
and hands clasped together make
songs raise up out of a silence
too immense, too glorious not
to taste on the tongue, with the
wind of the skin a caress
of mystery, thermo dynamics,
and consciousness, that is
Oh what the body knows of itself

Flying Trapeze - Mary Clark

We feel the inviolable thread
stronger than circus rigging
on which we will be
always swinging
 our flight a pattern
 of coming and going
a design in space awaits us
on the universal flying trapeze

When we gain each our own platform
and catch the bar on the upswing
we hold it shoulder high
and lift our feet
 to create our own gravity
 and soar across the tented sky
in a flawless arc, flyer and catcher
in perfect harmony

In this redistribution
of weights and measures
becoming separate in our unity
centered in sense and sensation
we feel the tenuous
but unbreakable connection
as the warm dome rushes to greet us
and sounds flow in fluted pillars

We sing to the return of the center
of gravity, and on the backswing
we let go; spare equipment
flies away
 and we are rearranged
 in the creation of our design
all on the flying trapeze, the universal
flying trapeze of love

Art History In Northern Sumatra – James Penha

The Kotanopan jungle
mountains are cut
in the foreground
by the rapid river
and so shimmer at sunset,
like a pointillistic painting until
every tree shakes
and the sky itself explodes
into a guernica
of bats: dark night
before night

when the landscape fractalizes
into pollack drips
and daubs de kooning
and bits of landscape
in my cubist eyes.

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