

# Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME  
31



#4

# Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 31, #4

The cluttered Rhine  
moves machinery and wine

**Ida Fasel**

ON THE RHINE

Waterways, Volume 11, Number 2, page 30

# **WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream**

Volume 31

Number 4\*

Designed, Edited and Published by Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

## **c o n t e n t s**

Ida Fasel	4	Jennifer Jayne Scobie	20
Arlene Mandell	6	Jari Thymian	22
Robert L. Brimm	8	Rex Sexton	27
Ruth Moon Kempfer	10		
Frank Murphy	15		
R. Yurman	18		

*Cover: Rhine View (1878) watercolor by Ernst Morgenstern*

*Artists: William Tombleson, William Miller, Wenceslaus Hallor, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Matthäus Merian, Anton Woensam, Karl Bodmer, J.J. Tanner, Wenceslaus Hollar*

Sample issues — \$5.00 Subscriptions -- \$45.00 Waterways is published 11 times a year.  
Submissions will be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope.

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

©2010 Ten Penny Players Inc. \*This magazine is published 10/10.

[www.tenpennyplayers.org](http://www.tenpennyplayers.org)



*Bucolic Landscape of Rhine  
Postcard 1910*

## On the Rhine – Ida Fasel

The cluttered Rhine  
moves machinery and wine  
and people who have brought  
their senses miles to see.

They tip en masse  
to the picturesque side  
round the point  
all eyes to the top

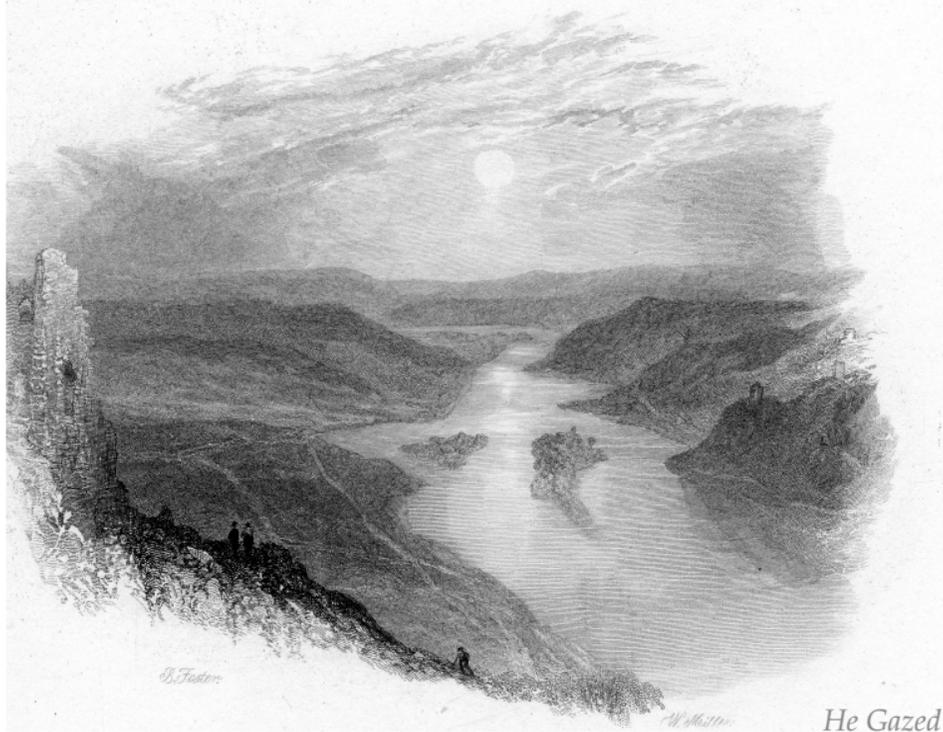
and pass (the travel brochures  
never tell you)

Lorelei bei long playing record,  
the rock wearing her light,  
the river her fine gold rings.



## Essence of a Star — Arlene Mandell

Using cooling cinders of ancient stars  
cosmologists calculate our universal age:  
thirteen billion years. Time clicks by  
one digital second, the next, the next  
as we chat, shop, text, watch war  
famine, oil spewing, whales dying  
so easy to become mired in the muck  
of despair. Instead let's steal some  
moments to inhale  
exhale  
celestial  
essence. . . .

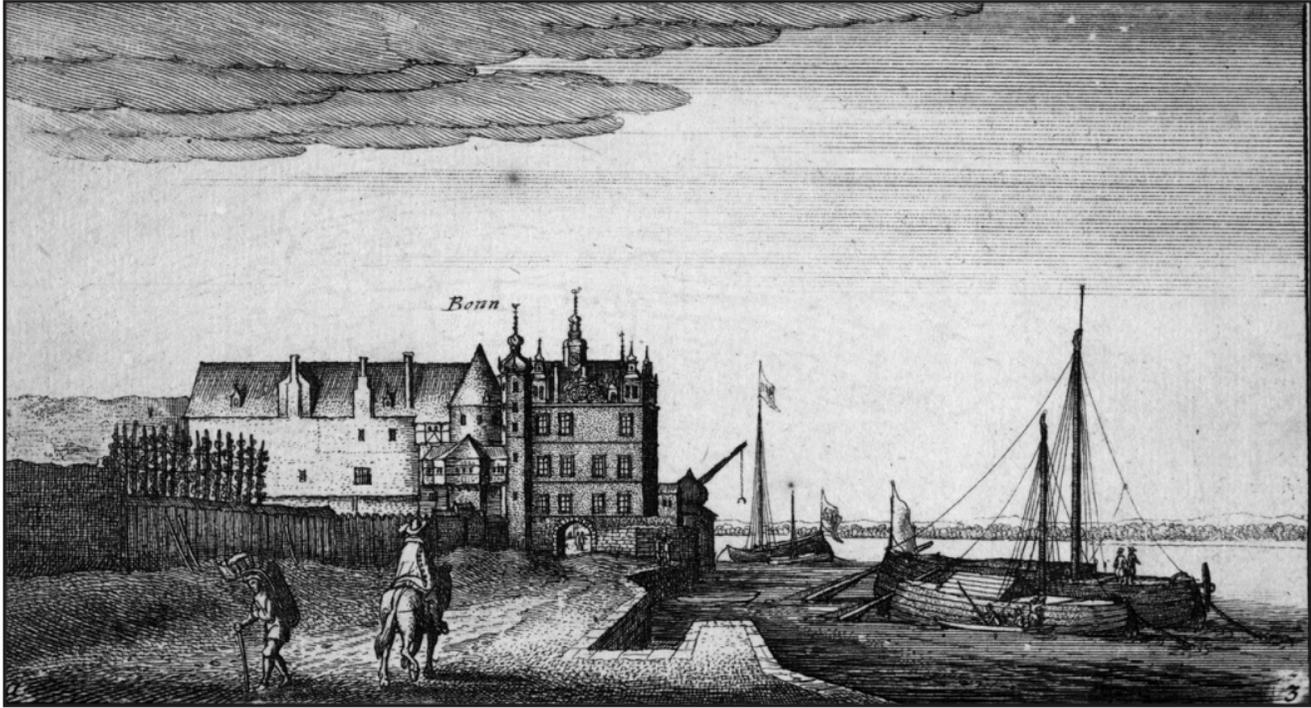


*He Gazed on the Rhine (1872)*  
*William Miller*

## Clementines – Robert L. Brimm

For one whole sweet  
week we had them, those  
clementines you bought,  
juicy little tangerines  
from Spain, the grocer  
said, and we supposed  
they truly were, for why  
should he lie about such

a thing? But now you're  
gone, the clementines  
a fading aftertaste,  
the small empty box  
sitting like a cat  
beside the back door,  
awaiting your return.



## Goat's Foot Morning-Glories – Ruth Moon Kempher

rope along the dune line down  
to water's edge, occasional  
wadded fuchsia blooms  
grown seaward, for the sun.  
but consider the sea's confusion –  
blessed, great with whales and fishes  
and the lobster's nest –  
then to be trundled over sand  
to crumple moon-beset, to drown,  
the club foot, brine browned.  
survivors-wrangle-rooted  
Glories of the land.



11

*Rhine 1840*  
*anonymous*

## **How We Visited the Winery – Ruth Moon Kempher**

on Bully Hill, at the top, above miles of vineyards – where my Grandad and Gramma used to pick the grapes for Taylor Wine – and Gramma wouldn't touch a drop – she's a Northern Baptist – but I think her blood's pure wine.

She wouldn't like my writing that to you, but I do. White wine, pure and vibrant. To make it red, they heat the grapes 'til the skins' pigment bleeds. She picked them – green, white and blue: so much an hour, more if you were a fast picker. “And I was fast with my hands, if I do say so.”

The crooked vines are tied to wires on posts, old railroad ties. The leaves, in twilight, show white undersides like moth cocoons there, blooming. She told me how she'd pick to the top of a line, and stand in the chill air, to watch the barges below, hauling the crated bottles on the lake dreaming rivers where they'd go. "Many's the time—" on Bully Hill, near Elmbois, grape juice sticky to her elbows. "It wasn't always easy," close to an admission as she'll come. "But that water was so blue. And the air was fine."

*Boats on the Rhine (1835)*  
*anonymous*



## Things Play – Frank Murphy

Pocket books scurry away, eye glasses  
hide beneath books. Things play.

Keys sneak behind coffee cups;

A cell phone  
creeps under a blanket.

Innocent pencils

share guilty secrets with a  
missing telephone number.

Mayonnaise jars

peep around complicitous milk bottles.

Things play.

Names jump down from the brain,  
duck under the nose, tiptoe into  
the mouth, and sit on the tip of tongues.

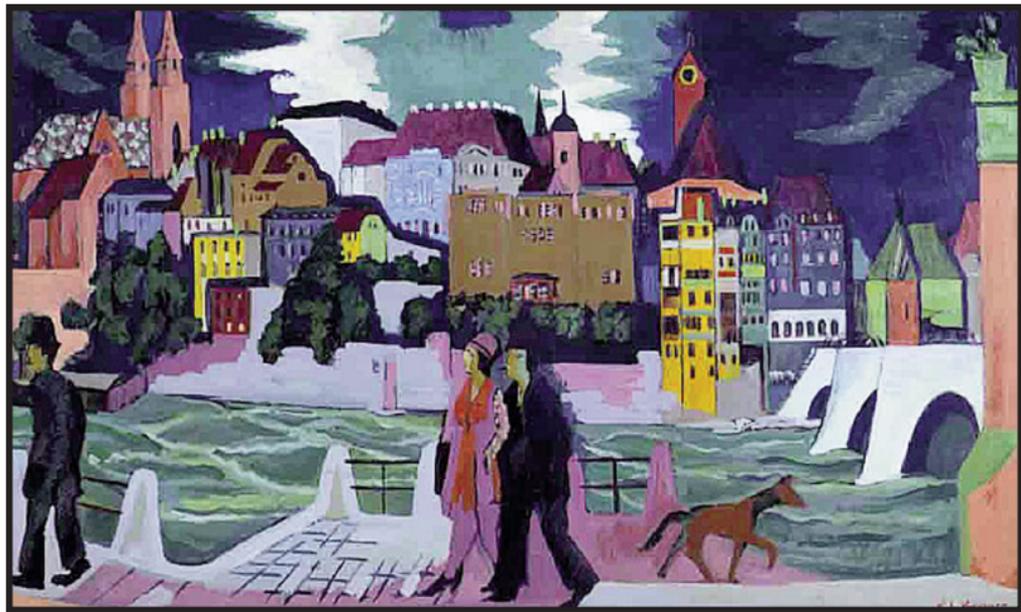
The present scampers into  
the clock. Things play.

The past darts into the ages. Things  
play. Everything that will be  
hides in tomorrow.

Things  
play.

And you, and me, and all our hidden lives  
stand on the dark streets of our most precious  
hopes, crying

“Come out, come out.”

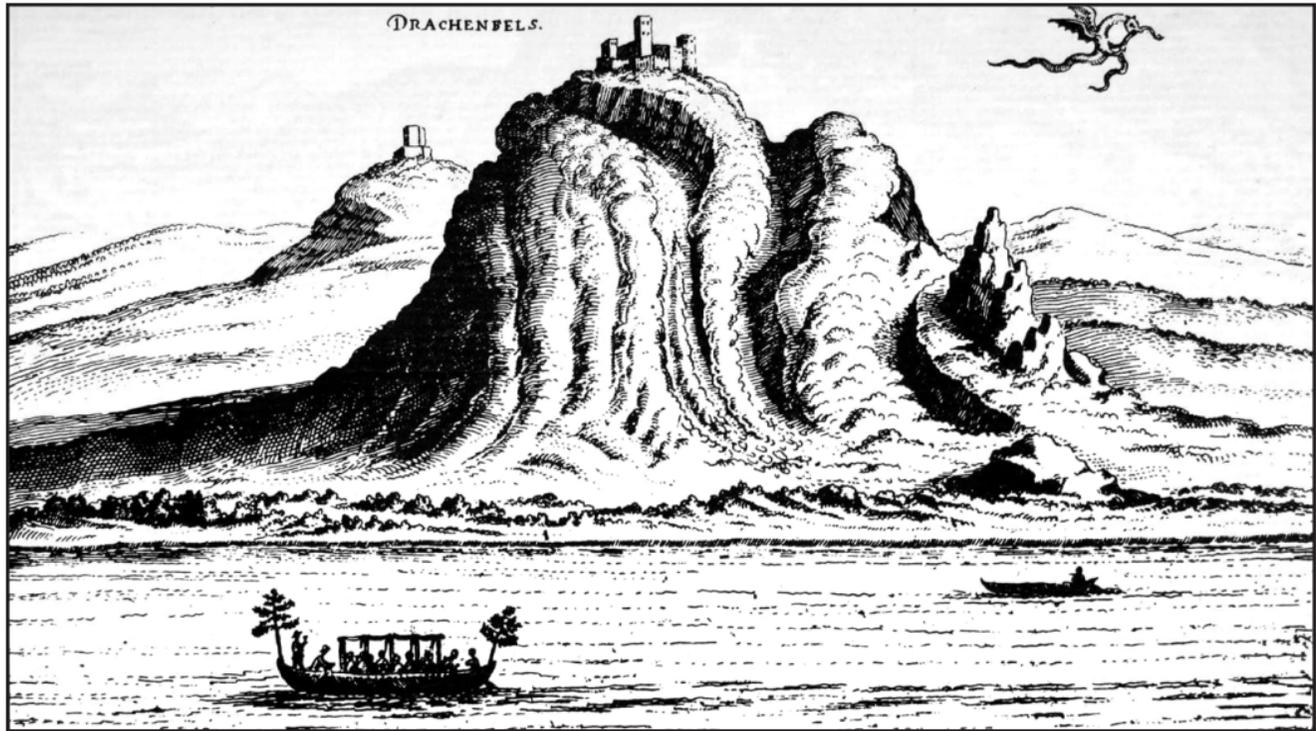


## Banished to Bogeyland – R. Yurman

“This is more than my night  
can hold. I dream of waterfalls,  
earthquakes, enormous engines.  
You rattle the windows, shake  
the walls. It’s a wonder,” she  
says, “you don’t wake yourself.”

The room fills with silence.  
He studies the bright flashes  
on the insides of his eyelids.

“I could live with whistles,  
snorts and groans, but not  
this tornado. I’d rather  
sleep in a freight yard,”  
she says. “You have to go.”



DRACHENFELS.

**vessels of verve – Jennifer Jayne Scobie**

those tiny striped  
zebra mussels  
that hitchhiked their way in  
from origins far far away  
clinging to the hulls  
of busy ships  
turned the Detroit River  
from murky to blue

and now  
the sounds of cargo ships  
greeting each other  
with fog horns  
bellowing deeply in threes

seem cleaner  
more beautiful

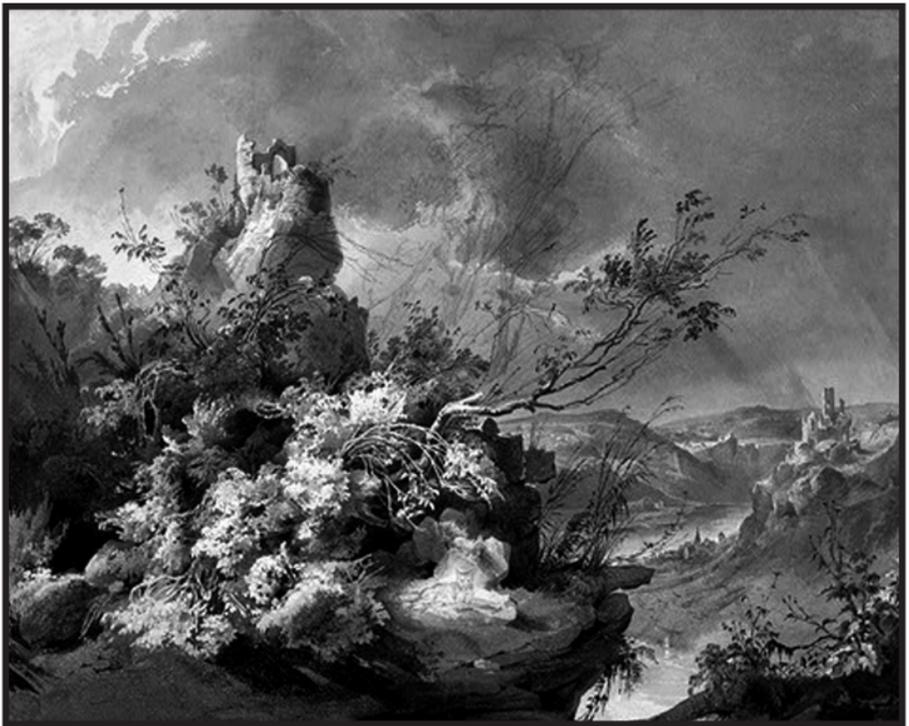
filled with hopes  
textiles and steel  
wine and machines  
vessels of verve  
find their way by  
and on  
to destinations  
that want  
and wait



## How the Red River Got Its Name – Jari Thymian

Dank basement, axes, missing limbs.  
The floor creaks above, slow ka-thunks,  
something dragged. Sleeping bags,  
dim flashlights, a flood of blood in Crookston.  
Something burble-burbles in the rusty  
plumbing pipes. Young cousins wait  
for the story lines: Give me back my liver!  
Give me back my liver! The river –  
much, much too close to Grandma's house –  
waits for its name.

(Previously published in The Bijou Poetry Review, 12/05/2009)



23

*Ruined Tower Overlooking the Rhine (1835)*  
*Karl Bodmer*

## Jari Thymian

A  
N  
C  
H  
O  
R

Anchor of all anchors. Highways 7, 12, and 75 intersect at Paul Bunyan's anchor made of the rare granite, tainted pink, left at the bottom of an ancient lake. After the last glacier, Paul, on Saturday nights, washed out his red wool socks in Lake Agassiz. The small town sails on rolling hills, a valley's 33-mile-long lake called Big Stone.



*Ruin Walls on the Rhine (1820)*  
*anonymous*



## Night Train – Rex Sexton

*Light so bright. light everywhere ...*

I am alone on the train.

The empty car, ablaze with light,  
seems as ephemeral as mist,  
as it streaks across the night.

I sit in the back,  
in a cold sweat,  
light headed, panic stricken,  
wondering whether

I am awake or asleep.

The thickets and rivers, the ravines fly wildly by,  
like waving arms menacing my night trip to tomorrow.

The ghost white winter landscapes – white hills,  
white valleys, white fields and woods – are as much  
as unreality as my blazing dream of radiance.

I cannot move. I am afraid.

*“Ten hut!” The sergeant smiles at me.*

*“But I wake up serge and the night is still there.”*

*“Lost in the moon’s glow,” the sergeant sings,*

*“we chase the dream shadows”*

*The Lord is my Shepard*

The train’s wheels seem to whisper darkly.

*I shall not want*

*I shall not want*

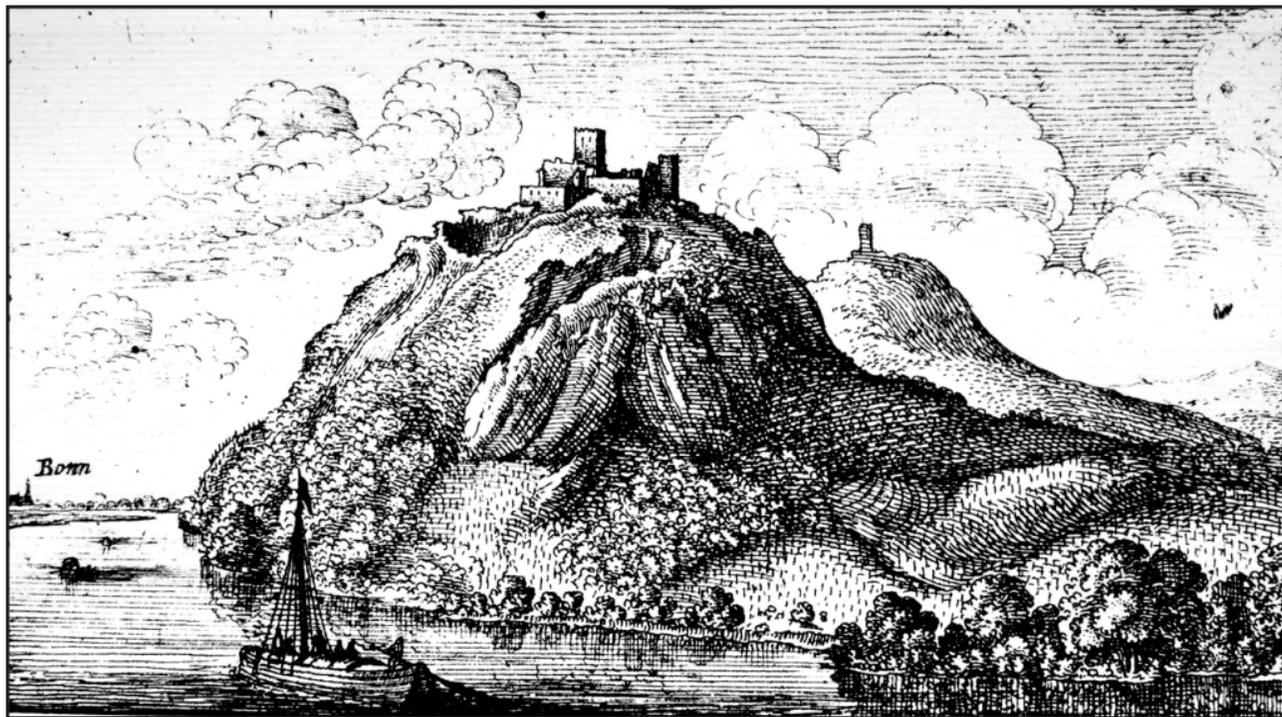
*though I walk through the valley*

*of the shadow of death ...*

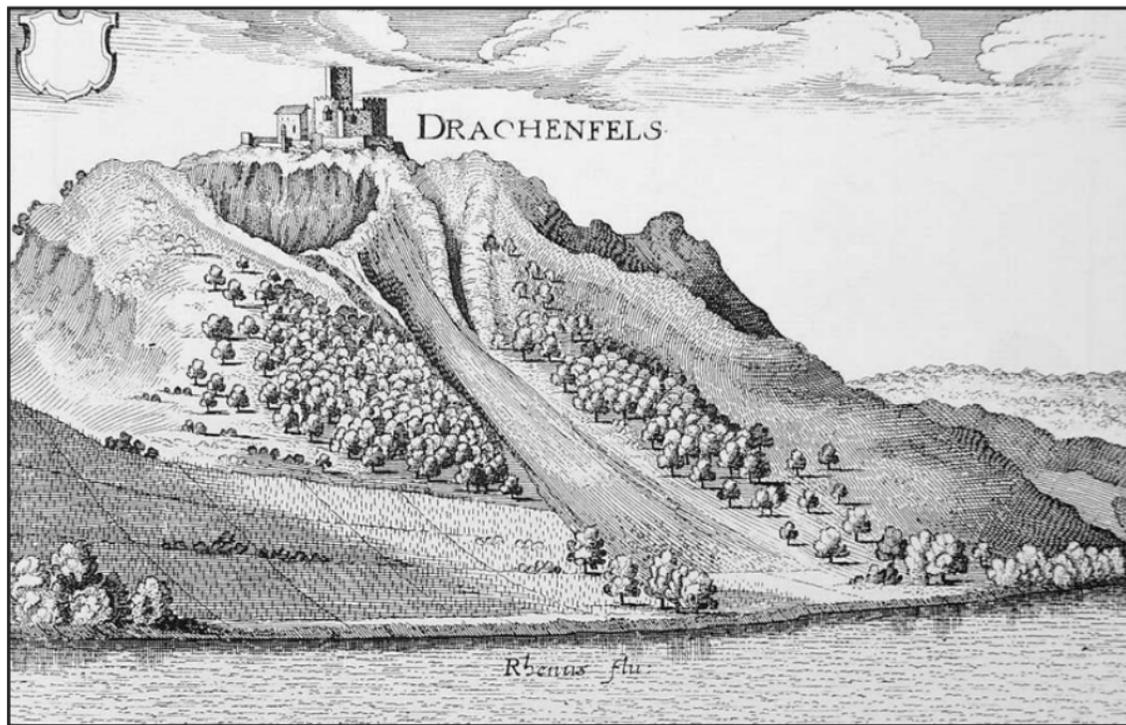
I sit up with a jolt, covered with sweat,  
heart pounding, pulse racing, eyes blurry.  
Masked figures surround me.  
I sit naked on a narrow cot.  
IV needles puncture my wrists.  
“Lie down.”  
One of them puts a hand on my chest.  
“Don’t move.”  
The others reach forward and grab me.  
I remember the incoming ordnance, the explosions,  
traveling through a tunnel, a golden radiance enveloping me.  
I remember my shapeless arms reaching out for God,  
my fingers slipping through air.

*The Rhine Osterprey and Feltzen engraving (1852)  
William Miller after J M W Turner*





*Drachenfels  
Matthäus Merian (1593-1650)*



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 -- \$45 for 11 issues.

Sample issues — \$5.00 (includes postage).

[www.tenpennyplayers.org](http://www.tenpennyplayers.org)