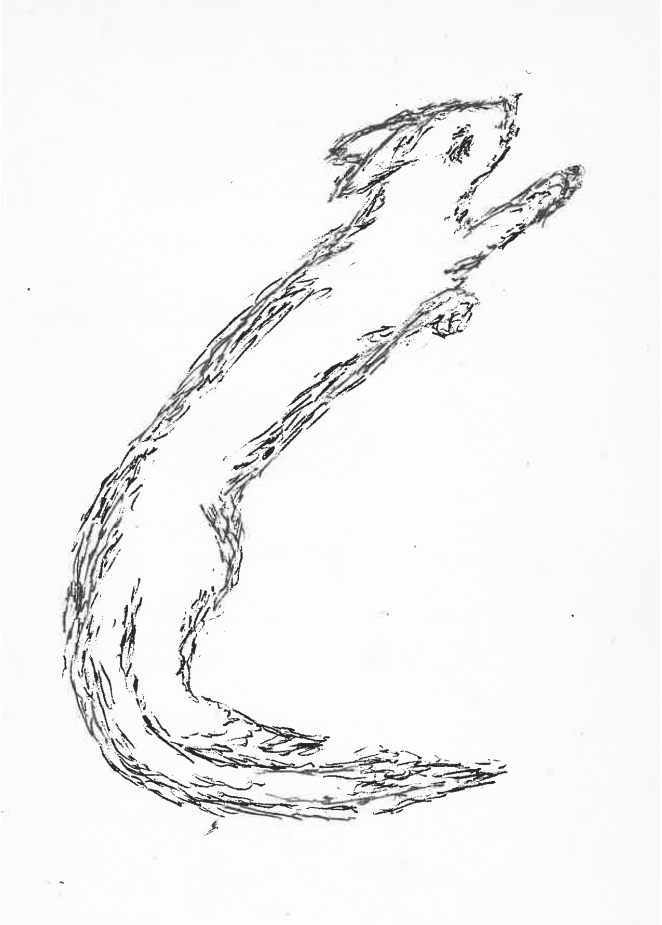


Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream



February, 2023 Volume 43 No. 8

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Volume 43

Number 8

Before shadows fall I watch a dusky earth
streak, stretch like a cat...

lines excerpted from
"A Paeon to Santa Monica"
by Mary K. Lindberg

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Volume 43 Number 8

Designed, Edited and Published by
Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel
A. Thomas Perry, Outreach Consultant

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Ark-a-type

(haiku adapted from a Bukidnon flood myth,
Mindanao, Phillipines)

tsunami swamps earth
when giant crab quakes the sea —
huge raft saves legions

Sylvia Manning

Dígame sí / Tell me Yes

(on learning Lorca visited Vermont)

That we can take Vermont 100
to Eden Mills and Eden
to be even near the cabin where
Lorca spent some time, 1929,
reading sonnets to his friend and
translating, with help from him,
Canciones, Songs, into English.

We'll take the poem he wrote there,
Poema doble del lago Edem,
to translate for ourselves
a stanza, a sentence even.
We won't worry why Eve eats ants
and Adam fertilizes dazzling fishes.
Déjame pasar ... Let me enter, he writes,
the forest of the stretches
and the joyful leaps

And we do. We be for him
the wood sprite he once knew
in his home until he was seven,
in a different wooded heaven.

And when the sun sets on the lake
we'll have him take our promise
that wherever his grave may be
matters none. He may pass
into the forest here, for long
stretches and joyful leaps
into eternity. For rest.
Say yes.

Federico Garcia Lorca

Poema doble del Lago Edén

(excerpt)

Déjame pasar la puerta
donde Eva come hormigas
y Adán fecunda peces deslumbrados.
Déjame pasar, hombrecillo de los cuernos,
al bosque de los desperezos
y los alegrísimos saltos.

Poeta en Nueva York (1940)

Robert Cooperman

Driving to Santa Fe

When the virus first hit
like a barbarian army storming
the gates, we got outside
to read in our almost fortress backyard,
and for our neighborhood walks,
keeping safe — some would say
paranoid — distances
from the few people we encountered.

But now, I want, need, to drive to Santa Fe,
five hours from Denver, almost
like a beckoning heroic quest,
though it's no safer, and aside
from the Old Town
and the O'Keeffe Museum,
your usual American city.

Just cabin fever, though we spent
most of our days indoors
even before this virus slipped in
on a misty-invisible invasion force.

But Santa Fe's now our fantasy road trip,
back to when America was one giant
superhighway, and you could escape
anything by driving far and fast enough.

At Home in the Woods

It throws its cashmere warmth beside the fire
And courts night's stars through an open window
This thing that moves that was not there before,
A curious white substance like a cloud —
But what would a cloud be doing inside
Unless lost on a wild and windy day
That blew open the door? The cat got in
And found its place beside the mantle clock
That struck but could not wake the sleeping cat
And so it struck again, silenced itself
And this time rang — the music room had ears
And cake for those who dream beside the fire.
I'm on my way, the cat said to the mouse
Who watched them from the wire trap on the floor.
The Moon saw everything and then retired
Bouncing away across the sleepy woods.

Pat Anthony

Macavity II

(with a nod to T.S. Eliot's 1939 book)

He is emerging from his feral life
this giant tomcat we've named
Marmaduke after another large
awkward marmalade animal
this one appearing from the woods
and coming to own the front porch
lounging on the stained chaise
but refusing shelter in his kitty cube
even in sleet and deep snow
preferring to trek to neighboring
barns on walkabout sometimes
lasting several days arriving back
with bits of straw and soil in his thick fur
and a hungry belly he stretches up
against the glass his version of rubbing
against human legs which he has
yet to do but finally we've reached
détente and I can sometimes pat his head
as he eats before he disappears again
our very own Macavity the mystery cat
who's adopted us as cats
are wont to do.

Cat Poem

You watch this poem leap
into your lap, spread its
paws and extend its claws
until they are the size
of little baseball mitts.
A couple of well-placed
feet on your thighs, and it
eases the soft belly
of the line down its spine:
a poem ready for
anything: leaping, climbing
the curtains, scratching up
the furniture. This one
yawns mightily, cracking
open its jaw as if
it could swallow a cow
or your precious canary.
What great words for teeth
it has! And metaphors
for tongue so rough, it rivals
sandpaper. The ridges
on the roof of its mouth
a rhyme from a time when
caverns were made of white
stalactites and stalagmites
in an unexplored tunnel
of undulating red.

You try to pet this one,
hand flowing in the same
direction as its fur,
which is soft and glowing
with sunlight. While it shuts
its eyes, the poem seems
to smile at you, to give
you permission to do
whatever it is you
want to do. When the poem
gazes back with its own
spark of phosphorescent
green, you can't explain it,
though you have tried: lost all
over again while it purrs.

Deborah H. Doolittle

In the Half-Light of Half-Nights

Morning dawns early. Spreads its wings
slowly. The pale cast of blue so
fleeting and already retreating.

So, tell me what to do with all
this saturation. What to do
with the trees that stand stiff and still

as if waiting's the most patient
thing to do. Even those early
song birds withhold their dawn chorus.

Reluctance is not the word I'd
choose to use. Anticipation,
likewise. This magical moment

is only a shadow away.
With just enough beauty to keep
us breathless for it to unveil.

Deborah H. Doolittle

Hooks, Teeth, Velvet Sheath

What we call the parts of
a cat are mere fancy
notions that enhance our
understanding this ball
of fur with ears and tail
that prefers my lap to
yours. That follows me like
a shadow in and out all
our rooms about the house.
That gets under your foot,

But will let you pet it,
and if you do, it purrs,
revving up its tiny
internal combustion
engine of happiness
and yours. Let's be honest
with each other, what we see
is what we get: a cat
that looks at us with that same
green phosphorescence fire
of desire in its eyes.

Names of Black Birds (II)

No wannabes among this crew
of Crows — all American, Fish,

Hooded, Carrion. Keeping their
own company, taking their own

steady course, black feathers stroking
the sky like oars. Crossing that blue

expanse one dingy dinghy, one
relentless rowboat at a time.

Their call's a caw that draws me in,
gets me thinking of their not-so-

distant kin in Ireland, Jackdaws,
Magpies, Choughs. Who says that all crows

must be black? Among that raucous
din, they find that Rooks are kissing

cousins, and to their consternation,
that Ravens remain less than kind.

Does not matter where they're going,
or where they are from, they bring

a bit of night with them into the light,
a slice of shadow into day.

Deborah H. Doolittle

Names of Blackbirds (III)

Darker than the Black Spruce trees that climb
the hill outside of town.

Darker than the coffee they serve outdoors
on the sidewalks in the cities.

Darker than the grand piano huddled
in the shadows on the stage at the concert hall.

Darker than jet, carbon, ebony,
soot, the SR171 launched skyward,

rocketing past clouds, pushing that baby blue
embryonic sack to the cracking

point. Challenging the sun, no wax
to melt, no sudden plummet to the ground.

Marilyn Braendeholm

A Sunset the Colour of Soup

We emerge from a leafless wood, and
step over clawing roots on icy paths.

Wind drives a slant of snow at us,
it whips around like rippled words,
and our legs feel mortal and fitful
in this soulless winter of centuries,

and he says, Look at those cows.
They look half petrified.

And I agree, we're fodder out here
in this blueness of cold. And the sun
lights a touchpaper on the horizon.
It burns crimson in a slow sweep,

and I say, Let's go home, light the fire,
and warm up with some tomato soup.

Asanas

When my back went out of whack
one afternoon, coming home from the gym,
where I'd done my routine exercises,
nothing more, I found rising from a chair
a torture worthy of Medieval sadists.

It seemed so unfair;
at sixty-nine I'm mindful
of my physical limitations,
practice yoga for nimbleness, flexibility, balance,
ride an exercise bike, swim.

But here I was, disabled,
for all I knew, forever.
Getting out of bed a creative adventure,
I invented my own asanas –
“the crab,” “the snake,” “the butterfly.”

Getting out of my car,
I clung to the opened door
as if to a life raft,
feeling the looks of pity
from the people nearby.

And then, just as suddenly,
my back began to feel normal,
so “normal,” in fact,
I didn't even notice
when I stood up from a chair.

Wayne Hogan

Some Things You Need to Know

She walked in. Nobody liked her dress. "Do you not like my dress?" she asked. "No," they said.

A black cat sauntered in. It looked like it'd been run over by a blue '54 Ford convertible. They all called it Spicy, though its real name was Scaramooch.

A somewhat swarthy man followed the black cat in. Was about 5' 9" and wore a black top hat like the one Lincoln used to wear. No sooner inside, the slightly swarthy man turned and walked back out. As she followed she could hear them saying, "We don't like your dress."

Silence

The comet streaks across the sky
Chasing fleeing stars in its path
Earth sleeps beneath the midnight blue
While feline luna stalks above

Curled round for warmth, head
And tail together, you form
A perfect circle.

Our Geography of Poets

Bali

James Penha

Colorado

Robert Cooperman

Kansas

Pat Anthony

Kentucky

Jane Stuart

Maryland

Charles Rammelkamp

New Jersey

Gilbert Honigfeld

North Carolina

Deborah H. Doolittle

Ohio

Irene T. Winslow

Tennessee

Wayne Hogan

Texas/Vermont

Sylvia Manning

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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