

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream

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VOLUME 42 NUMBER 5



Barbara Fisher

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Wayne Hegan

Mary Belardi Erickson

In Morning Sun

A pogo stick of sunlight jumps
the horizon and illuminates
half a dozen wood utility poles--
leading up our gravel driveway—

into shining white pillars
pointing skyward.

They glow with a brightness
as if the heralds of the trees
they once were,

instead of country utility poles
topped by blue insulators,
wires carrying electricity
to our old farmhouse.

Mary Belardi Erickson

Sparks fly up

from small stubble fires
we've spread with pitchforks
of soybean chaff.
The cool night breeze
carries an earthy smoke
of my brother's and my playful work.

I'm running with flame
to the next cold pile
Grandpa wants us to burn.
We think he might plow this field
before another needs
its corn threshed and hauled.

Tonight, though, the cool air
and sparks flying upward
are burning memories,
my brother and I kindling fire,
chasing shadows from the stubble.

Marilyn Braendeholm

A Giddy Bit of Bedlam

Once upon a time, the garden
was red and yellow, gaudy,
blistering and indestructible.
But this is autumn's end.

Autumn's for winter's storage,
sugared fruit and squashes.
For fern and flower, doddering
rain, and blossoms that flop
into the periphery of winter.

I watch low stars frosty
in the sky, and the moon bald
and shiny, and my eyes smile
with accomplishment. Summer
was a giddy bit of bedlam.

Marilyn Braendeholm

In Clove and Nutmeg

Autumn is dressed
in clove and nutmeg tones.
It's brittle. In need of sleep.

Geese flee, sweep the sky.
A squirrel, branch to branch.

Tiredness loses importance
when autumn wants to be seen

Gilbert Honigfeld

Monday. October 24, 1927

Poetry penned in a railroad coach
is shaky at best, the author's
penpoint as uncontrollable
and illogical as window-scenes
captured for a moment then gone
as the train careens steel-
wheeled from pumpkin fields
to Big City streets and their
uncertain futures, like lovers
coming apart, limbs disentangling,
suddenly shy and recovering.

Richard Spiegel

After Harvest

Poppy, patriarch
of Staten Island Family Farm,
gestured to the pumpkins.

“Take!” he said.

Barbara chose
one that fit
in a shopping bag.

At home, she sliced
and steamed; scooped
and mashed the pulp.

She rotated
the broken handle
of the old foley.

Her autumn pumpkin
pudding chilled
in our refrigerator

Richard Spiegel

Another Go at Poetry

Pass another day writing in the notebook,
waiting for the reader to recognize the words.

It's no use.

I come upon the moment
as I've always.

Better to leave the I behind.

Here is the now existential
without the lie of i.

Intention is to the future
what memory is to the past.

Moments on the page pass.

The waters flow.

Richard Spiegel

Raining Outside

So well read, that
the allusions I can cite
are myriad. What I see
or feel at any moment
is certain to pass. Lost
in the milieu, I churn
with the rest, composing
sounds to let loose
on ideas, while watching
Senate hearings.
It's too late in the day
to make a getaway.

Deborah H. Doolittle

When Thunder Blunders into the World

Someone—it isn't you—is gardening
behind the shed, sunhat suddenly drenched
in the deluge. You're counting the seconds
in terms of the Mississippi River—

that's how much water seems to be falling--
feeling safe, looking out from your window.
A sudden flash briefly bleaches the sky,
reanimates the trees, conjures
a not-so-friendly breeze.

Rain drops like bird shot ping the metal roof,
ding the windowpanes, smear the reflection
of your face, and then it happens: the bump
against the side of the house, a buffet

of sound rumbling deep in the throat. You look;
the gardener is gone. Just like that. Between
one flash and the next, the air, light and tight,
surrounds you with a sound you're counting on.

Deborah H. Doolittle

Some Facts About Noon

Neither ante or post, it's just the M
as in meridiem. A Latin way

for saying the sun is but half-way
through its day. On top of its rainbow-shaped
arc, like the birds perched on the golden arches
at McDonald's. Two of them to make that

M, if and only when perceived from that
proper angle. Like the town clock striking

out a substantive, common sound. Tolling
out a proper round of twelve. No six of

one, no half a dozen of another.

A monosyllabic song that must be sung

by some celestially inspired choir.

No more higher than the noon in Yuma

when there's no shade left to stand in. We walk
across streets on shadows that our feet make.

That one moment when all three hands
point right

at it. Like midnight, which for once is no

closer nor further away, except for
a certain over-abundance of shade.

James Penha

To the Food Editor

No! Do not let them cool!
Dredge apple cider donuts
in cinnamon sugar as soon
as they come out of the oven.
It's Autumn! It's November!
Then let them melt and merge
their wickedly hot components
in the mouth immediately
to caution the cold we mean
to live.

Li

Li held her head high
danced circles 'round the roses
gestured to the noises
 coming from the little seas
waved to friend
 way high in the Andes
Li was thirsty was seventy-three
had moved rivers
had worn apricot-colored scarves
 in her hair
had heard the soft hollow voices
 of giant vases
 smiling in half-circles
metal fog blocked her vision
 hid her white uniform
Li grew older
marveled more at trees
 and the clouds she loved
Li gave up her years
 for fallible knowledge
 and too-few Christmas lights.

Wayne Hogan

Don't Touch My Hair

What can't capitalism ruin? Is there nothing capitalism can't ruin? (My rant ends here.) On now to lesser Antilles. Consider salt and/or pepper. Better yet, writing. Writing needs and creates community, a comingtogetherness of sensitivities. More so than broccoli (to repeat-- more so than broccoli), writing both needs and creates community. And so writing is both inventor and prophet. Knowing that and four bucks ninety will get you a gelatin-free espresso down at Starbucks, if this isn't too far-fetched in the extreme to say.

George Freek

A Poem About Nothing

(After Su Tung Pg)

Leaves fall in two and threes.
Where do they go,
these newly dead leaves?
I walk the lake's edge.
I watch a crow
as it circles overhead.
Waves break against stones.
It's as if I can
hear them moan.
I gaze at nothing.
It's what my mind sees.
The crow lands in a tree,
and stares at me.
He seems unperturbed.
He's an unknown.
He means nothing to me,
I simply walk home.

Robert Cooperman

Food for the Jewish Holidays

For Chanukah, latkes fried in the oil
that miraculously lit the Temple
for eight nights, when oil
was sufficient to last but one.

Purim, when wicked Haman,
King Ahaseureus' prime minister,
planned to slaughter all the Jews,
but was hanged, wearing
his three-cornered hat,
after the intervention of saintly
and beautiful Queen Esther
and her uncle Mordecai.
So we eat hamantaschen,
fruit filled tri-corned pastries.

Last, the Passover seder:
chopped liver signifying mortar
for the bricks we toiled for Pharaoh;
and matzos: the terrified flight
from Egypt too rushed
to allow the bread to rise.

All that food meant something
significant, symbolic of salvation,
so even more delicious than simple
treats we grieved the loss of,
once those holidays were over.

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Sylvia Manning

Bringing in the Buddha

(in response to Huffstickler's poem, The Way of Art)

Dear poet, my friend,
It's not cold enough to bring in the Buddha,
from slab of granite beside a little river
some call a brook.

Last year a man (yes, a friend)
without an understanding for our need,
in our spiritual poverty, for ceremony,
lugged Buddha in like a piece of rubbish.

Winter (an easy one, some will say) was hell.
This autumn has been kind.
There is still no cure for hot and cold,
as Pema Chödrön knows,
but a day may be left
when we are not bereft of Light and Love.

If we can bring this broken Buddha in,
even when the doing requires due care
for a cracked and patched piece of resin,
will we call it dear, dear poet friend?
May we call it art?
When we bring the Buddha in
be s/he Jesus or a medium just sitting
to take a stand for beings in the millions
to some true magnitude Magdalene-hued.

Pat Anthony

Here in the middle of Kansas

we walk across acres of pumpkins
dying vines gone gray as errant spiders
Halloween leftovers grocery bins and markets
hope to unload before Christmas
trees arrive to take their place

carrying them home these orange orbs
will sit the black enamel roaster
rescued from the peddler's wagon
by my father back in Oklahoma
when the mule shied

slow oven roasted until
finger soft when poked then popped open
seeds scooped pulp sieved and spiced
so soon fragrant pies scent the kitchen
with two extra for the soup kitchen

these fruits of the vine a bit different
than those grapes spoken of in scripture
but still the work of human hands
sustenance since 5000 BC
gifted to many peoples and heaped now
with their hard hooked stem handles
just made for little hands to grasp
lift beyond their strength to carry home.

Our Geography of Poets

Bali

James Penha

Colorado

Robert Cooperman

Illinois

George Freek

Kansas

Pat Anthony

Minnesota

Mary Belardi Erickson

New Jersey

Gilbert Honigfeld

New York

Richard Spiegel

North Carolina

Deborah H. Doolittle

Tennessee

Wayne Hogan

Vermont

Sylvia Manning

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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