

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME
26



#6

Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 26, #6

being cleopatra was
only an incident
in my career

*cheerio my deario
from ARCHY AND MEHITABEL*

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 26

Number 6*

Designed, Edited and Published by Richard Spiegel & Barbara Fisher

Thomas Perry, Admirable Factotum

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Barbara Fisher



Translated Notice — Sylvia Manning

Sign on a post
over in the 16th:

YOUNG WOMAN, COMPETENT AND EXPERIMENTAL,
TO CLEAN HOUSE AND CARE FOR CHILDREN,
FRENCH SPEAKING.

Paris

first published in
North Central Review
January 2005

My Yoke Is Easy — Julie Lechevsky

The Bible says no to
chasing after
the esteem of men,
and what could be
further
from my mind?

Who would not trade
Their keenest judgments
For a sprig of chicory?

Taurus at the Ritz Plaza
Ida Fasel

Look at me in this deep chair before an exquisite
low table, china cup in hand, tapestry at my back
big enough to wall-to-wall my whole apartment.

Look at me addressing high-count fine linen
under Lapsong Souchong, at the landing
of sweeping stairs, a tea bag drying at home,
a Napoleon cheaper the supermarket.

I sit in the mirror in a field where
white flowers are threading small animals white
and men in chain mail back from their adventures
stand absorbed, reverent, waiting the pleasure of
ladies with lovely thin arms and elegant long necks.

Look at me in a pointed hat and pure silk gown,
mirrored in the gaze of my own cavalier.

At the Orchard — Jeanne M Whalen

We laughed because the laughing apples weren't red.
They smiled and bowed their heads to the setting sun's orange
and suckled from each branch in their dappled yellow
coats. Their heads nestled low among crisp fans of green
as they sighed, cheek to cheek, below the melting blue,
deep and deeper blue, drinking red, pouring violet.

I wore my hair down and long and full of violets
and we drove your old truck till the gaslight went red.
You said you'd never seen the sky or my eyes so blue
so I laughed and handed you my round, ripe orange
to peel while we waited for the light to turn green.
Pasty peels caught under my nails and turned them yellow.

(When I was born, jaundice turned all my skin yellow.
It's my favorite color besides the violet
that springs from the amethyst ring in a tiny green
box on our bed on my birthday, with ribbons all red
and a note as romantic as an orange
crayon will allow. Maybe it makes my eyes look blue.)

I was barefoot and you wore your dark jeans, dark blue
except where you kept your wallet and your knees (yellowed
there from repeated wear). You held your hair with an orange
bandana. I wore my wispy skirt, long and violet,
and you played with the hem till you made my face red.
The afternoon sun through the windshield tinted my eyes green.

I wanted a picnic in the grass, on the green
carpet where ants always ate and the brightest blue

of unsmogged sky could cuddle us and all the red,
ripe orchard apples. But the apples were yellow
and my gray eyes sulked till you straightened the violets
in my tousled hair and gave me another orange.

As the bare sun set on our threadbare quilt all red and orange,
splashes like the sun, I tossed some of the green
grapes at your mouth, rolled into your arms, let violet
breezes drift my skirt and showed you my eyes aren't blue.
You shook your head and traced the veins of pale yellow
orange juice that stained my skin. The sun had left it raw, red.

You promised me next time we'd find some apples red
with summer skin. I told you now I like them yellow.
And my eyes that day (so often gray) had turned to blue.

Recounting - Bill Roberts

It may come as a surprise
When you find out that I

Witnessed FDR take the oath
At his fourth inauguration

Cheered Bob Feller as he tossed
A fastball over 100 miles an hour

Dated and senior prommed
A famous talk-show personality

Sat next to Senator Jack Kennedy
At a nuclear holocaust movie

Honeymooned while Fidel & Co.
Shot off firecrackers in Havana's hills

Thrilled as Dame Margot Fonteyn
Danced one of her last Swan Lakes

Ogled an unmade-up Marilyn Monroe
Mrs. Arthur Miller leggily exigent a taxicab

Watched in stunned silence as Nikita
Khrushchev paraded by me to menace the U.N.

Was dazzled by Arturo Rubenstein's
Playing a double concerto

Retired for the first of a dozen times
The same week of the first moon landing

Helped develop for our country
Countless weapons of mass destruction

Wondered by brilliant Bill Clinton
Had a brain seizure in his little head

Became the father and caregiver
To six fun-loving canines

Wrote poetry of a highly selfish nature
Simply to please myself

And never achieved distinction until
This sudden momentary recounting.

Practice — Patricia Wellingham-Jones

Practice	She poses in front of her bathroom mirror	Convinces herself she is a Woman of Power
No way		
Nothing doing	Feels like a member of the Terrible Twos	Knows how to say that one big word
Not a whit		
Uh uh		
Nada	Practices glares	no
Forget it	firm glances	
Nyet	direct eye contact	No
Nein	straight posture	
Non		NO!

Fiftieth Annual — Lee Evans

The dainty little goat
licks my hand as I stretch into her stall
to scratch behind her elegant ears:

I who have been her father and mother,
sister and brother, lover and friend,
through all the twists and turns of Samsara.

She stands upon her hind legs.
I draw back my arm, pleased
at such rapport with the Animal world.

Incidentally a nearby poster
warns the crowd at the County Fair:
"Wash your hands if you touch the livestock."

Rhyme Scale Poem — Ron Singer

Dracula waxed oracular:
"The snack? Spectacular!"
Would peasants
wax Drac?
Suspense
(eschewing vernac)
...funicular.

Yes, suspense, tactile;
hand-spike strength, tensile;
gloating, infantile.
"His hands! Prehensile!"

(Demeanor, funereal,
somehow ethereal,
dreams, venereal,
biorhythms, sidereal.)

With moon's slow dance
those with sense
—all but the dense—
got them hence
in advance
of portended events.

Spike fell from heart,
ship into port,
corpse gave a start,
crowd fell apart.

Sleep seemed a ruse.
Amidst ahs and oohs,
no longer amused,
confused, foolish brood,
as Drac yawned and stood,
they fled through the wood.

Man of sighs, eyes red,
rose from vernal bed.
Night creatures stirred,
bat, mole, bird
tracked the undead.

Up like bird, wings like wax,
trees against night, black on black,
spectacular Dracula,
like stain or like macula,
through the moon cuts a trailless track.

The Bee Hunter — Hugo DeSarro

The woman at the table
killed two bees.

They buzzed around
her scented head
with yearning.

Heavy in the autumn air
they hung and circled
in a desperate drone.
She waited
for their touchdown
on the table, reaching

with a subtle stealth
and snuffing in a napkin,
one by one,
their fitful lives;
then waited with an eager eye
for other bees to come.

Queen of Cherries — Patricia A. Boutilier

If I were a bowl of cherries
I'd be Regal Queen Anne's.
I'd make my demand known,
a cool, serene Queen of Stones.

I'd be regal Queen Anne's
with eyelids and ears painted plum.
I'd be a woman of means
content with herb-tea and muesli.

I'd make my demands known.
I'd declare a year of cherry jubilee:

all transgressors forgiven,
all trespassers perfumed.

A cool, serene Regent of Stones,
I'd dip my soft, sweet fruit
into dark chocolate childhood.
I'd offer bites to passers-by.

With eyelids and ears painted plum
I'd be too happy to be deep.
I'd spill all my pitted secrets
if I were a bowl of cherries.

Freedom — Erin Ondersma

I lost control when
the reins that I once used to steer my world
vanished
with me

My once vibrant, solid self
became weak and withered
melting as my mother's fears
grew

So she sent me away
west of my world
where horses are medicine
for girls like me

I wouldn't believe
in healing
until I saw it
and became it—
finding the reins
as I grew

My fragile self sat weightless atop
a giant, majestic animal
stomping into the dust fiercely

Yes I made her move forward
I made her go right or left
I made her pick up her speed to a full gallop
I made her slow down and
I made her stop, pulling on the reins

She taught me of the
control I had lost
when my small self sat tall, confident
able to move forward
in my own direction
supported until ready to be released

I learned of healing when we raced together
dancing with the wind towards freedom
away from what had almost destroyed me
had she not lifted me up

Now I fly

Cleopatra on the Apron — James Penha
for Christine Knapp

I am the greatest
show on earth, Mr. De Mille,
Jimmy Stewart turned oddly from the rear window
standing out front finally
ready for my close-up, fright
wig winged in baby blue spots
round, Max Factor, your Clown
White Number One.

I perform in all three rings, Mr. Ringling
and, you too, Mr. Ringling,
for all five continents, Mr. Antony

and children of all ages
all at once, Mr. Barnum.

I am sperm and I am egg, Father Gregor,
yin and yang, Mr. BaiLee.

I am sun and forest
and, periodically, Dr. Mendeleev,
the elements of creation.

I am bursting, Signore Pagliacci,
to sing

softly a little song
I wrote.