

# Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

29



# Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 29, #7

A bird came down the walk

He did not know I saw

He bit an angleworm in halves

And ate the fellow raw

Emily Dickinson

# **WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream**

Volume 29

Number 7\*

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## **Buteos — Scott Owens**

They are not strangers here.  
They circle high but clear,  
measure each stroke,  
as they bank and turn,  
waiting for prey  
to stray into the open.  
They are not strangers here.  
They belong here,  
lonely birds of death.

## Just Like That — Dave Church

I sometimes sit at the typer near my window

Listening eternal to the hummmmmmmmm

Of its idle —

When suddenly

Like

SNAP,

Words for a song are born (Mother wren

Pulls worm from ground, slips into baby's mouth)

Just like that...

## Atlantis — William Corner Clarke

It's an autumn day  
In New York  
And I'm standing, staring  
At remains of worlds  
Previous to this one  
Lying crushed and fused  
In the sidewalk  
Glittering like iron pyrites  
In the rays  
Of the late afternoon sun

There are microscopic hieroglyphs  
Overwritten by the ramblings  
Of the weather  
Rivers, forests, animals and oceans  
Swirled into stone



And seasoned by fire  
Esoteric symbols  
Emptied of Gods and meaning  
Flattened and preserved  
Like dried flowers  
Inconceivable machinery  
For travelling between stars  
Ground into filings  
And mixed with the dust  
Of philosopher's bones  
All by the bus stop  
On Sutphin Boulevard

It's just gone 4 p.m.  
And the 29 bus arrives  
With a picture of Stone Henge  
On its side

Hip-Hop vibrates the windows  
Of the pawnshop down the block  
Marvin Gaye is in there somewhere  
Along with a snatch  
Of Delta blues  
And some sand from the Sahara

I've been carving reliefs  
On a rock face  
In the Valley of the Kings  
I've been standing on a crag  
Above Loch Tay  
Watching a falcon  
Catch its prey  
Now I'm leaving Jamaica  
Heading home

*first published in Fire issue #24*

## **The Last Human Inhabitant — Thomas D. Reynolds**

I saw him once charging after a wounded pullet,  
His rusted hatchet clipping a wing instead of the neck.

Undoubtedly some city boy back to nature  
Who didn't know a chicken's neck from his ass.

The poor bastard had to be awful hungry anyway  
To be willing to risk a tooth on those scraggly hens

Clucking and coughing around the old cabin,  
The one where your daddy was born.

No one had lived there for as much as twenty years,  
Yet generations of scroungy bitties still lingered

Around the door frame waiting for your grandma  
To walk out with a handful of leftover cornmeal.

Seeing that graying hair pulled back in a ponytail,  
They must have thought it was the second coming,

The legend of which was passed from hen to chick  
For twenty years while roosting on rotting fence posts.  
For as near as I can figure, he stayed there two weeks,  
The lopsided chimney trailing wood smoke  
Though the majority came from doors and windows  
Since the chimney was plugged with about a thousand  
Birds nests in addition to a couple dozen squirrel skeletons,  
So no wonder his exhaust smelled like scalded beans  
Along with a few other peculiar perfumes, ah hum.  
He was the last human inhabitant of the old place,  
And I reckon he deserves a bit of respect for that,  
A lonely old squatter gazing up at the stars all night.  
Wandering the woods where we once hunted,  
Laying hands for the last time on the doorframe  
Before like a ghost or a wandering circuit preacher  
After a sermon walking down the road with head bowed.

## Osprey — Lorraine Jeffery

He fell like God's hammer,  
and slapped the water  
with a sound that snapped  
all heads to the lake.

A shiny black gargoyle of parts and angles  
wrestled in the circling water.

Then, the great ebony wings  
pushed the air down  
in one stroke,  
and rose high above us.

The silver dash of the fish  
hanging from his  
comma beak.

## Geoff Stevens

Attacked down in the earth-worming subway  
the old bird strikes back with his walking stick  
making the feathers fly  
the squawking robbers flee  
on their battered wings  
their talons drawn

Patricia Kelly

halting steps

a bird-shaped shadow

on the patio

## When I Think of Those Doves — Lyn Lifshin

those pale shapes,  
still, not brash as  
jays or flashy but  
eating what  
the other birds  
leave behind,  
crumbs, a few  
drops of water.  
When I think of  
July vanishing,  
how I haven't  
checked the death  
anniversary for  
my mother's  
August death,

how the news  
seems too much,  
I look for the dove,  
I think how like  
this small shape  
my friend with so  
much nightmare  
to deal with seems  
who finds joy  
in a few small  
seeds  
the rocking chair  
and a crow's fading caw  
rest stop

## Bon Bon — James Penha

What lies within  
this dark  
and luscious  
chocolate  
will slake my thirst  
I think  
it drives me mad.



## The Park — Fran Farrell Kraft

Seagulls visited my little park today  
as they do from time to time.  
They arrive in a flock of white wings,  
wheeling and swooping and circling

above the benches and bright play things.  
Unlike the pigeons they temporarily displace,  
there are no stragglers struggling to keep up.  
Between circuits they ground in a snowy crown.

The gulls have now returned to the sea.  
Local pigeons are back and celebrating.  
Less disciplined and more varied  
with shades of silver and gray and flashes

of white underbelly, they also cavort,  
but small groups break off to establish  
their own orbits, each group followed  
by two or three furiously flapping fowl.

Can these be the baby pigeons  
that no one ever seems to see?

## Sometimes a Raven — Joanne Seltzer

Sometimes a raven  
flies along the path  
a woman walks.  
"Stalker!" cries the woman.  
The raven answers  
c-r-r-r-r-u-k.

The woman, grown pale,  
changes direction,  
provokes the raven  
to shadow a new path  
as it sweeps back and forth  
in mock attack.

The raven continues  
back and forth  
back and forth  
above this one woman  
at this one time  
in this one place.

The woman recites  
a litany  
of mythopoetic  
epithets:  
Bad Omen, *Great Spirit*,  
Nevermore.

And this one raven  
dark but somewhat comic  
surrenders its essence  
to metaphor,  
terminates  
this brief relationship.

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