

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

27

NO. 1



Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 27, #1

How Nations sink, by darling Schemes oppress'd,
When Vengeance listens to the Fool's Request.

Samuel Johnson
from *The Vanity of Human Wishes*

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 27

Number 1*

Designed, Edited and Published by Richard Spiegel & Barbara Fisher

Thomas Perry, Admirable Factotum

c o n t e n t s

James Penha	4	Lee Evans	11
Bill Roberts	5-7	Mary Lindberg	12
Hugo DeSarro	8	Carol Hamilton	13-16
Fredrick Zydek	9	Ida Fasel	17-18
Ron Singer	10	Richard Spiegel	19

Waterways is published 11 times a year. Subscriptions -- \$33 for 11 issues.

Sample issues — \$4.00 (includes postage).

Submissions will be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope.

Waterways, 393 St. Pauls Avenue, Staten Island, New York 10304-2127

©2006 Ten Penny Players Inc. *This magazine is published 6/06.

<http://www.tenpennyplayers.org/mags.html>



DIRECTIONS — James Penha

When he asked
for help, for
a gift of experience,
the grace of my
intuition,
I replied
eloquently
as a scarecrow
turned
and dessicated
by the winds
of his lands.

Brave Little Man — Bill Roberts

My mother, riding in the taxi across town,
tells me I'm a brave little man.

I have helped her pack all our belongings
into suitcases and cardboard boxes,
me being responsible for the canned goods
and toys that once were solely mine
but now belong to the sleeping little
boy and girl, my brother and sister,
who are unconscious and unaware
on either side of me in the back seat
of this crowded taxi, stifling

even with all its windows cracked,
the dark driver coughing and smoking
acid cigarettes, one after another,
as if a war wasn't going on in other parts
of the world, far off Europe and Asia.
We have just left my father, says my mother,
though he won't find out until he returns
from work, always late from the post office.
When he gets there, he will discover
an empty shell of a rental house, now his.
It is a Friday in July 1944, hot as blazes
in Washington, D.C., where summers
are always muggy, and uncomfortable.

The furniture is being transported
across town too, by drunken men who
seem to know my mother and are used
to hurry-up jobs of this sort, families splitting.
Yes, I have to be a brave little man,
entering into an entirely different world,
wondering if I'll like my new classmates
in an unknown school in a new part of town.
I dread starting this new life without
my father and wonder what he'll eat tonight
and what he'll do in an empty house.
The life of brave little men is very unsettling.

Two Cows — Hugo DeSarro

Driving through the hills of Pennsylvania
I saw them from a distance:
two cows in the center of an open field.
I saw two black and white cows
in an open field, but only one was real.
One moved because only one was real;
the other was a painted wooden sign.
Two cows in an open field,
one lonely and standing close to the other.

Dream Animals: *Gossiperus Erectur* — Fredrick Zydek

Of this you can be sure - those who have nothing better to do than talk about the very private lives of others are probably already lifeless. If they would rather discuss the dirty linen they've seen dangling on someone else's line, you can bet they hang their clothes in the basement to dry. This is a creature who delights in breaking confidentiality and thrives on other people's unhappy predicaments. It's attracted to bad news in the same dreadful way vultures are drawn towards carrion. It's their nature to pick bones clean and quibble over a few pieces of rotting fur. They're like hogs at the trough, a pack of wolves watching an ailing stag lag behind the herd, a school of piranhas caught in the fury of the kill.

Rose Garden — Ron Singer

At a White House Rose
Garden press conference,
trying to broker a truce,
Ronald Reagan introduced
Master Sergeant Samuel Doe,
then dictator (by coup) of Liberia,
as "Chairman Moe."
That kind of delirium
—or is it nonsense?—
steps on toes,
compounding woes.

Baghdad Looming — Lee Evans

In sight of the fabled city,
The soldiers await their orders,
Gathering in circles
Upon the sterile sand,
Their arms about each other,
New Testaments clutched in their hands.

They grovel and plead for Jesus
To preserve them through the battle,
And to ensure them victory—
As they make perfect their resolve
To disobey their God's commands.

Remains — Mary Lindberg

(Sedona, Arizona)

I stroll in Indian ruins,
tripping over invisible
seven hundred-year old footprints,
where people made love
in stone cubicles
carved like cylinder
seals in tall red cliffs,
scratching prayers for crops
on stone walls.

I think what of our remains?
Perhaps a skeleton or two
in dried-up oil-less moraine,
barren as this silenced world,
where sun-drenched
stick figures plead for rain
on blackened blood-iron cliffs.

A Question of Etymology — Carol Hamilton

1528, and Cabeza de Vaca saw buffalo on the coastal plains of Texas. *Cibeleros*, the bison hunters were called in the lands where Coronado passed. As usual, the Spaniards must have heard what they wished to hear, for they went on searching for the Seven Cities of Cibola, cities of gold built of glitter on the unlikely plains of Oklahoma and Kansas. Others called these great beasts *boef* for the French cattle, and how all

these words were mixed, bison and buffalo
and Spanish and French and native tongues
and English, of grains and windmills
and a holding place for foods in the mouths
of insects and an archaic word for all things
alimentary and bison and grain and gold,
always gold, always the Spaniards heard
gold. The Tainos said to Columbus,
"There is gold on that far island" . . .
or was it cannibals? A going-away line,
either way.

And the bison was gold
for the Kiowa, the Comanche.
But Cabeza de Vaca lost his lust

for gold, learned the native ways,
sought only his lost countrymen
as he crossed the continent, growing
hairier and wilder as he went,
but gentler, a healer to the tribes
he lived with and passed by. So, when,
at last he found his Conquistadors
on the West Coast, their misunderstandings
and his misunderstandings no longer meshed.
His life, the conquerors lives, the lives
of the conquered, the very naming
of things, our primal human task,
became so mixed and confused
that nothing can untangle us now.

My principal once borrowed
my marionettes, returned them snarled
beyond repair without a word
about the problem. Those dolls
could no longer dance freely,
nor can we nor our words
ever return to write a clear
history of our pasts.

The Laboratory — Ida Fasel

I huddle, I stretch,
I wave my arms, kick my legs.
Cold electrodes, can you carry the tune
as half-awake, I atone
like those nodding men at Jerusalem wall
anthems from the marrow of their bones?

Machine brimming with electrical accounts
of my double dark to steel,
wagging, jerking, conducting
my polyautograph black on white,
have you any way of arching
a rainbow over my dreams?

Jackhammer stylus, zigzagging lined paper,
pressing on with a surface narrative,
a fiction of sorts and supposes,
how will you tell the difference
between mere thrashing
and this night'

Revenge ain't sweet
Richard Spiegel

... it's cold
like a bucket of ice.
Cheryl used to daydream —
by the venetian blinds
or out by the avenue
counting cars
while she waited
for her father to come
home.

She feared he'd died,
gunned down
by alien salesmen...
and she dreamt how she would get 'em
in the end...
That never happened.
He was
only late
or long delayed
and she swallowed
her disappointment.



ISSN 0197-4777

published 11 times a year since 1979
very limited printing

by Ten Penny Players, Inc.
(a 501c3 not for profit corporation)

Subscriptions -- \$33 for 11 issues.

Sample issues — \$4.00 (includes postage).

www.tenpennyplayers.org/mags.html