

# Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME  
31



#11

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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

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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 lichened 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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