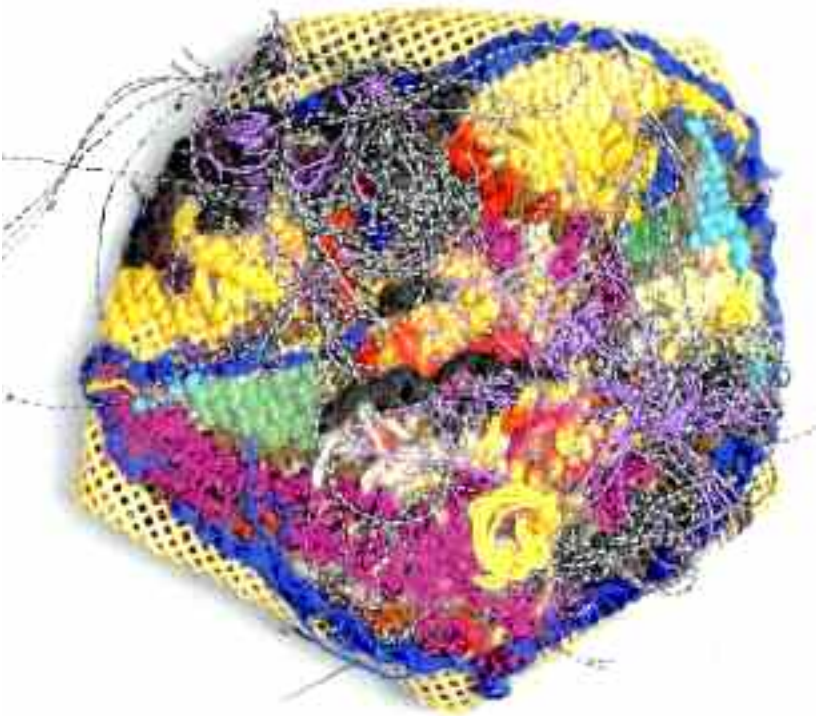


Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream



April, 2021

Volume 41
number 10

Waterways

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VOLUME 41 NUMBER 10

I had a vision
in the back seat
of my parents' car.

Enid Dame

excerpt from

On the Road to Damascus, Maryland

WATERWAYS

Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 41 Number 10

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SACRINIS, GOCST.
BEEN WAITING LONGS?



Wesley Hoggan

Robert Cooperman

How I Might Have Become a Cooperman

“...in 1787, Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II ordered all Jews in the Hapsburg Empire to acquire family names,”—*Jewish Currents*

Many chose their craft or trade,
so my guess: we worked with Kupfer,
copper: thus a cooperman,
ancestors beating copper into pretty
and useful shapes; not, I hope,
the middlemen who bought goods
cheap, then sold them dear.

Of course, nothing's that simple,
since we didn't emigrate
from Austria or Hungary, but Poland,
Yiddish the language Dad caressed
his mother with, and she him,
on our Sunday visits; Polish
what my parents spoke to hide
bad news from my brother and me;

Polish—that lovely slush and glide,
as if skating across a frozen pond or river—
reserved if things were truly catastrophic,
since they rightly assumed
Jeff and I had osmozed a smattering
of the calamitous language of Jews.

I see a man in a horsehide apron,
hammer and tongs in his fists,
beating copper into a shape
someone could admire and use:
a man happy at his work,
even with storm clouds massing,
as they always did for us.

Ellaraine Lockie

Running on Empty

My latest addiction is Wrigley's Polar Ice
I unwrap all fifteen pieces from the package

Lay them on the passenger seat
like a long line of cocaine

Or Salem substitutes
during the 160 Montana miles ahead

Or subtle similes aside
an endeavor to undo the habit of you

But the bumps and ruts in the gravel road
have their way with the Wrigley's

And when I reach over for a fix
I find again the emptiness I try to feed

Deborah H. Doolittle

My Mother, More Moths

How Mom used to sit at the foot
of my bed, crooked her fingers
into shapes revealed as shadows.
Told simple stories—about
hens and chickens, kittens and
cats—I barely remember.

What trick of the candle flame
made them appear larger than
on other nights, I don't know,
casting versions of themselves
on the ceiling, hands folding
and unfolding like wings, fans
fluttering, elongated
and elusive, unable to lie
flat or still or within reach.

More moths dive at the car
headlights, swarm the streetlamps, cling
to the wall around the front
porch light, bump into the glowing
glass of our living room window.
Like them, I hover around
the memory of what I can
no longer taste, touch, or smell,
but feel the way they flicker.

Marilyn Braendeholm

A Letter in the Sewing Box

It's 1962, a hot August day, and we're on the road that skirts around Spokane. The car occasionally goes bumpity-bump over a dead snake that's stiff as a hose.

What's that, Dad? He says, Was nothing.

And up ahead the asphalt is a smear of silver, bright and endless. Dad says it's nothing, all fake — it looks like water, but really it's not, and so I say,

If it's not water then what is it? Dad says,

It's nothing. Nothing at all. And I say, why does it keep moving away from us? His ears are turning that hot red colour, so I stop asking questions. For awhile.

All of this is leading to a letter I found in my sewing box this morning. It's from Mum. She wrote it 15-years ago. She's been dead for nearly 3-years. It says,

she drove to the farmers market early. It's going to reach 101° by noon, and it's not good for anything but dead snakes to be out on the road today.

Maybe she and I had more in common than a few bump.bumps along the way, like things that give you a start when you run across them unexpectedly.

Gilbert Honigfeld

Crawling

An hour, maybe two, before dawn and cars on the interstate have slowed to a crawl, a few with their flashers on.

Rain. Not any old rain, big rain, the kind that slashes at windshields and splashes the underbelly of your car with a baritone drumming you never heard before, a thrumming portent of possibility you dare not think about.

That's the kind of pre-dawn rain we faced, hoping the runoff would run off before we inched through the low roads praying the water wouldn't reach the plugs and kill the engine just like that.

D.R. James

Mom, at Home

To caption her black-and-white flippant pose—her smile real, hair teenage dark—the musty yearbook quips, “Good things: small packages.”

At five-two but buoyant on tennis calves, she claimed she flunked college chemistry from too much fun in pre-war Chicago, finally free and far enough from home.

In high school during the Depression she and the girls and their latest boyfriends would escape to secluded cul-de-sacs in abandoned developments, fix

their headlights on the white discs of new smooth pavement, dance till Cleveland’s midnight to the Dorseys and Goodman on the radio, Artie Shaw, her favorite—A Strange

Loneliness. Moonglow. “You kids don’t know how to dance,” she’d tell my Sixties sisters, eyes sparkling, mouth slightly parted, teeth still white as a commercial girl’s. Until

somebody’s wedding, I only saw Mom dance big-band behind an ironing board to the tunes on TV shows, the long arms of my father’s white shirts, damp, unrolled from the basket, opened wide and empty, flattened, then pressed, first one, then the other.

William Corner Clarke

The I

The sky knows it
As the eye
Of passing time
It is the thought
Of cities
Moving through
The dreaming
Places of the night
The rememberer
Of moments lost
To waking
When morning comes
All rivers, winds
And shadows
Speak for it
The statues
In every city square
Bear the silence
Of its name
It is the first
The last
And best
Of all the Gods
But it has no power
Except to bring
An end
To everything

William Corner Clarke

Bend in the River

An old park
Abandoned
To the wild
A bend in the river
Running through it

On the bank
A classical
Marble colonnade
Heavy with ivy
Falling into ruin

In its shadow
A cluster of reeds
Swaying gently
With the flow

A grey ground mist
Seeping
From the darkness
Of the forest
Silent as parchment

It was a beautiful
And tragic
Dew jeweled
Evening
Way beyond
All
Understanding

Sylvia Manning

That buddha is not the Buddha

If you meet the buddha, kill him.

Lin Chi I-husuan [9th century?]

So nobody ever will
be the Buddha you have to kill
in accordance with the koan
(He's not Prince so-and-
so) ... so nobody has to get hurt.
The koans tend to be curt
pithy paradoxes, but still ...
spirit is essentially incorporeal.
Broken resin replica brought inside
without prior agreement (I'd
have made a little ceremony or
written a poem/koan, something for
someone's bringing my Buddha indoors
when they hadn't even asked)
sat masked on card table all winter,
some dried flowers someone lent her
in an old canning jar, some books.
S/he was never disturbed by looks
toward her constant serenity,
seemed not to mind the possibility
she'd properly be trashed, in all probability,
since she wasn't real, just a silly token
and on top of that, broken.
But yesterday she got a break
when (again, I meant to take
time to commemorate it)

she went back to her slab of granite
by the little rushing river. "Sweet,"
I heard the murmur ... "and if you meet ...

Sylvia Manning

Holy Water

a grandmother creekside
(lief to be alone?)

 her husband soon may pass)
tends wild-grown lilies alongside bed
often dry too often indeed but wet now

when one son's child in mild sunshine
 finds her there unaware
that beside them the water flows now

 as it does not always
that lilies bloom now but not always
for she's not needing to know yet
this child of seasons dry and wet
 nor of evanescence

before predictable disappearance
 of sweet, pure water

spraying tall lilies there creekside
and sometimes her grand mother's prayers

Pat Anthony

Hermits

We're on the way to Liberty
north of Kansas City but home
to my grandmother where just maybe

the cookie tin might be full
of Wolferman's Hermits
my daddy bringing a bag
from the A & P with more
cinnamon and nutmeg
brown sugar and English walnuts
Sun-Maid raisins to soak
in the coffee before stirring
into the thick batter

and how just maybe
I could have a half-one
since I 'd been made to understand
they were special
expensive

but I'm sure of one thing
they were melt-in-my-mouth
delicious and only baked
by my Grandmother

back in Kansas City
where the old Roper hulked
outside in the toolshed
and we trundled everything

back and forth house to shed
we settled for oatmeal
cookies followed the recipe right
on the Quaker man's box
hard as rocks after a week

But I'm still here
in the back seat of the '56 Chevy
hoping we don't break down
like last time when we sat
on the side of the highway
until the tow-truck came
engine smoking and daddy
and momma not talking
me grown invisible again.

David Michael Nixon

How Are You?

I am a floating fire,
surrounded by waves.
I must keep my flames
from going out.

To help, I have a paddle
and a steel helmet.
My prayers echo
within the winds and waters.

Wayne Hogan

A History of a Dog

Born behind a billboard at the lower levels of the Sutter Buttes, the boy dog rose all blue from the depths of the nestles there. Born Oscar, the blue dog was. Named, it was later learned, for a beloved rural Oklahoma mail carrier back in the '40s. Blue was an orphan, all on his own. Blue was an adventurous dog. Always searching for new things to sniff and pee on. From the many billboards he encountered along the highway, Blue learned to read PABST BLUE RIBBON BEER by the tender age of three months. At the ripe old age of 14, Blue died.

A passing motorist saw him lying there and buried him right where he started, beneath the billboard at the lower levels of the Sutter Buttes. This much is true.

Wayne Hogan

Getting Used to Being Me

I figure surely one of these days
I'll get used to being me. Surely.
I practice at it every day. Doing the
things my me sometimes does and
some of the things my me sometimes
thinks of doing but don't (do).
Practicing being me is a fulltime job.
Hardly leaves me any time to just
be the me I can't get used to
or the me I imagine all this practicing
might get me used to (being). But
can practice make your you be a you
you can get used to?
Working on it.

C'était bien avant la fin des temps.

Mon premier outremer et un nouvel amour.
C'était, hors de tout doute, entrer dans
l'avenir.

Le paquebot était une ville immense.
Cet homme que j'aimais me racontait
ses voyages, ses hiers et ses lointains.
Il parlait comme un tableau, comme un livre.
Il créait des itinéraires reconnus
en toute prescience de ce qui se devinait,
se destinait.

Il ouvrait des paysages brûlés
qui donnaient soif.

Il semait des cailloux dans nos lendemains
que nous oublions le long des routes
parcourues
d'un pays à l'autre, d'un enfant à l'autre
et désormais nous envisagions des éternités.

It was long before the end of times.

My first overseas and a new love.
It was, without a doubt, stepping into
the future.

The liner was a huge city.
This man I loved told me about his travels,
his yesterday and his far away.
He spoke like a painting, like a book.
He created recognized routes
in full awareness of what was guessed,
was (destined). (or: purposed)
He opened up scorched landscapes
that made you thirsty.

He was sowing stones in our tomorrow
that we forget along the roads traveled
from one country to another,
from one child to another
and now we envisioned eons.

Monique Laforce

Slow Race

Wayne Hogan is waiting for Escargot
while Samuel Beckett waits for Godot.

Now, draw a background of centuries.

At his table, Jean de La Fontaine writes
a team of lazy hare and speedy turtle.

Here, in this next issue of *Waterways*,
Monique Laforce waits for an answer.

Is Aesop the winner of the slow race?

Our Geography of Poets

California

Ellaraine Lockie

Colorado

Robert Cooperman

Kansas

Pat Anthony

Michigan

D.R. James

New Jersey

Gilbert Honigfeld

New York

David Michael Nixon

North Carolina

Deborah H. Doolittle

Quebec

Monique Laforce

Tennessee

Wayne Hogan

Texas/Vermont

Sylvia Manning

Virginia

William Corner Clarke

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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