

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME
30



Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 30, #3

We unscrewed.

We rescrewed

Free Enterprise And The American Way - Barbara Fisher
Pier 84 at West 44th Street Manhattan, July 29, 1979

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 30

Number 3*

Designed, Edited and Published by Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel
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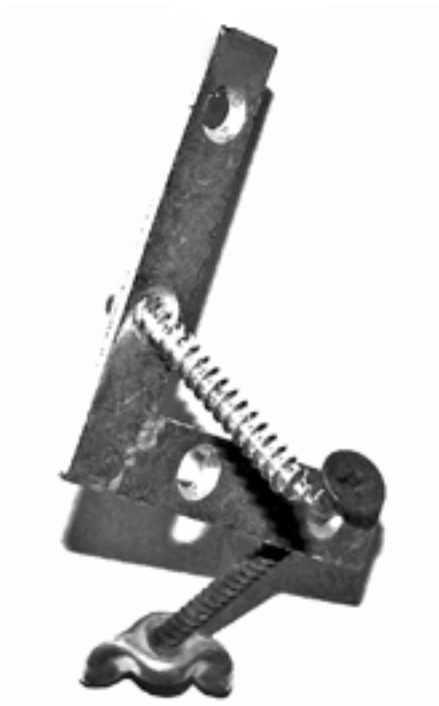
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Into the Fall — William Corner Clarke

Into the fall of moments
The pouring of the living goes
Into the fall of moments
The waking and the working
And the sleeping all
Into the fall they go
Nothing is excepted
For passion or compassion
All is mixed up in the pouring
The pouring mixes all
The voices that you heeded
And the ones you failed to hear

All rush together senseless
Into the ceaseless fall
Nothing can withstand
The rhythm of its sound
Like pictures in a crystal
Drawn by sleight of hand
Go time and trees and houses
Rain and wind and song
Into the fall of moments
They all slide and disappear

'Into the Fall' was originally published in Pennine Platform, No. 21, U.K.

Almost an Epiphany — Phoebe Wilcox

My job is a Boredom Bordello.

If I could copy my heart on the copy machine it
would be so much pinker than the gray of my surroundings.

It would be a hot pink fax for a lover or two.

Oh, fax me baby, fax me,

I'm so friggin' bored.

I'm ready to put a red light up outside my cubicle

I'm ready to hang Czechoslovakian glass beads across my doorway

I'm ready to wear my black flapper dress and the matching hat
with the rainbow sequins and netting.

I'm ready for seamed stockings and

I refuse to let data entry fill me with day job malaise.

I'm going to dance in secret

and put expectations through the shredder.

If you dare come by
you will be drugged by my enthusiasm for life.
You're gonna want to hop on this bus and fly.
What was it Christ said about freedom and captivity?
Who knows? I haven't read my Bible in awhile.
But I could read it now,
curled up on the floor beside the trash can,
and such spiritual insights would it impart
that I could take this world apart
and put it back together
just the way it was meant to be.
Yes, indeed.
Even boredom
Has a purpose
On this Earth.

Final Journey — Sankar Roy

Lord K says when someone's time expires,
the god of death, Yamraj, arrives
riding in a dark chariot as if
someone had called a cab.

He rings the doorbell once,
then patiently waits under the porch light,
lights a cigarette, puffs smoke
while watching openings in clouds.

He always gives enough time
to get out of the bed and change
from nightclothes into something formal.
He understands, after all, this is the first time
someone will be meeting the God.

According to Lord K, Yamraj is actually a decent god.
He prefers not to burst open people's doors.
Hardly anyone has ever seen him dragging a person
by the hair or any other body part.

If the person, who has been called,
doesn't answer after the first ring,
he patiently walks around the house
while humming a tune he learned from a singer
while transporting her to the heaven.

After the deceased comes out of the house,
he holds open the chariot's door, bows a little,
showing respect. While journeying back
through the sky, like a good tour guide,
he points out the lighted galaxies

by the roadside, people drinking
in the heavenly pubs, stars flashing
neon signs for the popular casinos,
cloud-prisons in which dead felons are kept,
prostitutes in black stockings
standing leaning against the planetary walls.

After a Storm — Michelle Chen

Torn drumskin,
pride battered out
by thundering gusts,
draped on a
a gnarled elm branch,
tracing cracks in the parchment
of dusk.

Stampeding winds
left a pockmarked moonscape of
overgrown lawns.
Premature earth
churned up raw, studded
with breadcrumbs.

Overturned baby stroller
breaching on a powerline
Tatters of
moth-eaten sweaters
and yesterday's mail
flutter on
patio chair skeletons—
prayer flags
for the insurance man.

Disrupted civilization
transfigured into
an infant's mobile,
dangling memory scraps
over a cradle of ruins.

Mesmerized, we start
to recollect
and contemplate
how hard
to try standing.

The Appliance Coroner — Bill Roberts

You really can't know the meaning
of deprivation these days until
your microwave burns out, as ours did,
in the middle of reheating the morning coffee,
a practice of pseudo-religious significance.

It suddenly flashed an ominous blue light,
then spluttered, smoked and sighed,
too early in the cycle to ruminate
over its untimely death with
a second cup of *Monsoon Malabar Gold*.

Only a teenager, thirteen, same age as
our once-new house and a top-of the line GE,
appliances are not what they used to be,
says my wife, who knows about appliances
except, that is, how to fix them.

The repair man, otherwise known as
The Appliance Coroner and well known to us
lately since everything seems to have
a lifespan of thirteen more or less years,
prays for the dead then renders his bill.

Sixty-nine dollars, the same as last month
when he administered last rites to a clothes drier.
A new microwave will cost six hundred bucks,
installation of new and removal of old included,
plus a promise that we'll see him again soon.

(Published in the 2/26/09 online issue of *Sunken Lines*)

Second Chances — Scott Owens

Things rarely come out right
the first time. We screw, unscrew, rescrow
to get it straight. We miss turns,
bend the nail, plant the bulbs
upside down. We burn the bread,
change clothes, regret the faux pas
or Freudian slip. Who among us
has never needed to apologize
for the poorly timed comment, the unknowing
offensive joke? We hope we learn
from each attempt what we need
to do it better the next time.
My father has been married
six times, my mother seven.
At sixty-eight, she's dating again.

Connecting — Edward J. Rielly

The butterfly flutters
its breeze, stirring currents
that force seasons
and dreams
to the far ends of existence.

One small screw
inserted in the wall
holding one thin board
to its support,
to the wall, to the house
leaning against the horizon,
red sun setting,
hill tops blazing.

Pin the butterfly,
remove the screw.
What worlds collapse?

Lighting the World — Edward J. Rielly

Like a small god we screw
the sun into darkness
like a light bulb;
it flickers faintly,
a loose connection
soaked with
desperation.

It goes out.

Then the moon,
a poor imitation
but we rotate it
carefully, base grating
in the socket, sliver
of rust on my thumb,
my hand dissolving
in great, cosmic darkness.

Sailors and Gold — H. Edgar Hix

The sky here suddenly rams into the horizon,
a line flat and curved. Waves come
from that line. Water skips on rocks,
thrown by the once named
sailors, passengers, livestock,
gold. Spume caresses the watchers' hair
while the deaths of waves grasp their feet.
The ocean sucks at the watchers and sky
like a womb trying to reclaim her children.
Horizon, father of hurricanes,
will again share his seed with this orderly chaos
from whom sailors and gold came
and to whom sailors and gold return.

Gleam Why Don't You — John Grey

Everyone reads the part
where it lauds light on stones.
They've all had that moment in their past:
the glistening aftertaste of rain,
the smug grayness of what's been here forever,
the apocryphal sun shining its headlamps
where they will do the most illuminating.
Forget the molten love of the first twenty seven lines,
the degradation that ultimately sucks in the blood-stained author,
even the place where man and the universe bang heads.
Rays hit a wet rock and all is right with the world.
Not bad for the cynosure of all that's treachery.
As long as it gleams, it's forgiven.

art for art's sake — Robert Schuler

all we talked about was art the lost-wax method of sculpture yielding such pure articulations of bone and skin Aphrodite Cezanne Chinese art of the Tang the wasteland recharged *il miglior fabbro* Pound's letters to Joyce's raising his craft and imagination Balzac in his monk's tunic drowning gallons of coffee Saramago's painstaking proofreading correcting texts written in stone what does the artist want what is beauty why try to create art in the midst of a universe slaving with cruelty madness inhumanity constant war Charles Péguy excommunicated for saying there is no hell Andrei Rublev Tarkovsky Salinger agree beauty cannot be staged sold you stay up all night weeks listen to Bach to Miles the Wolf read novels Dostoevsky Myshkin and Lebyatkin try to write poetry poems poems a poem the poem

When Truth Broke In — N. A'Yara Stein

Aunt Alice has drunk a fifth of Chivas
every day for over thirty years.
She said her husband couldn't penetrate her,
so he roped her like a calf,
drug her behind his car for two long miles.
They say she lived with a woman
who loved her like a man.
The two of them ran Ole King Cole,
a famous restaurant now forgotten.
Aunt Alice is four foot nine, still thin and blond.
Her lover gave her this pearl ring on my finger.

The same ring she gave me
while standing under the shadow of a gilded Saint Joan,
her only other treasure.
That same pearl ring I will one day give to you
before I tell you my story,
feel the family voice rattle in my throat.

Tigers Named William — David Michael Nixon

New tigers named William are here,
knocking on the redwood door
I can hear them screaming, pounding
their forepaws on the thick wood,
but I keep quiet and don't move.
I never acknowledge tigers
named William, so they must dissolve.

First appeared as *Green Turtle Broadside #2*

The Limits — David Michael Nixon

When the curtains cover
night lights on both sides,
look for the darkness to
infiltrate small openings,
tying outdoors and in
together with its fluid
river of dark song
so that bat and poet unite
and their cries bounce back
to show them how the spaces
around them, the limits
of their lives, are shaped.

Georgia O'Keeffe's Pelvis IV, 1944 — Alan Catlin

The bones, she
said, have such

life in them

and
the moon
she saw through

pelvic remains

what of
that moon?

Georgia O'Keeffe's Day with Juan — Alan Catlin

Fantastic geographic
planes in the mind

empty of geometry
as a room is without

waits: solar roofing
panels, unhinged, float

on invisible waves

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