

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME
31



#4

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The cluttered Rhine
moves machinery and wine

Ida Fasel

ON THE RHINE

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WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 31

Number 4*

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Cover: Rhine View (1878) watercolor by Ernst Morgenstern

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*Bucolic Landscape of Rhine
Postcard 1910*

On the Rhine – Ida Fasel

The cluttered Rhine
moves machinery and wine
and people who have brought
their senses miles to see.

They tip en masse
to the picturesque side
round the point
all eyes to the top

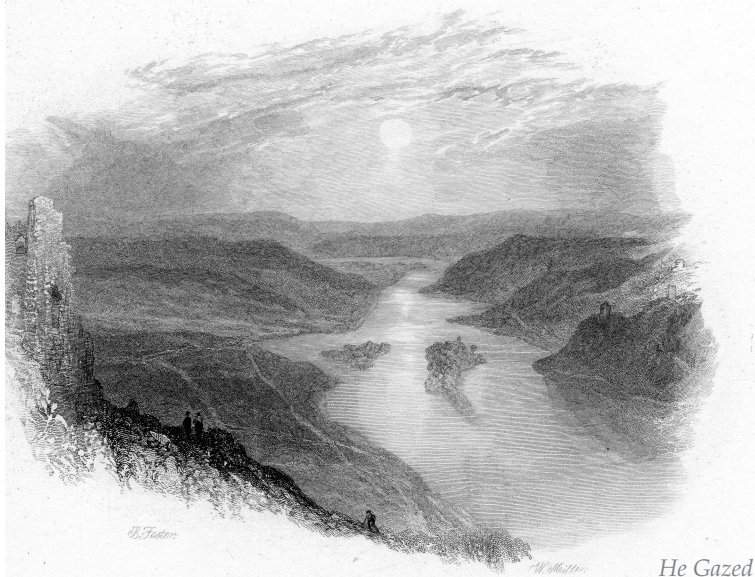
and pass (the travel brochures
never tell you)

Lorelei bei long playing record,
the rock wearing her light,
the river her fine gold rings.



Essence of a Star — Arlene Mandell

Using cooling cinders of ancient stars
cosmologists calculate our universal age:
thirteen billion years. Time clicks by
one digital second, the next, the next
as we chat, shop, text, watch war
famine, oil spewing, whales dying
so easy to become mired in the muck
of despair. Instead let's steal some
moments to inhale
exhale
celestial
essence. . . .



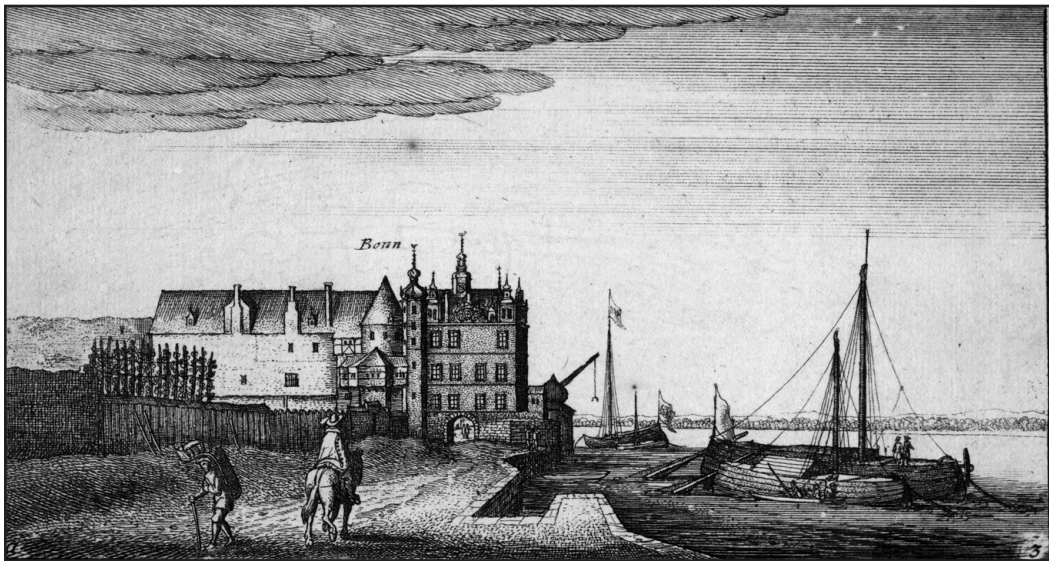
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He Gazed on the Rhine (1872)
William Miller

Clementines – Robert L. Brimm

For one whole sweet
week we had them, those
clementines you bought,
juicy little tangerines
from Spain, the grocer
said, and we supposed
they truly were, for why
should he lie about such

a thing? But now you're
gone, the clementines
a fading aftertaste,
the small empty box
sitting like a cat
beside the back door,
awaiting your return.



Rhine near Bonn
Wenceslas Hollar (1607-1677)

Goat's Foot Morning-Glories – Ruth Moon Kempher

rope along the dune line down
to water's edge, occasional
wadded fuchsia blooms
grown seaward, for the sun.
but consider the sea's confusion –
blessed, great with whales and fishes
and the lobster's nest –
then to be trundled over sand
to crumple moon-beset, to drown,
the club foot, brine browned.
survivors-wrangle-rooted
Glories of the land.



How We Visited the Winery – Ruth Moon Kempher

on Bully Hill, at the top, above miles of vineyards – where my Grandad and Gramma used to pick the grapes for Taylor Wine – and Gramma wouldn't touch a drop – she's a Northern Baptist – but I think her blood's pure wine.

She wouldn't like my writing that to you, but I do. White wine, pure and vibrant. To make it red, they heat the grapes 'til the skins' pigment bleeds. She picked them – green, white and blue: so much an hour, more if you were a fast picker. “And I was fast with my hands, if I do say so.”

The crooked vines are tied to wires on posts, old railroad ties. The leaves, in twilight, show white undersides like moth cocoons there, blooming. She told me how she'd pick to the top of a line, and stand in the chill air, to watch the barges below, hauling the crated bottles on the lake dreaming rivers where they'd go. "Many's the time—" on Bully Hill, near Elmbois, grape juice sticky to her elbows. "It wasn't always easy," close to an admission as she'll come. "But that water was so blue. And the air was fine."

Boats on the Rhine (1835)
anonymous



Things Play – Frank Murphy

Pocket books scurry away, eye glasses
hide beneath books. Things play.

Keys sneak behind coffee cups;

A cell phone
creeps under a blanket.

Innocent pencils

share guilty secrets with a
missing telephone number.

Mayonnaise jars

peep around complicitous milk bottles.

Things play.

Names jump down from the brain,
duck under the nose, tiptoe into
the mouth, and sit on the tip of tongues.

The present scampers into
the clock. Things play.

The past darts into the ages. Things
play. Everything that will be
hides in tomorrow.

Things
play.

And you, and me, and all our hidden lives
stand on the dark streets of our most precious
hopes, crying

“Come out, come out.”

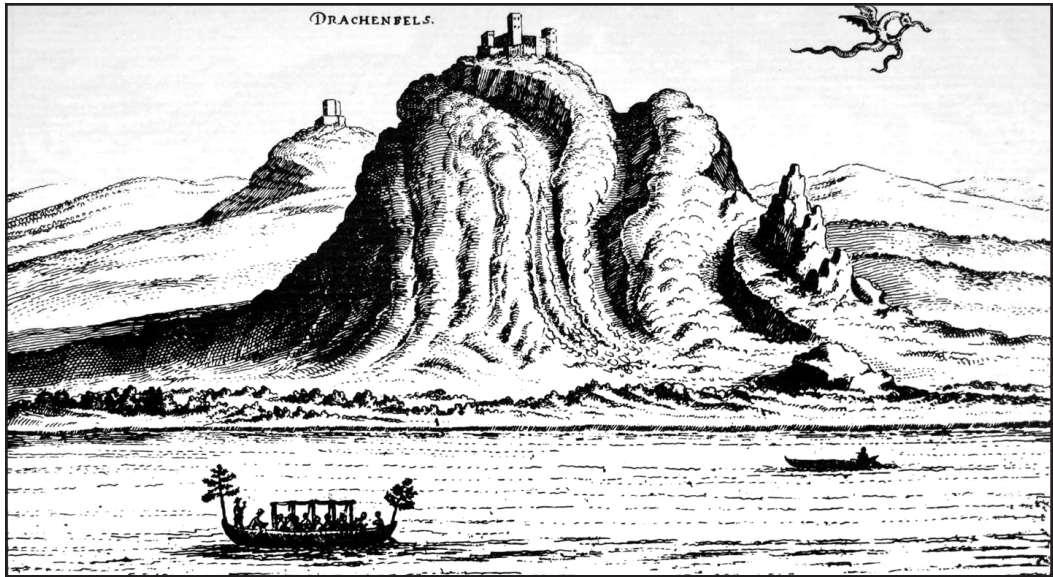


Banished to Bogeyland – R. Yurman

“This is more than my night
can hold. I dream of waterfalls,
earthquakes, enormous engines.
You rattle the windows, shake
the walls. It’s a wonder,” she
says, “you don’t wake yourself.”

The room fills with silence.
He studies the bright flashes
on the insides of his eyelids.

“I could live with whistles,
snorts and groans, but not
this tornado. I’d rather
sleep in a freight yard,”
she says. “You have to go.”



vessels of verve – Jennifer Jayne Scobie

those tiny striped
zebra mussels
that hitchhiked their way in
from origins far far away
clinging to the hulls
of busy ships
turned the Detroit River
from murky to blue

and now
the sounds of cargo ships
greeting each other
with fog horns
bellowing deeply in threes

seem cleaner
more beautiful

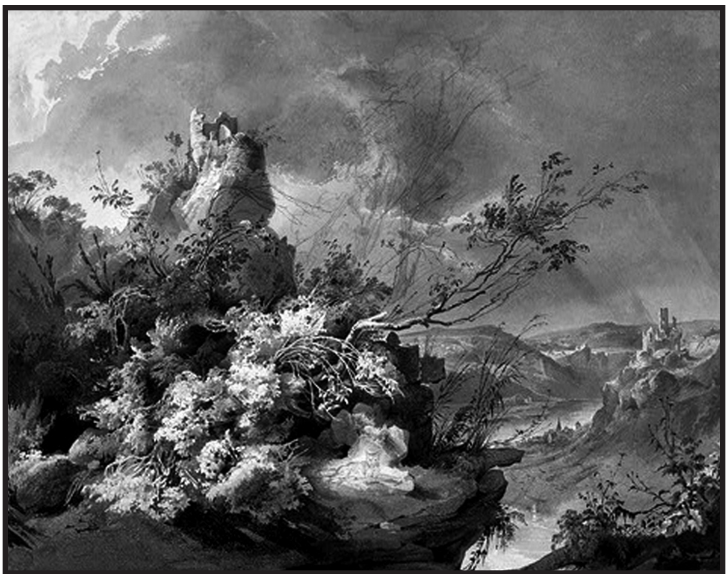
filled with hopes
textiles and steel
wine and machines
vessels of verve
find their way by
and on
to destinations
that want
and wait



How the Red River Got Its Name – Jari Thymian

Dank basement, axes, missing limbs.
The floor creaks above, slow ka-thunks,
something dragged. Sleeping bags,
dim flashlights, a flood of blood in Crookston.
Something burble-burbles in the rusty
plumbing pipes. Young cousins wait
for the story lines: Give me back my liver!
Give me back my liver! The river –
much, much too close to Grandma's house –
waits for its name.

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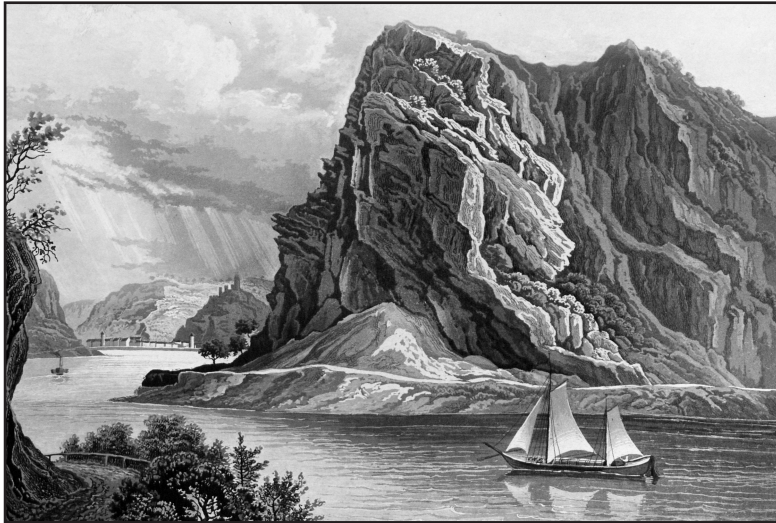
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Ruined Tower Overlooking the Rhine (1835)
Karl Bodmer

Jari Thymian

A
N
C
H
O
R

Anchor of all anchors. Highways 7, 12, and 75 intersect at Paul Bunyan's anchor made of the rare granite, tainted pink, left at the bottom of an ancient lake. After the last glacier, Paul, on Saturday nights, washed out his red wool socks in Lake Agassiz. The small town sails on rolling hills, a valley's 33-mile-long lake called Big Stone.



Ruin Walls on the Rhine (1820)
anonymous



Night Train – Rex Sexton

Light so bright. light everywhere ...

I am alone on the train.

The empty car, ablaze with light,
seems as ephemeral as mist,
as it streaks across the night.

I sit in the back,
in a cold sweat,
light headed, panic stricken,
wondering whether

I am awake or asleep.

The thickets and rivers, the ravines fly wildly by,
like waving arms menacing my night trip to tomorrow.

The ghost white winter landscapes – white hills,
white valleys, white fields and woods – are as much
as unreality as my blazing dream of radiance.

I cannot move. I am afraid.

“Ten hut!” The sergeant smiles at me.

“But I wake up serge and the night is still there.”

“Lost in the moon’s glow,” the sergeant sings,

“we chase the dream shadows”

The Lord is my Shepard

The train’s wheels seem to whisper darkly.

I shall not want

I shall not want

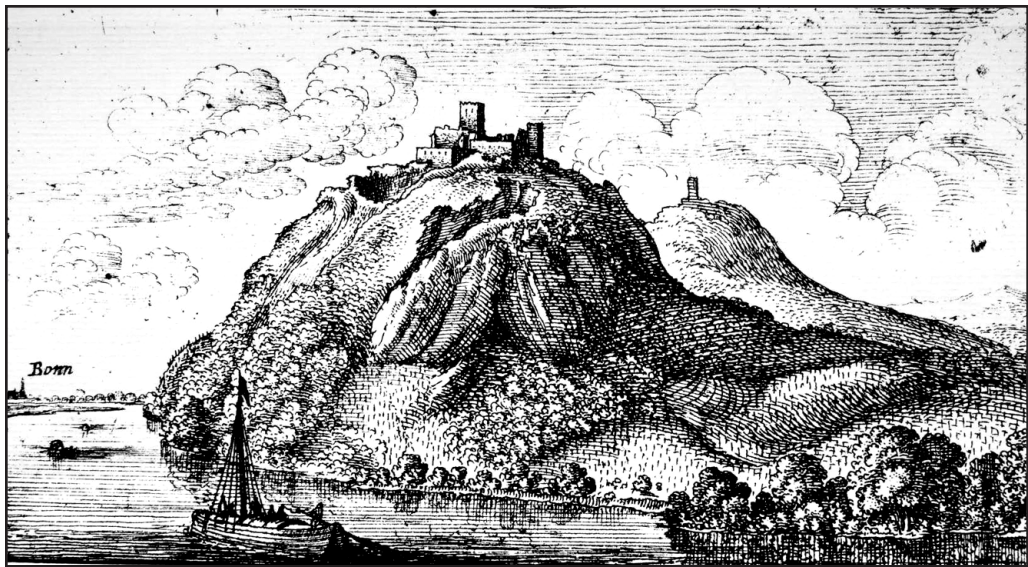
though I walk through the valley

of the shadow of death ...

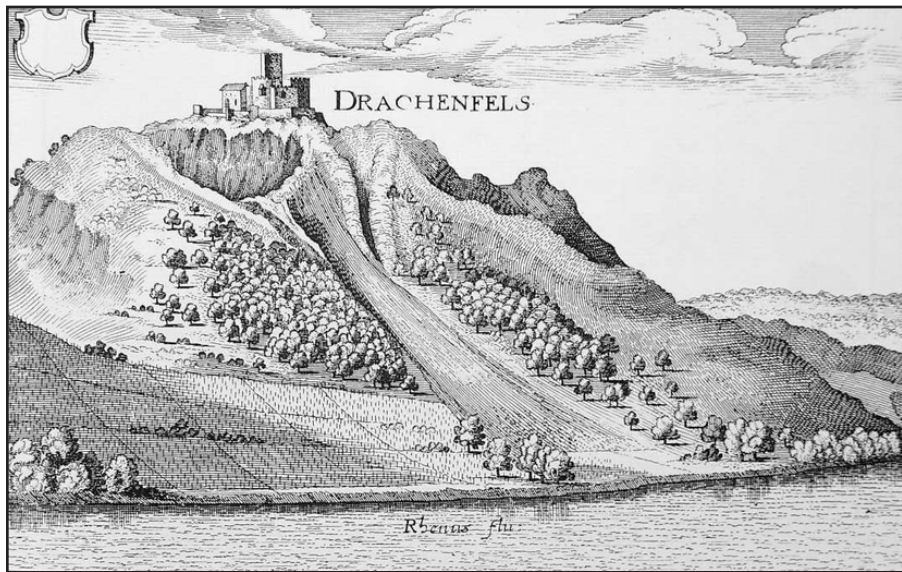
I sit up with a jolt, covered with sweat,
heart pounding, pulse racing, eyes blurry.
Masked figures surround me.
I sit naked on a narrow cot.
IV needles puncture my wrists.
“Lie down.”
One of them puts a hand on my chest.
“Don’t move.”
The others reach forward and grab me.
I remember the incoming ordnance, the explosions,
traveling through a tunnel, a golden radiance enveloping me.
I remember my shapeless arms reaching out for God,
my fingers slipping through air.

*The Rhine Osterprey and Feltzen engraving (1852)
William Miller after J M W Turner*





*Drachenfels
Matthäus Merian (1593-1650)*



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