

# Waterways:

## Poetry in the Mainstream

2005



January

## Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 26, #1

i was once a vers libre bard  
but i died and my soul went into the body of a cockroach

Don Marquis  
*the coming of archy*  
*from ARCHY AND MEHITABEL*

# **WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream**

Volume 26 Number 1\*

Designed, Edited and Published by Richard Spiegel & Barbara Fisher

Thomas Perry, Admirable Factotum

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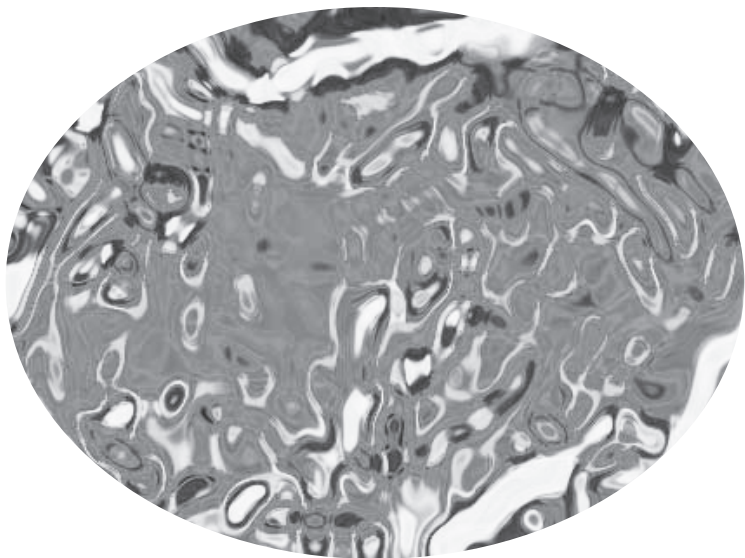
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## Don't Hold Your Breath — Bill Roberts

This is all I'm willing to admit:  
There's no future in the past,  
So I'm determined there will be

No past in the future.  
Henceforth (I detest that word,  
Don't you, but it fits this slot),

I will not conjure up past events  
For your afternoon's entertainment.  
Everything I write will be about

Current events, a *now*-happening,  
Pen taken in hand as it's happening,  
Whatever *it* turns out to be.

I'm now waiting for something,  
Anything, worthwhile to happen  
So I can write it up and report to you.

Please don't hold your breath—  
Hardly anything happens  
Around here any more.

## Helpers Anselm Brocki

Since my wondrous  
brain of molecules  
and nanotechnology  
is self-contained  
with only seen light  
& other energy waves  
announcing from outside,  
it needs many kinds  
of help to maintain  
the illusion of me  
as leader of this body:

regular schedules  
of up, eat, work, ease,  
and sleep carried out  
from well-known bed,  
dented maple breakfast  
table, cubical formica  
desk, restaurants,  
and movie houses;  
familiar faces, shirts,  
nubby blue sweaters,  
fresh sourdough bread,

photo albums from all  
the decades of different  
places, and especially  
feelings of tenderness  
constantly flowing  
freely out and in.

## Home — Harvey Steinberg

It's painful to recall the warm hours together.  
Wakefulness licking the mattress,  
Retinas eating hues of stocked cupboards,  
Our vigorous family in full enactments  
All slip to long-term memory  
Whose fire-door sticks.



**From House to Home**  
**Ida Fasel**

**1.**

L 23 N 24FT & PT of L24  
DAF BEG ON WLY LI 34.21FT NLY  
FR SW COR SD L TH N TO NW COR  
SD L TH ELY ALG NLY LI TO NE  
CPR SD L TH SLY ALG ELY LI SD  
L TO PT 26 FT NLY FR SE COR  
SD TH WLY ON ST LI TO POB  
BLK 11 CRESTMOOR Park 2ND FLG

**2.**

Turn and turn  
As in the old Shaker hymn  
Till it comes round right.

## Transformation — Ida Fasel

Hope is a drudge  
working the fires,  
feeding ordeals  
with wounds and desires,  
sweeping up ashes  
that won't pack down -  
by midnight to be  
her fine ball gown.

## Your ribbons of honor — Sylvia Manning

*(for a poet)*

Some paper with copies  
of your poems, some extras,  
has become  
mulch, very white mulch,  
beneath the red rose

the red rose called  
(Who knows why? Not me.)  
The Rose of San Antonio,  
the one a young woman gave me  
when you died.

The paper seems like  
snow until you  
look more closely,  
see the black words  
on the white ribbons  
at the roots of the flower,  
in shreds, your poems.

Good compost  
on the good soil,  
from a good poet,  
to nourish the rose  
of San Antonio

**Gulf Walk with Mad Egret**  
**David Martin**

Like a beachcomber  
lost on an island  
I am stranded  
on Clearwater beach  
for Christmas. For fun  
I walk the shoreline  
alone. The setting sun  
smears the gulf sky  
with egg yolk  
and the color of blood.

Pelicans swoop waves  
like prehistoric birds.  
A giant egret floats down  
in the darkness.  
I can see his long  
gooney steps on the sand.  
From the shadows  
he pokes his big bill  
into my life.

#

I walk until the sun  
slides under the gulf.  
The tidewash tickles  
my feet and sandpipers  
skitter everywhere.  
I start to think  
I am truly lost  
and then I see  
the shadow of my shack  
and palm trees  
under the moon.

I am safe.  
And then a shriek!  
Wild wings flapping!  
A strutting explosion  
of skinny legs!  
A jabby beak  
and a long loony neck!  
I run for my life  
across the sand.  
The night egret  
stalks his prey!

## Night — R. Yurman

Deep shadows  
beyond the fire  
predators lithe as snakes  
lie in wait  
between earth and chaos—  
kinkajou and jaguar  
kept at bay  
the whites of their eyes  
gone dark  
But no matter how faithfully  
we feed the flames  
they invade our dreams—

the many-headed jackal  
bares its canine teeth  
the musk ox  
lifts its horns  
and stomps  
Chilled by swirling winds  
our clamped weapons  
gripped between  
fingerjoints and thumb  
dangle useless  
with only—on those rare  
cloudless mid-cycle nights—  
the owl-bright moon  
to protect us

## Something Wild And Fragile — Joan Payne Kincaid

The Red-shouldered Hawk  
perched above the lake  
aims large soulful eyes at the scope  
where we seem to meet  
this gray fall day  
raptor with delicate life bones of air  
prepare to fly away  
I, always grounded  
overwhelmed by wildness  
bravery fierce challenges  
vulnerability and grace  
(all animals are in a state of grace)  
am left only to stare  
at empty limb.



## Outside of Time — Joan Payne Kincaid

It was in the rainforest that our eyes found each other even though people were milling around and there were other primates in her room of illusionary piece of jungle she was up on a plastic rock lying down and had been slowly turning her head to focus quietly at another Calabas or sometimes at the crowd behind the glass when our eyes began a dialogue of abandonment from separation beyond joy and pain as if we were outside of time and place comparing notes from within each other's mind moving backward through evolution perhaps to some common ancestor we were outside of limitations of species or social order or expectation she calmly placed one hand over the other relaxing as I stood with

my elbows supporting my chin to help me remain still enough to keep our stream of awareness flowing I would blink slowly as a sort of signal the way my cats do

to communicate a mutual state of awareness and she did not shift her gaze and her alert mind remained open to this transmission of being as long as I remained

and continued in that space where two beings were for a few timeless moments melded and transcendent beyond walls and crowds and the whole limited prison of confinement and it was an honor to have her commit her unique being to me out of all the possibilities such as where she might have been and where I might have been in this passage of time.

Angels are those who leave me — Richard Spiegel

"Wottayacallit," she asked.

"We are sui generis,"  
he replied, lost in his machine.

When the bell rang,  
a storm shook the trees  
& water streamed down the hill.

He opened the door  
& the dog dragged him  
down the porch

& out to the gutter.



photograph by  
Barbara Fisher

