

Waterways

Poetry in the Mainstream



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Vol 44 No 3

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Volume 44

Number 3

the world shrank to
the size of a pea

from "O Muse" by Charles Rammelkamp
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by Barbara Fisher

Vast

Just out of Minneapolis-St. Paul we seemed
briefly to stall as if to shadow
all those wispies drifting below.

The mazes of cul-de-sacs had given way
to assorted squares of barren fields,
their whiskered homesteads glued

to odd corners like stamps, wide ribbon
slipping backward and away, silent terrain
under a lazy canoe. Now the sun

has cast a gray ghost of our plane
down and to my right, framed it within
the awkward porthole, its sliding shade,

an unaccountable halo of rainbow—
and this ridiculous filigree of angels,
filmy leagues camouflaged in ether,

special recruits that mingle and network
like secret agents: the FBI of the sky.
But when we soon tilt and ascend

to the high status toward Denver, I know
all this silliness will vanish, angels fading,
becoming the thin air, and these fields
will retreat

to compose vast sheets of stamps, re-impose
perspective, that inevitable severance
from everything that's then re-imaginable.

James Penha

As If a Durian

How I feared your thorny demeanor,
threatening, impenetrable, hanging,
waiting to fall, to be picked up,
your aura distancing me even as it
dared me to crack you open, slip now
my fingers into flesh I fondle until you
beg me feast face down incomparable
sweetness surrendered to my mouth.

Splinter

again a
late april
carousel
afternoon

vision fogs
in the smoke
of a stranger's
cigarette

the thump, thump
of this song
is an ache
layers deep

another
splintered
odyssey
going down

on the reefs
of the real

B. R. Straban

Gifts
(for Shirley)

I take the lights
of the city
string them
in a row
spirals
'round your brow
Christmas tree bulbs
in your hair
aurora eyes
shine so bright
this city
winks out
in your reflection

Marilyn Braendeholm

Much To My Unsuppressed Delight

Sunday was with Granny.
Grandpa lived there too,
but he was as dependable
as weather, a shiftless man,
claimed Granny, but I liked him,

and I adored the white rabbits
that lived in old apple crates
with chickenwire doors, fed them

carrots straight from the garden
while Granny had one stewing
with veg and tatties on the stove,
'though Granny said it was chicken.

There were three old rusty Fords
half buried in the ground
behind the chicken coop, and
after dinner, which wasn't chicken,
I was told to go and play outside,

and I'd jump on the roofs of those
old Fords, sprung metal sounding
like kettle drums of thunder,

and for that brief moment,
this was my entire world,
much to my unsuppressed delight.

Mary K. Lindberg

Longing Still

He died a half-century ago.
To his white-haired mother
he is forever a tall, handsome 22.
A tear slides into her proud smile.
I long for him still.

Her curly-headed boy loved to play
soldier, became a helicopter pilot,
won Purple Heart. Her hand trembles,
holds photo of dark-eyed uniformed,
uniformed man-child.
I long for him still.

He died bravely in failed rescue,
Vietnam's final combat event.
His name among the last
58,000 on that wall.
I've rubbed it several times.
I long for him still.

She removes her glasses
to stare back at the moment.
They gave me a folded flag;
my world shrank
to the size of a pea.
I long for him still
because I can.

Every life lost in this or
tomorrow's war will never
see their name on a wall.
We lose what they would become.
They lose the chance of longing still.

Life

Battered and bruised
And frail as a whisper
My weary Muse
Still lives with me
In Crazy Town
Down by the ruins
Of the Fair Ground rides
Strung out along the bay
No one is buying
Our lousy souvenirs
Sharks are swarming
The ocean's roads
And poisoned rain
Is falling
On the empty boulevards
The forecasts all predict
Days of nightmare
Days of doom
Coming soon
In fact
There really is no reason
To love or live at all
But just for the hell of it
We continue
Anyway

Where Am I?

Late at night.
Streets deserted.
The only sound
a weary song
emanating from
a third-floor window.

I wonder if it will rain.
It's the time for it.
Dark and cloudy.
Nobody about.

Or maybe weather's content
just to hang out like I do.
Back against the stars.
Sleeping on its feet.

It's neither cold nor warm.
The temperature keeps itself
to itself.
And there's no traffic.
People are already
where they need to be.

Except me.
Inevitably me.
The dead are more to the point
than I am.

A streetlamp
shines down on my face.

A beam of light.
A man of little impact, little self.
Feels like we weigh about the same.

Jennifer Lagier

Resilience

There is power in being robbed & still choosing to dance.

— Amanda Gorman

Silver shaving of sickle moon
floats between charcoal shreds,
fraying bay fog.

Pearly orb swells, then wanes.
Lunar increments dwindle,
mysteriously reappear, newly restored.

Monthly, celestial chameleon glides onstage,
takes a cosmic curtain call,
traverses night sky among stellar applause.

Jennifer Lagier

Lunar Grin

Crescent moon rises
over tree line, shingled roofs,
tilted cheshire cat grin
wrapped in silver fog snood.

Atmospheric river number twelve
brings midnight thunderstorm,
snake tongue lightning,
gale winds, spontaneous floods.

At sunrise, fuming sky clears.
Smiling lunar splinter hangs
among constellations, above sailboats,
between lavender clouds.

Jennifer Lagier

My Poem Refuses to Get Out of Bed

She curls against my grumpy
muse who will not open
her eyes. Both snuggle deeper
into warm covers as fog
rolls ashore, erases all landmarks.
The computer keyboard locks up,
pen runs out of ink.
Pigheaded poetry goes on strike

Pat Anthony

Hope's Bound Box

Behind your eyes a tiny dot
receding shrinking
disappearing leaving only
emptiness sleeplessness
echoed by drumming rain
beating its message onto
spindly corn sprouting soybean

you wander the house
looking for a way to unlock
hope from its bound box
as if you've tuned the world
to some distant station
and you keep adjusting the dial
right left pressing your ear
to the green
box its stenciled flowers
back in another town, age nine.

Charles Rammelkamp

The Yellow Limo

When Stargell hammered that two-run homer,
clearing the right field fence
over Ken Singleton's futile reaching glove,
sixth inning, seventh game,
Pete was sitting with his dad
in far left field at Memorial Stadium,
and he knew the O's were going to lose,
as certain in his ten-year-old bones
as Howard Cosell, calling the game
for Wide World of Sports.
Cosell clearly favored the Pirates,
which only added to the misery,
the Orioles having squandered a 3-1 lead,
with the final two games in Baltimore.

Is it any wonder
the drunk-on-beer Baltimore fans
trashed Cosell's yellow limousine
after the game?
A small consolation for a broken heart.

Richard Spiegel

How did Abraham gather
 a caravan of livestock,
 tents, followers;
how did Daniel Boone trek
 through the forests of Kentucky
 and bring a village?
Alone in the city, the artist looked inward;
 and the community gathered.



Our Geography of Poets

Bali

James Penha

California

Jennifer Lagier

Kansas

Pat Anthony

Maryland

Charles Rammelkamp

Michigan

D.R. James

New York

Mary K. Lindberg

Richard Spiegel

North Carolina

B. R. Strahan

Rhode Island

John Grey

Virginia

William Corner Clarke

West Sussex

Marilyn Braendeholm

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