

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream

October, 2021 volume 42 number 4



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VOLUME 42 NUMBER 4



Barbara Fisher

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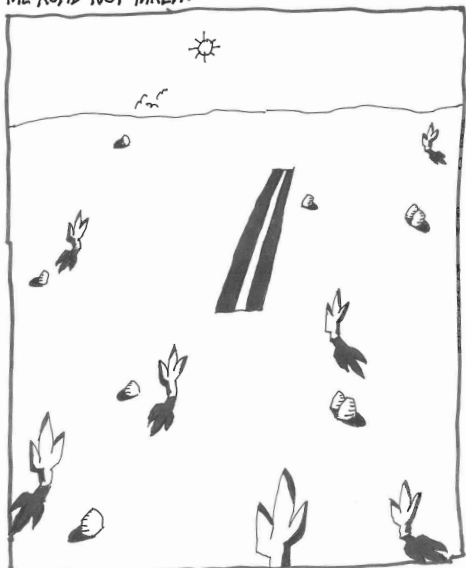
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THE ROAD NOT TAKEN.



Wayne Hagan

Pat Anthony

Ear to Ear

Already corn rattles
Grocery bin's green eared cousins
finally turned down and hanging

every farmer waiting for the last
bit of green to vanish from rustling leaves
so as not to wrap whirling combine's teeth

and everywhere come night deer
listening ear to ear for falling kernels
their crunch so different

from what nibbling teeth once stripped
milky orb bursting then from silken husks
reminding me how in the café by the elevator

I once asked why we can't harvest
from those burgeoning green fields
only to face a sea of knowing smirks

*Ain't no sweet corn there, Lady!
that there's field corn: break your purty teeth
'lessen you're a coon or a deer!*

I peel back last husks in the grocer's bin
pinch a kernel to see if milk bursts
just to be sure.

Wayne Hogan

The Just So-So American Sentence

They were as haggard as it gets,
they'd been so long now on the way
walking past so many stop-and-go and
keep-out signs, now and then barely
escaping mad dogs (and madder bulls),
going up-hill for such long stretches,
stepping around boulders bigger'n an
elephant's bodice, scaling walls and
jumping barbed-wire fences, never
sleeping so to be on the ever-fearful
watch for vicious cockroaches running
rampant in that part of the land
(they, and cuckolded husbands as far
as the eye could see), on and on
they'd come with still no end in sight
to speak of, hoping there'd not ben
too much tension or exhilaration
in this just so-so American sentence.

Wayne Hogan

Cun Abody Keep Itself Alive

O yeah! Smack-dab in the middle
of the road it was! Sumbody shoulda
sed sumthin! Shouldn'ta happened.
Nosiree, shouldn'ta. Shoulda been
whole 'nother story. One with more
metal. Aluminum, at least.
Then there's thet word, "peasants."
Plum disgustin word, "peasants."
Where'd it come frum anyhow?
Frum 15th century countryside France,
yew sez? 'kay. Nuff sed, thet
purty much 'splains it. So then
how yew feel 'bout the Texas flag
abein flowd on the side the
grand ol Amurican flag should be
abein flowed? Thet hakle yer halters
any? An them poems them people
write. Cun abody keep itself
alive awritin 'em?

Wayne Hogan

Sorta a One-in-More Poem

The former took precedence
over the latter, as its wont was
to be. I'm sorry not being
more helpful, though there
may be more to understand
but I don't see how, as this has
so perfectly epitomized
remembering the pedillogical
view espoused earlier saying
something of the Age of Pericles,
or Canadian poetry, perhaps.
O daughter of Babylon, who
shall be destroyed, happy is she
who dashes your little one
against the sea!

Marilyn Braendeholme

Small Town Saturday

It's market day, and I'm standing beside Jack, who could've been my brother, if Mum had married that boy who kissed her in front of the high school back when, but there's some blood connection, albeit flimsy, somewhere under our skin, and Jack pulls a golden harvest of sweet corn in a hemp bag from under the trestle table, and sets it aside, as if it might be but probably isn't for sale, or more likely it's something he's keeping for his granny who always stops by here at 10 o'clock on a Saturday to haggle the price of one tomato or one spring onion, but she manages to take home all the ugly mis-shapen fruit and veg without turning out one coin, and just as I'm about to ask Jack about the corn, I see Dad in a better-look-away-now mood, walking by with a face like a hard horizon and an empty wooden crate labeled Golden Sweet Corn clenched in his hand.

Saturday's farmers' market
a sting and hiss of conversation
straight out of warm soil

James Penha

Corn Reborn

Corn sellers in Bali all hail from Lombok, one island east, because...because... they always have in endless migration west to tourists who hunger...or did until demand with the rest of our world collapsed like a failed crop. But as the beaches reopen the sellers' barbeque carts line the shores their charcoal burning, their smoke wafting in our eyes and noses recalling, recobbling paradise: they grill their corn not quite to black and paint the kernels with savory sauce—secret as where they locked down, magical as Bali itself, back from the dead.

Deborah Doolittle

**Robert Creely Speaks Freely
of the Water Willow**

It drew attention
from the other who walked
back and forth and passed
it from where it stood.

It stood at attention, each
branch rigid with thoughts
of water, each leaf stiff
for want of rain.

Any amount of rain, brisk breeze,
the barest puff of air would
break its concentration
and let down its silvery hair.

Ruth Moon Kempfer

Hazy at the Market

green tomatoes

forced in some flat
or with neon sunshine

not enough vitamins
to nourish the blight

wormless, of course
worms appreciate taste

why do I think of love
in connection with

packed in plastic, green
tomatoes? why am I fazed

it is solid pulp and green
someone I could trust

vegetable connections
dreams; soft rain

Gilbert Honigfeld

A New World

Once he'd landed in this country,
joining a long line of men and women
holding little kids by the hand, a few
at the breast, reality quickly replaced
dreams of milk and honey, scrambling
to find a day's work anywhere and
any way he could

but there was no
turning back when the alternative was
too grim to ponder and so the trans-
planted family survived in their new
world remembering the past while
learning new words and new foods
they'd never known in the old country

like fresh Jersey corn every August,
his favorite the two-tone variety
with irregular niblets that he'd
sprinkle with salt as soon as
Mama pulled it from the roiling pot,
eager to suck the sugar out of
the cob no matter if it was too
hot to hold in his hands for more
than a few seconds

validation somehow
that leaving the old country was worth
the struggle, fresh corn a taste of heaven.

Richard Spiegel

“It’s about getting accustomed,”

I remember my mother saying as she aged
vainly into her eighties. She lost an eye

to a California doctor’s good intention.
Her bones bent; fingers and toes.

Is it gravity that pulls us forward?
She lost teeth. Doctors placed a glass eye

in her empty socket. It troubled her
to climb the stairs, but she grew

more accustomed to the vagaries of aging.
The starlight is bent by the force

that shapes our fall out of favor.
Into what trajectory have we shot?



1970 photo of Richard and his mother (right).

Richard Spiegel

Amid This Turbulent Mediation

Have a go and comeback
if you will or won't.

The passing passions collide
in the haze without meaning.

My attempt to communicate
is rolled well into the night.

Winter is coming, crashing
with my moment. Do you journey

out of your house? What do you
find? On what do you lean?

Do you learn nothing,
but still stand for poetry?

My mind makes words of the world.
These lines remain in midair, hovering

over this page. It does
what it does. In the starlight

you'll find the dot.

Richard Spiegel

The Take Away

At the Saint George market,
we buy 5 ears of corn
every Saturday
from the Jersey farmer.
We break the shank, remove
the silk and peel the husks,
leaving the sweet kernels
on the cob. We eat them hot,
out of a boiling pot.

EARLY FURNITURE RE-ARRANGING.



Our Geography of Poets

Florida

Ruth Moon Kempher

Kansas

Pat Anthony

New Jersey

Gilbert Honigfeld

New York

Richard Spiegel

North Carolina

Deborah H. Doolittle

Tangerang-Banten

James Penha

Tennessee

Wayne Hogan

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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