

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream



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number 3

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 41 NUMBER 3

I contemplate this summer parade.

Enid Dame

excerpt from

Jerusalem Syndrome

WATERWAYS

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Volume 41 Number 3

Designed, Edited and Published by

Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel

A. Thomas Perry, Outreach Coordinator

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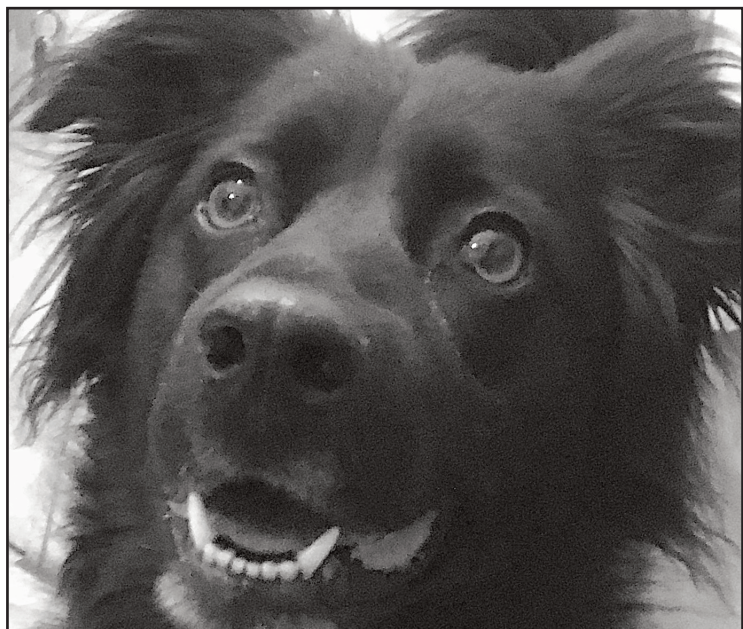
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Enfold

Law limits the Assateague feral pony herd
so every July the foals are herded to swim
Chincoteague Channel to auction grounds,
yet for fear the little ones will panic on
their own, the whole fold crosses in a rite
of passage to consign, release, return, renew.
But 2020's lockdown auction was online only;
unlike us this year, the foals don't feel uneasy.

On the Road After a Record Rain

I

Morning coffee at the Bear Paw Bakery
requires the mettle of a Montana driver
The car acts like a drunk on the dirt road
Sloppy as a warm chocolate bar
I relax the steering wheel the way I learned
at 14
to let go and give in to invisible great forces
Press the accelerator in my vintage
Lucchese boot
to ten m.p.h. with no braking
To keep from sliding into the roadside parade
of young pheasants behind their mother

Down the road a cottontail wasn't so lucky
In polite farmer protocol its flattened body
has been moved to the far side of the road
A murder of crows waits on a power line
to clean up the evidence
Feathers gleaming like the coal
my father mined in the years crops failed

II

Back at the cabin the die-hard walker
in me eases into Wellingtons
Not what I'd ever wear into the town
of Tony Lamas, John Deeres and Durangos
Mud has mortared enough on the dirt road
for footprints
My earmark on the same land that was branded
by parents and grandparents

The swarm of dragonflies sired by heavy rains
disperses to flit from yarrow
to wheat grass to wild geraniums
Sun lights them like day fireflies
and heats the still air with sweet grass
vanilla scent and anise of coneflowers
The whole prairie sings a green song
By the time I backtrack to the cabin
tires have erased any right of ownership
The land has claimed itself once again

Marilyn Braendeholm

Memories of Short-Lived Days

I'm held in a space between
fragile and fortitude, between
fierce and the softest kiss.

Summer was once a long memory
with a name. A wind's whisper.

I heard it once, it tugged at
my sleep, and then scattered
off my fingertips when I woke.
Forgive me if I forget these days.

I passed a shop window today.
The world's closed, windows
soaped white. I thought I saw
forever in the glass, but it was
knots, snares, and much to do
about it already being autumn.

Marilyn Braendeholm

On Wings Of Geese

When summer flies off with the geese,
it's time to start picking blackberries.

My first memories are of picking them,
blackberries that is. Seems a lifetime.

Dad would stick me on his shoulder –
he'd pick berries on the lower vines,
and I'd eat whatever I could reach.

He'd ask, "Are you picking or eating?"
And I'd say, "Yes."

And he'd say "OK, then. Let's move,"
and I'd wrap my arms around his
forehead, and hold on tight.

His skin was warm and tanned, and
he smelled like fresh baked pie.

And now I'm here picking berries
from the same vines, same churchyard —

although there are a few more
tombstones in it now. Dad passed

many years ago, but I keep repeating
what he started when I was young.

And when my fingers stain blue with
blackberries, I know that summer's

flown off with the wings of geese.

Sylvia Manning

for Emily who taught herself to whistle

Emily's supposedly
afraid of everything but robins
butterflies, moths, spiders, snakes
(though here near northern border
they've no venom).

For anything alive (not a robin)
that flies or takes its time
to crawl along our summer soil
moist with frequent rain
she feigns a fear beyond disdain.

Then Emily says easily, "I hate them!"
or declares as immediately,
"They're scary!"

Emily wanders barefoot
through her 8th year, being 7,
in this benign species-diverse heaven,
says when asked,
yes she does have shoes
and she'll put them on
when school begins again,

lets in all the village young,
all of them swarming, together again,
warm in early September,
nearly calendar autumn, safe
to unlearn hate and fear of little others
unlike them or Emily, soles still harder,
brownier, for the summer
under reign of goldenrod

while the robin hopped safely happy
in its maple shade.

Mary K Lindberg

The Pansy Patch

When I was a child I crouched
in the crawl space beneath the porch
with boys, girls, undressing to peer
beneath overalls, skirts. No one knew.

In the backyard I planted violet pansies
under a shady maple tree. My flowers
didn't bloom like the pictures on seed packs.
To tell the truth, they did not grow at all.

I was afraid of the dark until a tall boy
with thick glasses threw tiny stones
at my alley window on summer nights.
He had moonlight on his face.

His footsteps sounded like words newly born.
One day he brought a posy of dandelions,
said he liked to make up rhymes of my name.
I pressed the flowers into a book so they could
become poems.

Years later I walked in that alley; it was filled
with debris. I could not find words to describe
what I felt. No moonlight, no nosegay,
not one stanza of romance.

I talked to the tree about my feelings
but it only waved clusters of seeds nonchalantly.
The child hides in that dried up pansy patch,
pulling weeds to make this poem green.

Roberta Gould

Birth of Flowers

The Earth
Disgorges
Yellow miracles
Underground life
Comes to be
Visiting air
with flounces
and twizzels
Sleeping at night
Open at morning

Ruth Moon Kempfer

Summer Ending (around again in time)

Now won't burn.

The gulls
have flown inland
to attack the pines.

Cats
stalk blind alleys, too.

We can never find each other in this fog.

Throw a stone.
Black leafless oaktwigs
will explode a scattering of swallows.

“The Garden of Eden” and “Hell” are slipping
loose in their frameworks.

Yell my name.

Perhaps
the ricocheting of your voice
will trace a path that I can follow.

City Garden Center

In the City
Garden Center
Unpainted Jesus
Stands alone
Among the usual
Concrete animals
And garden gnomes

Jesus is no bigger
Than all the others
And the gnomes
Could just as well be
Holding fishing rods
And angling for souls
Around a plastic
Ornamental Galilee

Nor is it really
Any surprise
To be told
That Snow White

And The Virgin Mary
Have both been born
Twin sisters
From the same old
Plaster mold

For out beyond
The chain link fencing
The whole shebang
Is falling down
The turnpike road
Is loud with fear
Garbage is blowing
In the wind

Edward J. Rielly

The Teachers' Parade

The teachers line their cars in a row
like ducklings after their mother:
each car different, a kaleidoscope of colors
and shapes, roofs yielding a man or woman
standing, upper body protruding fearlessly
into the sky, arms ready to wave,
a convertible or two, on the whole
a bit too flashy, too daring, for teachers
of young children, others with the driver's
window down, an arm ready to extend.

The first one pulls out. The others follow,
their path winding through the neighborhood
where their young students stand waiting
beside parents, small hands grasping homemade
signs, lettering sometimes clearly legible,
pictures bearing little resemblance to the
teachers
in the cars, though that hardly matters.
In this pandemic, children and teachers separated
from each other, honking and waving, calling
names, bring smiles that, for a few minutes,
dissolve space, are almost as good as a hug.

Monique Laforce

Midi Juillet

C'est midi en juillet
nous cherchons l'ombre
au ventre des horloges
nous projetons des départs
sur les paquebots du temps
mais au moment de partir
tu dis non
et restes sur le quai des heures
à saluer de la main
l'ailleurs et tes illusions
qui regagnent le large sans toi

l'ici est aussi un ailleurs
au bout du voyage

Monique Laforce

Noon in July

It's noon in July
we are looking for the shadow
in the belly of clocks
we are planning departures
on the ships of time
but at the moment of leaving
you say no
and remain on the dock of the hours
to greet with a waving hand
elsewhere and your illusions
who go back to the open sea without you

the here is also an elsewhere
at the end of the trip

Our Geography of Poets

California

Ellaraine Lockie

Florida

Ruth Moon Kempher

Maine

Edward J. Rielly

New York

Roberta Gould

Mary K. Lindberg

Quebec

Monique Laforce

Tangerang-Banten

James Penha

Texas / Vermont

Sylvia Manning

Virginia

William Corner Clarke

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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