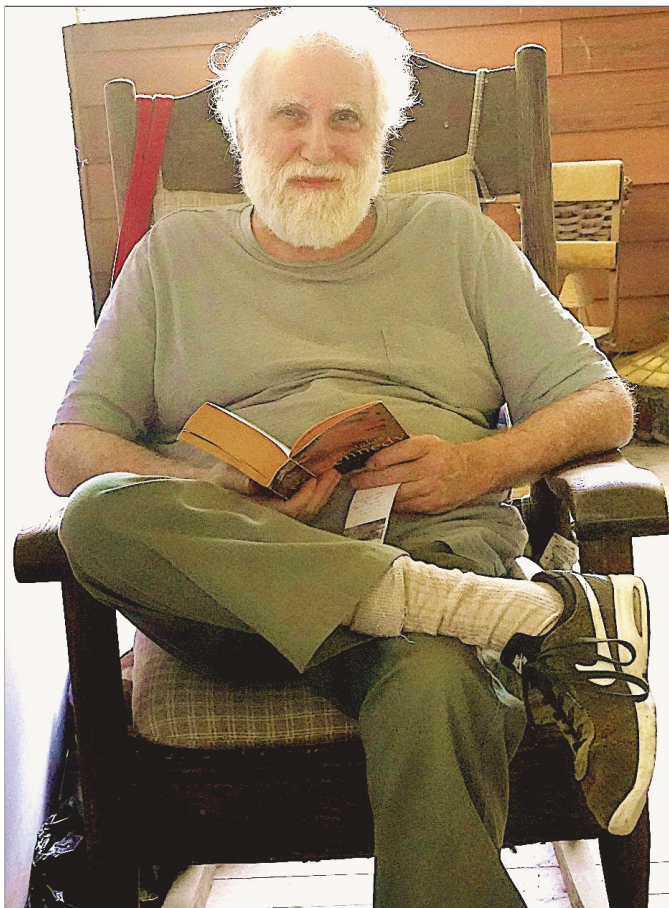


# Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream



July, 2022  
Vol 43 No 2

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Volume 43

Number 2

Let us allow our spirits to  
mingle

*"December 2019"*

Ofelia Rodriguez Goldstein

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Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 43 Number 2

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## **Outsiders**

I didn't ask to be  
But I fear I'm living in  
The mad wolf skin  
Of those too close  
To the edge of Fate  
In love with chance  
And mystery  
I am the old drunk  
The acidhead  
Just one of those  
Who burned wild  
In the sunlight  
Of their youth  
Now deep  
In the black night days  
Of the dying time  
I may be too late  
For anything  
Of consequence  
To change my ways  
Yet I'm still here  
For grace or worse  
Alive and kicking  
In the God damned  
Lovely thick of it

Mary K. Lindberg

## Michelangelo's Dust

*Medici Chapel, Florence, Italy*

Quiet. The Tuscan afternoon sun exposes waves of lazy motes over silent statues, tombs; they float in golden crescents toward Michelangelo's reclining marble sculptures.

Next to me a bent-over man, ebony eyes, ivory beard, agitated. Who is he? the novelist Stendhal's ghost, heartbeats awry from viewing Renaissance art treasures? Or the artist's shade, scattering genius sparks? The man's splayed hand trembles, rakes his thick, white hair. A raspy voice splices the still air. *We're just flecks of dust, here for a little while. But a few linger longer.* He points to the sculptor's figures of Day, Night, Dawn, Dusk, adorning the Medici tomb. Waves his arms. *Five centuries later, we see what his dust made: David, the Sistine Chapel, his slaves, Madonnas, and so much more.*

The silence shivers. The man shuffles away. Sunbeams fill the space where he stood. Everywhere colossal specks sail, waft in sculpted air.

*Mary Belardi Erickson*

**Not a Whisper**

Fireflies glow  
like sparkling beads  
on cool dark grass.  
The fulgent fliers flash  
while clouds hold secrets.

As sky holes open  
to gaze through,  
a hint of stars appears  
like faraway lit spirits  
you want to follow.

*Mary Belardi Erickson*

## **Cosmic Lilies**

When I reach the end of the very end,  
I am paused upon the smooth green of lily pads  
where a turn let the caught waters  
recline against the bank.

A quieted bed supports roots.  
Above, from green platforms  
yellow globes, mirrored on the stream,  
gleam with simple elegance.

The water droplets dot a universe  
of green expanse where mingles  
many dimensions of reflection.



*Gilbert Honigfeld*

**Monday. August 22, 1927**

Desperate to harness the seductive  
power of poetry that had served  
him so effectively in the opening  
act of their personal passion play,  
he reminds her of death's inevitability  
and how he's prepared to enter Heaven  
or Hell unguided by Dante or God's own Son,  
if only they might approach together as lovers  
enter the sea, clothing askew on the sand.

But it is late August, and the autumn  
of their time together is near palpable  
in the trapped heat of the Village streets  
they walk, seeking calm but sensing storm.

**Saturday. September 17, 1927**

Leaden skies cast a premonit'ry gloom  
foretending an empty autumn  
whose prospects darken the canvas  
of his mind, while he hopes  
to dispel the coming curse of winter  
by sketching, then painting, still  
images of what they'd had, as  
though flashbacks might entice  
her back to bed where unclothed  
they'd lock disentangably like  
writhing pythons in the slick  
glissandi of love before sleep.

Robert Cooperman

## Bueno de Mesquita

*Dutch comedian and television artist Abraham...*

*Bueno de Mesquita died... in 2005.*

— *Jewish Currents*

How different my life's been from that Belgium concentration camp: moments from being swept up like the dust of so many landsmen at Auschwitz. But I played my one-string cello, kept my hands from trembling by lashing the bow like a bullwhip, and made faces the commandant found funny, so he placed me in the camp orchestra.

If not for that cello and my face so rubbery — I can emulate a boiling pot of potato-leek soup, can mimic film stars and world leaders, though never the *chutzpah* to perform my impersonation of that mustachioed *mamzer*, the one who tried to kill all of my people —

I'd have been dead long ago.

I survived the war in that orchestra;  
to my amazement  
afterwards, became a star on television  
and in nightclubs,

making people laugh, helping them  
forget their troubles.

I've even performed in Germany: defanged now,  
no longer a threat to murder the whole world,  
at least for the foreseeable future. They find it  
difficult to pronounce my name  
in their high German,  
so they call me, "The small one with a mustache."

Better that than "filthy Jew-scum." They roar  
at my facial contortions, at the way I pluck  
my old cello's one string, at my jokes.

We're all friends now.

But every time I make Germans laugh,  
I think: yes, laugh you bastards, at what you think's  
a harmless little man with a thousand

rubbery expressions,

but everything you tried to do to me,  
you failed to do:

your laughter at my jokes and poses?

My small revenge.

**Voices**

Voices from long ago echo in my dreams  
Memories of childhood, joy, sweet, innocence  
Bright golden summers never ending  
When happiness reigned days rich with love.  
Family support encouraged, guided.  
Parents and brother long gone, grave deep.  
Now arthritic bones, blood pressure;  
Difficulty walking, time cruelly sped up  
Destination grave and final sleep.  
Love, fleeting, breaks the heart, weeps the soul  
Throughout life sought meaning and truth  
Blue planet, like single grain of sand  
Among desert of stars, expands outwards  
Into the blackness of space.

*Sylvia Manning*

My real name is Nevermind, though  
my brother said *Anudder time*.

Today my name is Coming Home to house in hamlet  
just miles beneath Mullein Hill, old commune site,  
on clear roads past fields still deep in snow.

Tomorrow my name will be S. Now,  
the S. for Summer, because my name once was,  
in the gorgeous green years of my generation.

Secretly I know my name is Sam,  
(though I only just remembered).

Sam through high school,  
college — even to my teachers,  
even to cousins and casual lovers.

Sam. Nevermind why.

My brother died, but I hear him say,  
when he doesn't think we understand,  
when he doesn't have the strength  
to try again,

*Anudder time*.

He thinks that's what we say  
when we say my name, Nevermind.

He never called me Sam.

*Sylvia Manning*

## **You In Youth**

*(a dizain with one extra syllable)*

Can you remember what you wanted most  
if, when you were young, you tried to decide?  
Or maybe life was fun so time got lost  
to focus on your own truth. Or you lied.  
Or life was so stressful you could have died.  
So mainly you were cleaning up the mess  
your life was wrapped in, having to address  
the new tide of plastic packaging. Too,  
that hole in the ozone? . . . eating meat less?  
Or not at all? Did it even matter, you?

*Richard Spiegel*

It's easy to slip past  
incomplete sentences  
with my back pressed  
against the chair.  
I stare at the ceiling.  
Rambling dreams  
fall out of my head  
and pull me  
past the moment.



*Richard Spiegel*

I asked my Palestinian neighbor,  
“Why can’t we all live in peace?”  
He says, “They don’t want it.”  
It’s always *they*.  
If there weren’t any *they*,  
would there still be an *us*?  
But, it’s beyond linguistics  
and the power of poems.  
Is it beyond all rational thought?  
I’m reading Milan Kundera’s account  
of the Russian invasion  
and occupation of Prague  
in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.  
There’s a history of savagery;  
but what’s the response?  
What are the options?  
Israel fearful of Iran justifies proactive  
military force.  
The Saudis bomb Yemen.  
Is war as inevitable as hurricanes  
yet to develop in the Atlantic?  
What if they threw a war  
and nobody went?  
But, they want it. Don’t they? Do we?  
Maybe we can change our minds  
if we take a trip.

Barbara's asleep on the porch.  
We live here in the shade of our yard.  
No need to go anywhere;  
though the world comes loudly  
to us. Diggers. Blowers. Honkers.  
Crashers. Motors. Engines. Tellers.  
To Cage this might have made music.

*Richard Spiegel*

Barbara is up  
at the refrigerator.

“It’s everybody’s problem,  
not just ours.”

Bugs. Ants. Mosquitos.  
She prepared eggs and potatoes  
for another day;  
the week coming to a close.

And I go crazy into that good morning;  
I go lazy into that new day.  
And what shall I do?  
Fall back? Lean forward  
into a race free world?  
Let me live to make us free —  
Glory. Glory. Rise up. Rise up  
from fear and despair.

I want to change the direction  
of this magazine. I want to reach  
out to more diverse contributors.  
It seems we’re falling into nebulousness,  
just falling.

Terrified reactions. Turning. Turning. Turning.  
Vertigo; and again finding myself here,  
looking in the spiegel. Better turn to art.

It's the middle of July.

Turn around and look up  
at the photos from the sky. Nebulae.  
Telescope on a satellite

standing on the soft uncertain certainty of math.  
There are the numbers — the sense and non.  
“You okay?” “Yes. All right.”

“Are you making a list? a recipe? an accounting?”  
“No. No. No.” She replies to all my queries  
and sits down at this table beside me,  
with her notepad. “Making a poem?” “Yeah.”

It's only been a minute  
Breakfast at Longchamps  
on Fifth Avenue  
with two old men:  
Henry Miller  
my father  
and me  
at 18.  
Scrambled eggs  
and coffee,  
laughter  
and a memory  
of time gone by  
half remembered  
as in a dream.

## **Our Geography of Poets**

### **Colorado**

Robert Cooperman

### **Minnesota**

Mary Belardi Erickson

### **New Jersey**

Gilbert Honigfeld

### **New York**

Barbara Fisher  
Mary K. Lindberg  
Richard Spiegel

### **Surrey**

Colin Ian Jeffery

### **Texas/Vermont**

Sylvia Manning

### **Virginia**

William Corner Clarke

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