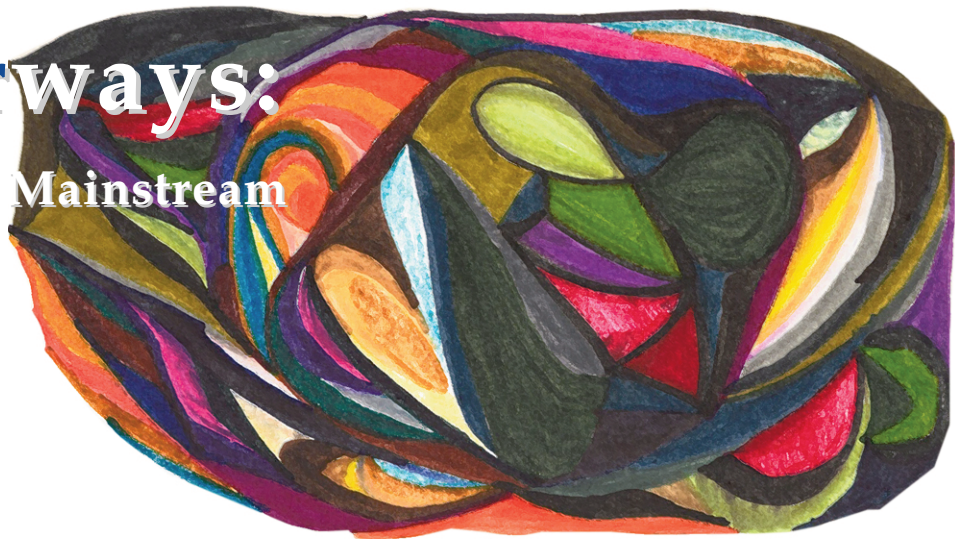


# Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME  
32

#6



# Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 32, #6

**They had heard how harmony feels  
in the skin,**

**James Penha**

PERFECT PITCH

Waterways, Volume 17, Number 7

# **WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream**

Volume 32

Number 6

Designed, Edited and Published by Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

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

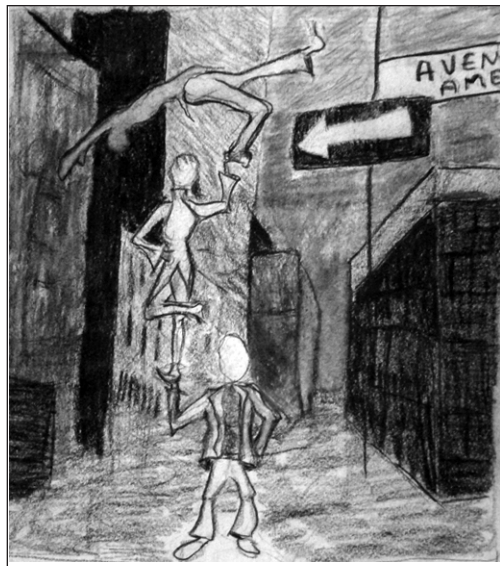
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## Embrace of Dust

the wise shoes never jump at criticism  
they accept closet darkness  
the silence of non-use

the gentle shoes whisper thanks  
to slippers  
they nuzzle shoe horns  
they caress socks

the brave shoes wait polished  
behind the closed door

the lonely shoes  
take forgetfulness kindly  
they are ready to be useful  
they are ready to go

*by Kelley Jean White*

## Sadie My Hound

my friend, hears a music  
our Husky friend, Mr. Frost, ignores –  
or, as so often when with me –  
doesn't listen. But Sadie  
startled  
wheels through the halls, ears  
cocked, neck hair abristle; it's  
a fandango I'm not tuned to, some  
phantom's keeping, or a whistle –  
she's smitten by it, as  
Mr. Frost, oblivious, steals her dinner

*by Ruth Moon Kempher*

## Granted

*Harmony: the blending of simultaneous sounds of different pitch or quality*

I tell my wife I love her.  
She waves it away with a flip  
of her hand. It's not  
that she doesn't believe me.  
Even unshowered, dressed  
in baggy sweatpants, a cotton t-shirt,  
she knows I'd drop anything  
for even a moment with her.  
It's just that she can't find time  
for the consequences of love  
with her mother still sick,  
the baby crying, the boy  
needing money for school.



I catch her hand mid-flip,  
hold it to my face,  
kiss the palm. She pulls  
it away. I see in her eyes  
the same resistance to loss  
I saw before we were married.  
What? she says.  
Nothing, I tell her.  
Just that. Exactly that.

*by Scott Owens*

## **A Threnody for the Written Works of Emily, Charlotte and Anne Bronte**

Their spoken, written words  
condensed, repeated, cycled  
until substance of words disappear.  
Until only a sound like an atonal musical  
note remains.

*by Alan Catlin*

## Sirens

*“Don’t you know what I can do  
to make you feel all right?”*

The girl’s voice challenges me  
from the car radio.

My daughter has assured me  
this was the song of the summer  
two or three years ago.  
Zoe was still in high school then,  
So I take her word for it.

But it sounds like a voice  
I've heard in my dreams  
for as long as I can remember,  
a lure from my imagination,  
and though it's beckoned me  
most of my life  
it feels like it comes to me  
from somewhere in the future,  
not from the past.

*by Charles Rammelkamp*

## Crazy Horse

Three old men  
sit at a corner table on  
the other side of the room.  
They each wear short-  
sleeve shirts in  
the wintertime. (One also  
wears a baseball cap,  
though it's not clear from here  
which team it's for.)  
A slight haze  
rises from their table.  
It is their breath condensing  
in the refrigerated air.

Just the tops of their words  
drift across the room.  
Taken together, they don't  
weigh much, but  
the sound they make  
that only a dog could hear  
would be like music  
to a beagle puppy's ear.  
Geometry and phantoms. And a  
crazy horse or two,  
or coyote story.

*by Wayne Hogan*

## Hash Browns and Champagne

We have hash browns  
from McDonald's  
and champagne from Spain  
for breakfast.

We're drinking  
our champagne  
out of lead crystal glasses,  
so they have a nice ring  
when we toast each other.  
Kit and I are celebrating  
our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary today.

I'm her second husband  
and she's my fourth wife,  
so people were  
betting against us,  
but we fooled them all.  
We were living in the east  
at the time, but moved  
to California,  
where I'd grown up,  
twenty years later.  
Finally, we settled in Nevada  
with our old dog,  
a retired, racing greyhound.



We're getting old, too,  
but we like to tell people  
we're falling apart  
with as much style as possible.  
We forge on.

*by Arthur Winfield Knight*

## **In the Night**

still June evening  
driving home, windows open  
in the corner street light ahead  
I see two small raccoons  
timidly sneaking out  
of a storm drain  
I pull up and stop  
  
they back inside silently  
four eyes shine up at me  
from behind thieves' masks  
each pair of dark paws  
clasped together  
... I stare

between steel bars  
two heads bow low  
eyes cast down  
like they are  
ashamed

*by Charles McAnulla*

## **Asunder**

after sixteen years

the problem

with us was

we were

on the same page

but not

in the same book

oh, well...

couldn't be helped

best regards

always

*by Charles McAnulla*

## Delivery

It was a four-four ballad  
that closed the generation gap,  
something with rain in the lyrics  
and a set of chromatic changes  
that could practically make you cry,  
three guys pushing 60 and a gal  
in her 20's half-singing, half speaking  
words they'd all heard a hundred  
times before, but never like that.

*by Gil Honigfeld*

## The Last Dance

Alzheimer's  
has made  
her  
forget  
to brush  
her teeth  
take a bath  
what words  
to say  
and food  
to eat

too shaky to stand alone  
or sit in a chair  
she still  
loves  
to cuddle  
in her husband's arms  
and waltz

*by Sheryl L. Nelms*

**somewhere after dark**

crossed a bridge with your name,  
your first and middle names,  
in Maryland or West Virginia

somewhere after the Big Savage mountain  
crested in daylight,  
perhaps long after

so now one has to wonder,  
didn't you cross this bridge  
yourself, long ago, with me,  
but in darkness too deep  
for you to see it?

*by Sylvia Manning*



**before falling (at last) asleep:**

whatever tomorrow brought,  
there to find the poem,  
this year's Christmas poem  
we were bid by our mentor  
to write, even if we doubted  
we had it in us  
and so it was  
in the bunches of radishes  
big and shiny red, polished by  
drizzle in early morning  
in free community garden  
where Paul picked arugula,  
turnip greens and mustard

for “the women,” as he said,  
at Our Lady of Guadalupe,  
to clean again and package  
for whoever knew still  
how to use their goodness  
or so he said before saying as well  
“I’m sorry, but I’ve been there,  
and there aren’t any men helping.  
So that’s why I say it that way.  
It just so happens ...”  
that Viola from another kind of parish  
comes for greens for herself  
and for friends who remember  
how to use them

and that these red radishes bunched  
to be placed on open pickup tailgate  
for Paul to wash at his place  
before taking to Our Lady ...  
are as red as any boughten balls  
on any real or artificial tree,  
are as red as the roses springing from brown thorny brush  
in Juan Diego's winter landscape  
and sweet, these bouquets  
bearing colors of the Mexican flag,  
from this free garden in Seguin  
(whose young pecan trees died in drought)  
and sweet beyond conceit or metaphor,  
for Our Lady.

*by Sylvia Manning*

**December 12, 2011**

*(as noted for Our Lady of Guadalupe)*

black cat crosses

backyard winter rye

(crayon kelly green

covering after long

awaited latest autumn

rain

the obscenely sad losses

of other grasses

beneath pecan trees

alive but just

and this year

giving us

no fruit)

*by Sylvia Manning*

**December 12, 2011**

Black cat nearly fat now, for how regularly Len fed her, crosses  
the backyard winter rye, high from finally having rain, late November.

The St. Augustine may not come back again.

But it's a thirsty grass unsuitable for these dry times.

Pecan trees arch above the green below the cat's smooth black.

They drop no nuts for squirrels or us for holiday gatherings,  
fruitcakes, baked as much to warm a space as to fix a place in time.

No shells to crack while we sit to share task and words beneath them.

It is enough that they're still here. Who knows how?

*by Sylvia Manning*

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