

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream

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volume 42
number 1



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VOLUME 42 NUMBER 1



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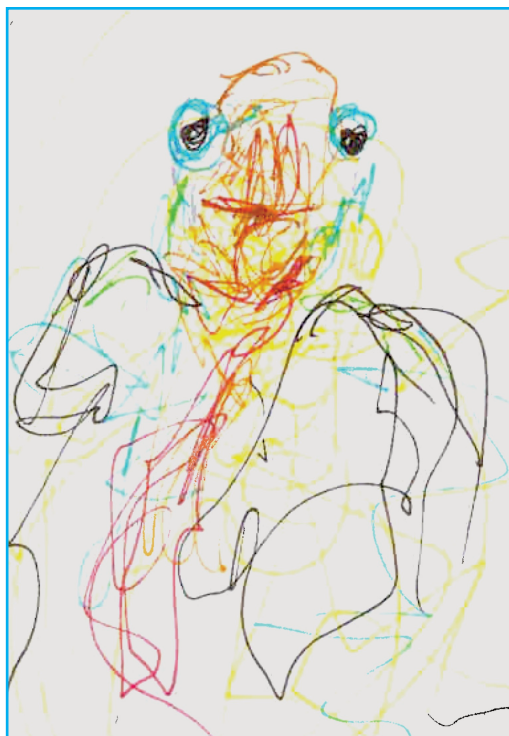
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Wayne Hogan

House Specialty

Waiter! There's just one
blackbird in my soup! There
should be more blackbirds in
my soup! This restaurant comes
highly recommended for the
number of blackbirds in the soup!
I can get soup anywhere — I came
here for the blackbirds! Get me
the chef! I want to speak to
the chef! I want to tell the chef
I want more blackbirds in my
soup! Now look! My soup
is cold! I want more soup, too!

Marilyn Braendeholm

Wind Just Isn't Strong Enough...

to stop the flight
of clouds and gulls,
to stop a caterpillar
from inching along a leaf,
and it will never stop
a chick from hatching, or
seeds from sprouting, or
stop a stream from running.

But wind is an invisible
passenger. It's all knots,
and rebellion, a wily body.

Marilyn Braendeholm

The Yew

This is about a tree.

There was something about it.

More than interesting.

But it's not really about the tree.

So. What's it about?

Childhood.

It holds my childhood.

That summer. The forest

behind the house. Beyond

the maple tree — the one Dad

nailed a nest box on. As if

crucified. By a nest box.

And beyond the huckleberries

that I stopped to eat before

chasing on . . . after something.

Something else. I can't recall what

because I was always chasing

after something.

Always running. Ducking

under a long sweep of
hanging limbs that wanted to
touch the ground. Like long arms
over soil. Soft. Dry. Scented hot
as my summer days, and overhead
pinecones ripening in the sun.
In the mute shade. The coolness.

Undercover from heat, a tent of
limbs as if mothering arms.
There for feeling safe. Secure.
Like newly hatched chicks waiting
for their mother's return. Safe
within a tree. Tucked on a limb.
This tree is a poem.

John Grey

On the Subject of Spring

Spring is concerned
with all these new arrivals.
It rehearses the singers,
schools the hunters
in where the big bugs fly,
which soils conceal the juiciest worms.

Spring has my feeders on its list,
the seed I put out
for the newly minted black-silk grackle
or the fledgling oriole.
It keeps watch on my birdbath.
Is it deep and cool and clean enough
for a robin to be splashing?

And, despite suburban sprawl,
spring watches over the thinning stands of forest,
guides the warblers
to their lush green nesting boughs.

With all of its thawing, budding,
flowering, it still has time
to rouse the hibernators out of slumber,
warm passion from winter chill.

Its motto is “Life.”

Its newness never gets old.

John Grey

Empty Nest

Sparrows nudge their offspring
out into their own lives.

You reach out,
pull yours in.

These birds taught their fledglings flight,
figured that's enough to know.

You tried to keep your child's wings
secret from himself.

Parent sparrows
are now free and unencumbered.

You wonder how such creatures sing.

Mary Belardi Erickson

Black-capped Chickadee

On a ragged weed head
a black-capped chickadee
grasps a slender stem,
searches for tiny seeds
while a murmur of breeze
rocks the dead plant.
The tiny bird alters
its holds effortlessly:
Zen acrobatics.

Ron Singer

Self-Driving

A baby in a bubble car, I saw,
face magnified by the plastic shield,
a Covid-era vehicle.

Was there a pusher, as well?
How could there not have been?
Still, Washington Square Park
is full of wheeled surprises:

Skateboards, Razors, rollerblades,
bicycles, prams, voltage riders,
ersatz carts for injured pets
(many of the drivers, “look-at-me’s”).

In Abuja, Nigeria,
a decade ago (it seems longer),
I hailed a two-person taxi.

Since I lacked small money for the fare,

my share was picked up
by the other passenger,
a well-heeled local matron.

Was the vehicle a pedi-cab,
or something else from Asia?
Was there a driver? I forget,
but how could there not have been?

A large passenger with peeled skin*,
I must have been magnified,
like the bubble baby in the park,
like him, a featured attraction.

**Oyinbo*, the Yoruba word for “white person,” means “peeled skin.”

Kelley Jean White

3 Poems

loggers thin the forest
a hundred trees gone
a thousand songs lost

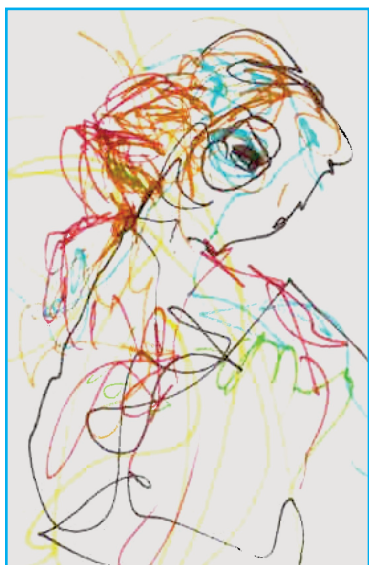
I had forever
to birth you. Even now time
stands still as you age.

always mom, across
the room I recognize
my grown son's sniffles

Gilbert Honigfeld

Spring

Saw a red-winged blackbird
strutting her stuff this morning
doing some show-off moves,
kind of a sassy Spring salsa.



Our Geography of Poets

Minnesota

Mary Belardi Erickson

New Jersey

Gilbert Honigfeld

New York

Ron Singer

Pennsylvania

Kelley Jean White

Rhode Island

John Grey

Tennessee

Wayne Hogan

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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