

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME
31



Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 31, #8

Over snow and ice, storms, ledges, choked brooks, high winds
harmony holds its note till we hear,
yellow butterflies twang the strings of light.

Ida Fasel

HILL HOUSE

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WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 31

Number 8

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Strait – James Penha

We are mounds of sand
or rocks of ice
but squeeze the years between
the backs of our heads into
fluttering waves of wings and waves
carrying us like hemispheres from night
to day to night
and yours is the hand
of God who knows nothing
of time.

February Eastward – Carol Hamilton

The familiar drive with all
sculpted down to less-than-gold
...the short grasses, the swirls
of dried love grass,
the old seed tassels
and the trees left crippled
branches held up broken
black pointy stumps shaken
at the sky with crazy angles to shout
See! See what ice has done!

And the sky just blue with nothing
to soften the edges.
Hills and distances lap
all over themselves.
We hold our breath
knowing one day something
almost forgotten will happen ...
and this road will, I think,
Still be here . . .

Of Blizzards – Ruth Moon Kempher

As a general notion, blizzards
seldom threaten Florida, my
home, except as afterthoughts:
the tag ends of something a
lot awful up there above us –
storms I remember from past
lives I lived in, winters I wish
forgotten, drifts and those
trees overburdened with snow –

myself young, grasping for
someone to hold onto forever —
or as occasions of magic, as if
butterflies lit in the azalea's
ice-crusted, clever twigs now.

Black is the Colour of Luck – David Chorlton

A black cat's luck rubs off
when it sidles up
and leaves a scent on your leg.
Now it's yours,

you're never alone
and when the lights go out
there's a sound like warmth
from underneath the fur
One comes out of the bushes

after watching you for weeks,
another moves in
from nobody knows where,
and another one still is all nerves

with eyes and a hunger.
This one moves so fast

you wonder whether it's real.
When you set out the food
it won't come
until it's invisible.
Try offering a name;

Perhaps it'll stay.
Place it by the door mat,
one letter at a time

and wait. When luck
moves in you've got a shadow
for cloudy days.

Wide Wooden Floorboards – Frank Murphy

Old wood century wood
The light, the strong light
The soft light
 Sunlight and
 days of rain
have gathered with shadows
 days
 no one living
 remembers

and painted these floors
day after day
up until this moment
and what I
remember of a day in 1948
is bundled up with the grain
of this old wood
held together
by nothing at all
or by everything else.

Making Amends – Scott Owens

Autumn mornings
you'll want to go into the yard

and put things
right again. Wearing the old

shoes against the
dew, taking advantage

of the sun's
lethargy, you'll clip the stray sprig

of holly, pare back
pyracantha, rake leaves

into piles. You'll brush off cobwebs from corners

of the house,
clorox mildew beneath the gutters,

finally get the
lawn edged the way you like it.

There won't be time
for everything.

Old lilies might
not get thinned,

the garage cleaned.
Dead wood

will remain in the soffit,
but each

redress will leave
you that much closer

to comfort and
winter's closing in.

How to Tell – Robert L. Brimm

There's something about the way
these words cling to each other,
how they gaze back upon the world,

how they give themselves to gravity,
descending like an icicle intent
on capturing gem light of morning.

Oh, how they will ping! with music
at the touch of my exploring finger,
how they'll sing to me late at night

or when I walk along the shore,
haunting me until I take them in,
share them with others, who may

exclaim, or may simply sit, savoring
the sound. Then I'll know, really,
really know, that I've made a poem.

The Long Affair – William Corner Clarke

You leave a trace
Of your beauty behind
Like a red silk scarf
On the back of a café chair

Caught between
Chance and twilight
Abject on an empty street
I cannot bear
Forgetting you

I am, myself, the moment
Torn and wasted
You are a shadow
Cast by smoke
From a rare perfume

I follow your absence
All over the world
Until we meet again
Old and naked
White as moonlight
On our graves

Elegy – William Corner-Clarke

Sensing your presence
Waiting somewhere beyond
The schoolyard trees
As the late afternoon
Infant class piano
Struck up 'All Things Bright
And Beautiful'
The last song before the rush of hometime
Through the corridors and cloakrooms
To the open sky

Ice-cream cornets, country lanes
And cricket meadows
Beyond All Hallows church
Red Admirals and high hedgerows
All vivid still
As the colors of old
Railway station posters
Mother and son
We walked for hours after school
Or so it seemed
For moments then were large
And took their time to ripen
In the summer sun

In those days you had no face
Nor form, just heat and sounds
Of love, for you were everything
Including me
Unreal as dreams and thoughts
And real as nothing else
Can ever be

Lying here now at 3 a.m.
Drawn tight by death
You're real enough
Real and as distant

As the small blue case of clothes
Standing unopened
In the corner of the hospital room
No doubt now about the contours
Of your face
So small yet massive
In its petrified repose
Only the mortal weight remaining
Of a life distilled
Into the essence
Of my own

My Latest Hobby – Donald Lev

My latest hobby is collecting videos
Of old films: VCR's; no DVDs.
Ghosts appear prominently in my latest acquisitions;
Ingmar Bergman's next to last film, "Fanny and Alexander
for one, Nicole Kidman's stunning performance in
"The Others" for another. Is this
a sign from the world of ghosts
that I may soon see one, or be one?
In Chile, at this very moment,
they are bringing up the buried miners,
from what could have been their grave.
So many grateful Lazarus's.

In the spring current – Mary Erickson

lucent fish swim out
the railroad's cool stone
culvert, a channeled flow
widening into a swashing rill.
You cup a minnow
and stroke its fulgent form.
Its instinct is to twitch and jerk
back to its watery sentence.
Its belly anchors to gravel
as its slippery form swims
into a mind's net

with other minnows
caught by sticky cells.
They're not minnows swallowed
in the frenzy of a fad,
not that kind of brain food.

Future springs, larger fish appear,
snagged by new thought
baited with meaty experiences
from a life's jump
into its downstream rush:
many spring floods,
many ugly bottom crawlers,

many minnows pooled
you've had to leave
no matter how beautiful,
you with a mindset invigorated
each spring—
only your body a bit tattered
from being wistfully wild
in a world of fish eyes,
a mind sparking images
nurturing you
toward no regrets.

The Journey is the Reward – Arlene Mandell

(Chinese proverb)

In darkness I slip
into a cool, damp
passageway

dim blue light seeps
through tiny fissures

trickling music
like a stream
moves over
smooth pebbles

my breath is slow
as the scene dissolves
in diffused sunlight

a dragonfly alights
on my wrist, flashes
bronze wings

the faint breeze
reminds me
a still mind listens.

We Walked Into This Joint, See, And – Michael S. Morris

The very opposite of hidden away –
this horn raised itself high up in the air
glinting in the night's silent light,
and like a cat suddenly pounced on a note
one high peal that ran up to the top
of the scale and then jumped off
into space, hanging a sound out there
sometimes found in bottle's bottoms

sometimes in arched cathedrals of church
of spirituality, of anguish, of grace
There was no hand holding the horn
as there is no hand holding the wind
yet the music played on waiting for no one

The Girl with Botticelli Hair – Robert Cooperman

You were the girl with Botticelli hair;
that's how, in small part, I remember you,
when we were young and life was always fair.

And as the song goes, we hadn't a care,
and, as it turned out, damn it, not a clue,
except you had fair Botticelli hair,

And oh, a wit so quick and sharp and rare,
and a keen eye and a soft hand that knew
that life isn't always so young and fair.

So you went about your time with the flair
of a dancer in her light-as-air shoes:
befitting a girl with Botticelli hair:

strands of gleaming gold praised by a Shakespeare.
Though his lady-love could be less than true,
To your friends, you were always more than fair.

But though illness and the too weary years pared
away the joy we all took as your due,
you were the girl with Botticelli hair,
when life was young and wild and always fair.

KARMA – Arthur Winfield Knight

We saw our first
greyhounds
at a pet fair
in Santa Rosa.
Kit and I knew,
instantly,
we were
going to adopt one
someday.

Five years later,
we got Nikkie,
who was five
and had run
at a track in Mexico.
Only one dog in 20
raced until five.
Most burnt out
by the time
they were three,

retired or killed.
I'm not a mystic,
but it was
as if she'd run
for her life,
sensing
we'd be there
at the finish.
Karma.

A Greyhound & Two Funerals - Arthur Winfield Knight

There she was for me,
ten years old, the first time.
My wife flew back
to Pennsylvania
when my father-in-law died.
I stayed in Nevada
with Nikkie. Someone
had to care for the dog
and no one liked me
back east. When Kit
came home a week later,
Nikkie was so glad to see her

she threw up. Kit said,
“No one ever did that for me.”
Two and a half years later,
my mother-in-law died
and Kit flew back
for the last time.
Nikkie and I stayed home,
again. I took her for walks,
fed her, talked to her.
When Kit returned,
she met Nikkie in the yard,
playing safe, home for good.
Nikkie seemed to know.

March 20, 2009 – George Held

It's snowing the first day of spring –
No big anomaly: six inches flushed
Me from the garden one April 10th.
Fat flakes drop straight down, trees hushed,
The mercury at 36 degrees.
Small flakes soon slant in a breeze –
The lion growling in a last fling,
Before the lamb gentles the spring.

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