

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream



January, 2021

Volume 41
number 7

Waterways

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VOLUME 41 NUMBER 7

We're together in our
long hair and bare feet
mashing mint leaves for tea.

Enid Dame

excerpt from

Hagar After the Commune Collapses

WATERWAYS

Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 41 Number 7

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Cover Needlepoint by Barbara Fisher

frontispiece by Wayne Hogan

Sample issues — \$5.00 Subscriptions — \$45.00

Waterways is published 11 times a year by

Ten Penny Players Inc., 393 St. Pauls Avenue,

Staten Island, New York 10304-2127

Waterways is published monthly except for August.

Submissions will be returned only if
accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope.

THE FIRST DRAFT.



Wayne Hogan

Marilyn Braendeholm

Out of This Fog Comes

the sun.
it's a clutch of warmth,
a canopy suspended
over winter's muscle.

the sun.
is in the cheeks of roses,
on tensiled tails
of a comet.

the sun.
a bright horizon of a new year,
licked and kicked by
the sun.

Marilyn Braendeholm

The Rise of a Sparrow's Song

Through this rising sun, sings
a morning fugue.

I wake to

these rust and ruby moments.

A sunrise, and
a sparrow's song.

Sunlight whips the window.

A skin
of moth-grey mist.

It fogs my drifts and
fills my poverty
with its preening light.

Not that I understand nature's
ways. Ice and rain
that spill on petals,

a rip and razored wire.
It's a big ask of the sun
to reset balance.

So, come sit beside my fire,
its amber lamp is
pinked with sky,

and we'll watch the edges
return to green.

Deborah H. Doolittle

Donald Justice Dreams of Water Lilies

A sort of stillness
descends upon the pond
as we enter the water.

The frog, croaking
a moment before, slips
from its lily pad.

Its small splash
lost among our loud
sloshing about.

Our wavelets intersect,
rock the water lilies
like boats at anchor

at Williams Bay. A heron
shifts its stance to glance
at us then glides away.

We plant each foot,
toes wriggling in as they dig,
heels grounding down

as we step deeper
into our trance,
a memory unfolding

a great fog lifting
some mystery blossoming
before our eyes

in every hint of pink
and suggestion of red,
looming above the water's

blue, glowing profoundly,
profusely, like stars,
but not blushing.

Deborah Doolittle

Swimming with My Sister

We wade the shallow waters,
test how our toes grip the pond bottom.
Behind us the grownups prop up
umbrellas in the imported sand,
spread blankets to work on their tans.
At Stratton Brook State Park, ropes
strung out on small floats separate us
from the cool, deep center where a
giant snapping turtle is known to gloat.

We inch our way out, go up to our waists,
then our chests. Our pale skin becomes
tinted as if dipped in tepid tea. Our new
swimsuits turn brownish. We cannot see
our feet that touch the gooey bottom.
We practice treading water and dead man's
float. Pretend to be real dogs as we paddle.
Our mother, meanwhile, smokes her cigarettes
and waves whenever we look her way.

The noise around us is deafening.
We hold our breaths and close our eyes
and press our hands and ears to our heads
before we drop below the surface and dare
each other to see who can stay underwater
longer than the other. When we emerged,
the sun had shifted, shadows of trees
reached out to grab us, even as our mother
stubbed her cigarette and leaped to her feet.

Ellaraine Lockie

Back in the Sixties

She wore red for a funeral
Too festive said the Montana Methodists
But why if he didn't really die she said

She wore black satin to the prom
Just like that Elizabeth Taylor they said
Three inches below collar bone, shiny and short
Others' ankle teasing, crinolined and pastel
Inoffensive formals on fake virgins

Hers teasing more than ankles
on good country Christian men
Slut whispers from Southern Baptist
wives in Northern Montana

The Lutherans let her in
until she sang secular for Sunday Service
Sacrilegious they said
As they saved their souls
with wafers and wine

Catholicism came on a white horse
heralded by black ghost habits
Redeeming her fashion faux pas
and music mistakes with Hail Marys
and profferings to the priest

Give to be forgiven they said
Successful sinning with salvation
Like writing a check on zero balance
knowing parents will recompense

But her parents wouldn't pay the Pope
Give it up or get out they said
So she took her trinity-triggered
tendonitis to college and joined a cult
Where nobody said anything
They just smoked

James Penha

Mash

I heard The Sound of Music in '65
when I turned eighteen, and at Shea
The Beatles mouthing songs drowned
in screams, screams in Selma,
screams and thunder roiling Vietnam,
and, thanks to the CIA, a year of living
screamingly in Indonesia where I live
now not far enough from the sounds
of rants and screams in my homeland.

Pat Anthony

Lemon Mint

I pull it up barehanded
its oily scent sharp, fresh
against the sameness
of the morning

I've brought it with me
from too many places to count
those moves where I sell stuff
but keep this plant cradled
in wet newspapers along with
slips of yellow river iris
carved one year from flooding
banks along the raging Kaw

I grow it in four places now
to be sure it doesn't leave me
to evaporate with countless others
into the ether of my life.

Gilbert Honigfeld

Forget About It

The party was revving into high gear,
wine coolers and iced-tea popular today.

The revelers, half-clad in bathing suits
and orthopedic water shoes are rocking
to old-time rhythms they grew up with,
mouthing precisely the lyrics of their youth.

Once a class of rebels for rebellion's sake alone,
these uncles/aunts now larger than ever,
gather 'round the karaoke machine singing
overlearned lyrics and making rah-rah moves.

Transported on music, booze and psyche-
delic code words they once hid from now-
dead parents, they use their new mini-woodstock
to forget what the doctor said about those tests.

Gilbert Honigfeld

Collateral Damage

The beautiful girl, now 19,
is losing her hair in patches
she covers cleverly with her round
bristly styling brush, a temporary fix
since there is slim evidence her
prayers for regrowth are being answered.

Her doctor gave it a fancy name,
something with four or five syllables,
as though naming it could fix it
and asked her many questions about
disease, drugs, distress and diet,
recommending that she not worry so much.

Her local drug store does not carry any
worry-free remedies and time is not her friend.

Sylvia Manning

New Year Musings in Reclusion

in northern Vermont, January 2021

From here in Orleans County
named for Orléans, yes,
from whence came Jeanne
the cross-dressing maid

We can't go up to see her statue
in her armor on her battle horse
up there on the Plains of Abraham,
or even to Magog to hear some French

Or even to the old Larousse
to learn what commune means
to francophones, Paris or anywhere.
In tiny print: "*Commune* has no
exact equivalent in English..."
though first it tries with *parish*.
Louise Michel might have punted a
loud English pun: "Perish the thought!"

We could go next door to Caledonia County,
its name already old when New Caledonia
received Louise as transported prisoner.

Or up the hill to where those hippies, in '71,
ignorant and innocent of centennialism
and without appropriate regard for capitalism
built latrines and dreamt their dreams

Or since we're still in seclusion
in this new year, going nowhere,
we could resolve to learn to spell
sesquicentennial.

William Corner Clarke

Accomplices

Time
The suspect
In the case
Accomplice
To the clock
And its
Smiling face
Both guilty
Of the theft
Of all
The days
That we
Had left

Charles Rammelkamp

The World's Best Sonnets

Driving to Cape May, New Jersey,
in the distance we saw the water tower,
block letters making a bold civic claim.

I thought of smalltown pride,
the bogus inflated contentions –
“Home of the original boy scout troop”,
“Birthplace of Mother’s Day”,
“Soybean Capital of the World”,
“World’s Largest Pinecone”.

“What’s that say?” I asked Abby,
our eyesight not as sharp
as it was when we were younger.

“The World’s Best Sonnets?” she speculated,
squinting at the letters,
not believing her eyes.
Where were we, anyway?
Stratford-upon-Avon?

“Home of the World’s Best Sunsets,”
we said at the same time,
as we got closer.
Mystery solved.

D.R. James

Early Morning Love Song

Despite the moon, nearly full, gliding
six inches above the western horizon
where that faint line of a Great Lake lies,
my couple of cardinals
amidst the etched gray of sunrise
say it's morning,
and all the little birds believe them.

Despite me, nearing fifty, holding
two inches before hitting the midway
in a life as long as it ought to be,
my tired, allergic eyes
below a gray sketch of wild hair
see it's morning,
and all the giddy cells believe them.

Despite this near-miss at late love, that the
last quarter-inch could not have slid down
like a pane shattering for joy,
my old sorrows roll over
in their fetching gray failure,
sigh, "It's morning,"
and all the silly feelings believe them.

D.R. James

Song of the Sirens of Life

—after Marvin Bell

The domestic smile of snow,
the anonymous kindness of white,
the imagination of the mouth,

the grains of ebbing desire,
those inaudible explosions,
those nominal pleasures,

the churches of the vapor—
my tired mother finally
flew; what she had chosen

mimicked a parachute. Not
a soul had bewitched her,
but signaled safety, so sure.

Mary K. Lindberg

A Paean to Santa Monica

Destination Ocean Avenue for one last run.
Soon I'll be far away.
Even Adam had to leave paradise.

Before shadows fall I watch a dusky earth
streak, stretch like a cat,
rotate in a slow motion I can't see.

No hurry. Birth of the first painting of the day.
An unseen sun spreads glory to come
like an operatic overture, in tints of charcoal gray,
pink, lavender, blue, sliding scale to daylight.

Clouds stand by, dissolve shades
like a watercolor wash, wait for their cue
to amble into the exhibition.

The silent moon at work urges
the Pacific to finger-paint the world
with glassy waves topped by fresh foam.

I hear the hush of this music,
a sliding rush, glissando,
bridal train of the moon.

Crowds of dew drops stare at me
from green hedges like nosy neighbors,
wet my ankles in blades of grass.

I run at full throttle to savor
this coming day as shadows
spring up everywhere.

Our Geography of Poets

California

Ellaraine Lockie

Kansas

Pat Anthony

Maryland

Charles Rammelkamp

Michigan

D.R. James

New Jersey

Gilbert Honigfeld

New York

Mary K. Lindberg

North Carolina

Deborah H. Doolittle

Tangerang-Banten

James Penha

Texas/Vermont

Sylvia Manning

Virginia

William Corner Clarke

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

ISSN 0197-4777

Very limited printing

Subscriptions -- \$45 for 11 issues.

Sample issues — \$5.00 (includes postage)

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