

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream



July, 2020

Volume 41
number 2

Waterways

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VOLUME 41 NUMBER 2

We're pounded and whirled
assaulted by falling colors:
red and green un-
sensual orgasms.

Enid Dame
excerpt from
July 4, 1980

WATERWAYS

Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 41 Number 2

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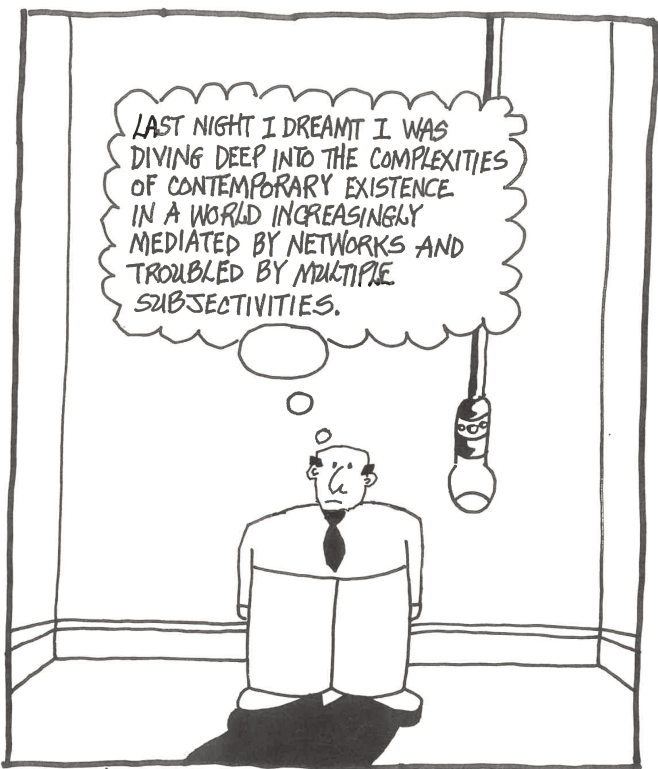
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Wayne Hogen

Mary Belardi Erickson

Tree Shadows

The moon is a large bellied yellow bird
over the trembling ash trees.
Yet all is calm under the rustling branches
where leaf shadows do not even shiver,
even on cooled, still ground.
I am wanting to wander among
these dark figures created
by blocked moonshine.
It seems their shadow substance
uncloaks the spirits of night:
welcoming shade dance.
The beckoning depths could keep me,
but the phantom leaves will depart
as the round moon flies east to west.

Before Me

I have dug in the soil, found reminders
of others before me like the swirl
of colors on a clay marble which rolls
in the space of my hand, an image
of earth in rotation, light and dark.

Ruth Moon Kempfer

The Ubiquitous Encomium, Love

exploded like fireworks

umbrellas of spark, icebluegreen

to a downdraft of ashes

a fall of gentle

night moths, soft

ghost gone

only the night behind, like a shade

on a roller, drawn.

James Penha

Friends With Crayons

Friends leave

empty spaces

between the lines

of their coloring books

for us to fill.

Monique Laforce

On se souvient parfois de

l'aube éventrée par le soleil
le corps aveugle cherchant nourriture
une pierre fondant doucement sa lumière

l'étrangeté d'être et de l'écrire

We sometimes remember

dawn broken by the sun
the blind body looking for food
a stone gently melting its light

the strangeness of being and writing it

Mary K. Lindberg

Once Upon A Prom

The night of the prom
I watched from the window
until Alan appeared
white corsage box in hand.

We met in a whirl of summer shawl,
a whiff of my mother's Chanel perfume.
Hiding a host of tremblings,
he pinned the white flowers
on my dress. He wore silence well
as my mother assessed him.

At the prom we danced so close
rose petals brushed my lips.
In the front seat of his car
we whispered, then kissed goodnight.
Next morning I pressed the gardenias.

Why is it so difficult now?
Have we forgotten how
to feel sudden shudders
from a single touch,
body hairs stand up,
the spine-tingling thrill
of an ordinary white box?

Barbara E. Young

Not So Rural As All That

It started days before the 4th, as if unable to wait
for Santa. Bang. Do cars still backfire?

Cattle pastured across the road, accustomed
to Sunday rapid-fire, ruminated.

. . . us, surrounded by sizzles and whizzes, pops,
knocks, earth-rocking BOOMsss

How is it that the thunder
doesn't scramble birds' eggs in their shells?

I can see that seed-sized hummingbirds might
ride the waves of sound, sleeping.

In between flower bursts: Who are you calling GIRL?
And what might be a shot.

The moon rose whole, into gunsmoke, and dust
sucked west from the Sahara. Mother of pearl.

Ellaraine Lockie

Autumn's End

Green alters to Grand Canyon colors
in age-old October chemistry
of England leaves
Chameleon change of life
Like the midway metamorphosis
en route to old age
Where verdant clarity of youth
and variegated complexity
of early adulthood
combine in full spectrum

I see me and a multitude
of midlife sisters
Our hormones sucked out
by nature's straw
Chlorophyll leached from our leaves
Leaving ruby orange amber splendor
that has been there all along

Some of us still gripping
boughs for security
Grasping bygone shades of green
that shift to bouts of blue
Indigo depressions that clash
with earth-tone beauty
And become brittle with the fear
of forthcoming winter

Others of us float gracefully
to the ground grandmothering
into sunset colors
Or cluster in commiserating piles
Watching the balance of us
blow carefree in newfound freedoms
on fall's final breezes
Gilded in sunlit brilliance
of acceptance
We blaze into the inevitability
of autumn's end

Marilyn Braendeholm

The Relevance of Colour

Dad obsessed with cobalt blue.
It was in every seascape he painted.
The sky. The water. They were fluid.

He and I would sit on the beach,
my toes buried in wet sand and
my ankles tangled in ribbons of
red kelp. Dad sat on a 3-leg stool,

sinking slowly into the soft sand—
an hourglass of sorts, and when
his knees drew level with his chin,
it was time to pack up and leave.

Come October, Dad said he wanted
to visit the North Lakes, to paint
maple trees in fiery fall colours.
But when Dad's sister suddenly
died, the calendar stopped.

Mum said I was old enough to go
to the funeral. I felt grown up,
like an adult who could eat cake
for breakfast and popcorn for
dinner. But it wasn't at all
like I thought it would be.

Everyone was crying as they
walked by Auntie Susie in her
white pine coffin, her curly
red hair flowing around her
face like kelp that tangled
around my ankles at the beach.

We never did go to the Lakes.
Dad put his paint and brushes
away - and he watched the red
and gold leaves falling and
blow away in the autumn wind.

The Sea Witch

The black rock
Rising from the sea
Out beyond the tide line
The last trace
Of the land of the Settanti
Long gone from memory

I think her beauty
Comes from them
They are in her gaze
Her lichen coloured eyes
Her sapphire veins
The flaxen hair
She combs in rainbow waves
I hear their music
In her heart's wild birds
Singing on the wind

She is the friend
Of all the lost ones
Walking the line
Between sea and sky
The orphans
Of the winter's day
Wishing to be taken
And swept away

She is beyond
The reach of all
But madmen sailing
In their broken shells
She is the ghost
Of sleep and shadow
Mistress of storms
And sailors
Shipwrecked
On her dark shores

Sheryl L. Nelms

“One night
the pipe

we’d been putting
in the hole

started corkscrewing up
out of the hole

all of the roughnecks
on the drilling rig ran

but my friend Bob
had been in the crow’s nest

high up on the rig

when I went back
and started looking for him

I finally found him
hanging from the Geronimo line

he looked ok
except he was quivering

he said he thought everybody
on the derrick was dead

but him!"

Charles Rammelkamp

Colors

When did salmon become a color?
Around the same time peach
 and pistachio did,
I imagine. Their thingness provides
a solidity to the tones, as any noun brings
a shape to experience.

Red, blue, yellow, pink, green,
 purple, orange.
The words label the visual quality
without reference to something
colored just so, only abstract blobs.
Yet wasn't it Kant who said
you can't imagine colors — or anything —
without the characteristic of extension
in space and time?
Kant's cookie cutters,
 the forms of perception.

I remember painting dormitory rooms
 one summer.
The colors, institutional pastels,
beige and turquoise and light green,
were identified by names like
A-17 and P-63 and T-11.

The numbers stressed
the essentially utilitarian,
unaesthetic value of the tints and shades.

So why not nouns for shades of color?

Why not verbs, adverbs, adjectives?

Green, blue and red

are adjectives.

A gerund, like “participating,”

might be a good name for a color.

“The wall was a dark shade of participating,”

my wife recalled, describing

her sister’s new home,

“but the ceiling was a pale administration

with recovery trimming.”

Prepositions to classify Crayola

crayon colors — into and over,

within and atop. Besides, under, upon.

Three kinds of “oh yeah.”

An endless glissando of piano keys.

David Michael Nixon

Pale Bright Dancer

Her face was pale, beneath her broad sombrero.

She wore bright paisley gloves

in greens and purples.

Her book was open to a page illuminated

by deft hands,

until she closed it, rose and danced, her pair

of bright red sneakers beating wild in time

to a swirling tune that almost shimmered

in the iridescent air. Those who beheld her

felt sharp pleasure, mingled with aching pain,

as daylight wound around her into twilight.

Our Geography of Poets

California

Ellaraine Lockie

Florida

Ruth Moon Kempfer

Maryland

Charles Rammelkamp

Minnesota

Mary Belardi Erickson

New York

Mary K. Lindberg

David Michael Nixon

Quebec

Monique Laforce

Tangerang-Banten

James Penha

Tennessee

Barbara E. Young

Wayne Hogan

Texas

Sheryl Nelms

Virginia

William Corner Clarke

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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