

Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

32

#7



Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 32, #7

**Tiny trunks are curious twigs to the gray timbers
portaging great bellies back
silently into the bush
with the breeze.**

James Penha

MAMMOTH PRODUCTIONS

Waterways, Volume 15, Number 3

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 32

Number 7

Designed, Edited and Published by Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

c o n t e n t s

Sylvia Manning	3	Gilbert Honigfeld	20
Kelley Jean White	9	Maria Marsello	21
Hugo DeSarro	12	George Held	23
Scott Owens	13	Arlene Mandell	24
Mary Belardi Erickson	15	Wayne Hogan	27
Thomas Reynolds	17	<i>cover picture by Barbara and Richard</i>	
		<i>frontispiece by Sylvia Manning</i>	

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

Ten Penny Players Inc. This magazine is published January, 2012

www.tenpennyplayers.org

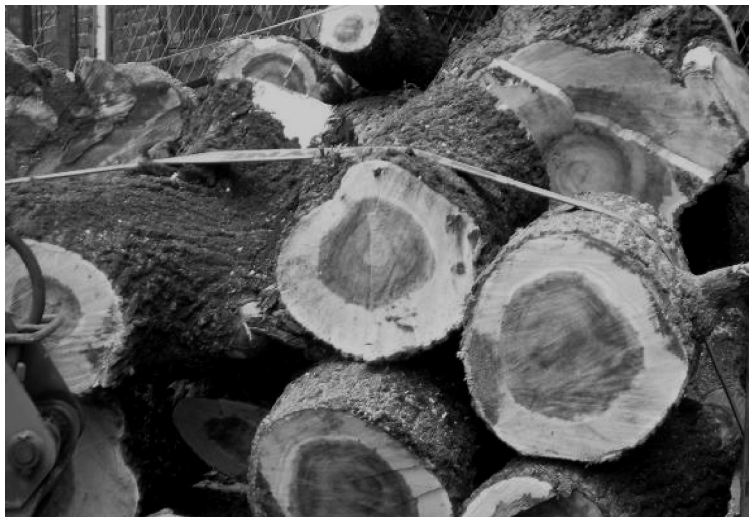


photo by Sylvia Manning

Alley Tree

behind house with paid parking gone, cut to an inconvenient three inches above asphalt to halt parkers.

“What kind of tree is it?” I asked in insecure French. The worker had a mind for understanding and told me it was a maple, but not the sugar maple. That’s what he told me, though I can’t tell you with what words except *érable*.

I’m glad it was someone like this who finally hauled the pieces of trunk away.

“Can it be used for something?” I asked again weakly in French and again he nevertheless answered.

“It could be,” he said. Then he talked of how it

could be used for firewood. But something told me he knew it wouldn’t be, and I thought I caught a note of sadness for that.

Then his truck to pull the trailer full of pieces of the trunk wouldn’t start, so there was time to take pictures, especially of the rings (this was an old tree) and of the moss (that faced north).

It was left neat, the parking lot behind the little house that lost its view when they built the huge hotel across the street, the little house that had only this tree left it from earlier days.

Finally the truck would start, and it was gone.

Sylvia Manning

(April 6, 2009, Quebec City, on a slip from the Bibliothèque Gabrielle Roy from checking out BONHEUR D’OCCASION, by Gabrielle Roy herself.)

Mieux Vaut Tard Que Jamais

(from *Des Recettes de Quittance*)

to learn a language
better late than never

to even try
get a little better
pick up a phrase or word
better late than never

to learn to love life a little
your own little life
better late than never

to accept yourself as you are
or be the self you can accept
better late than never

to better yourself by learning
anything about Beauty –
where it hides,
why it shies away –
better late than never

and you can go with this
forever and forever this
better late than never

Sylvia Manning

*21-02-09 on receipt of 20-02-09 from Jean Coutu
for pros 135mm rouleau+CD (prints and CD
for disposable camera pictures), \$14.47*

Tree trying to sing blues

(from Des Recettes de Quittance)

One of two trees at edge of alley
talks or tries to sing, tonight.
A limb rubs another. A new cold
lets the sound seem musical,
even animal, like someone crying
or someone trying to make a song
in a high register.

The rest of the tree
and the one next
and me below,
we listen.

Sylvia Manning

18-02-09 on receipt from Bizou/L'Accessoirie Place Ste-Foy, a pair of mittens for \$1.99

Weeping Willow

(from *Des Recettes de Quittance*)

This team
come from
North Carolina
to create
the tree they love
down there, but
here from a huge
block of snow,
working all night,
laughing.

Saule Pleureur

Cette équipe
qui est venue
de Nord-
Carolina
pour créer
l'arbre
qu'ils aiment
là-bas, mais
ici d'une grande
bloque de neige,
en travaillant
pour la nuit,
rient.

May they laugh
always,
long after
their tree
made from snow
doesn't exist.

Qu'ils rient
toujours,
longue après
la sculpture
de la neige
n'existe pas.

Sylvia Manning

February 7, '09 on front and back of receipt from *Épicerie Moisan* for laitue frisée (green curly lettuce), an old receipt from I know not where dated August 27, 2008. This green grocery calls itself the oldest in North America. The sculpture is one of those in the Winter Carnival International competition.

After the burning the forest returns

for Dr. Al Shigo, May 8, 1930-October 6, 2006

"Trees as a group are intelligent. Intelligence means the ability to connect information in ways that assure survival."

past seared hemlock, split beach, scarred maple,
I am waiting by the damp places for the thick amazement
of berries, brave through the squalling mosquito clouds,
the tearing tartness of red, raspberry, thick confusion, of black,
berry, hard ticking of grasshopper and bee as the sun climbs
noon through new green aspen saplings, moose
maple, stinkwood, black birch cotyledons, choke
cherry, ash, — pushing two-leaved through low growth—
creepers, princess pine, ground pine, mosses, whip fork

and broom, powder gun, hairy cap, succulent snow-
berry, wintergreen, fierce climbing snapdragon,
thrust through fecund droppings, bear, moose, deer
sign, rabbit scat, new green touch-me-not, honeysuckle,
wild grape, strangling bittersweet, and your own, your fungi,
destroying angel, puff ball, witch's butter, morel,
staghorn, in scrub brush, sumac, elderberry, in liminal
cattail, pussy willow, prickly wild rose; white light
on the ledges, the granite mountain, past tree line,
hot crow call on sun-burned shoulder, cracked paper
birch, wind-burned pine in the place of eagles,
pail thump of rock blueberries in lichen dry desert
(lush moss-worlds after rain,) checkerberries, trillium, Indian
pipe, lady'slipper, one shaft of sunlight, and dark

owl-pellet damp, cool waterfall thrush; trees may not heal,
but the forest does, seeks fingerling strawberries
in low burning grass, sand tunneling bee hiss, skitter
ant, quick knee prickle through juniper sharp branches –
read the runes, beetle-track beneath bark, dragonflies
in coupled flight, ballooning spiders, sugar maples scarred
by drunk sapsuckers, and ashes, noon hot bird sky, you, rising
ash, smoke, pollen, snake in hawkgrasp, seed, falling – my
startled hand seizing all, red tipped and eager, pushing
into the heart of brambles, transfixed by thorns –
almost worth the fire, the blackened stumps

Kelley Jean White

Pear Tree

Pear tree on your elephant leg
gathering shadows in your folds,
your brawny arms defy the wind,
your brittle leaves like talons
claw the smooth enameled sky.

Sullen, crusty pachyderm
with hard, insipid fruit
slow to ripen on the limb,
you are not an obliging tree
like the apple and the peach.

Yet, I confess that we are more
alike than meets the eye. My somber
mood and stubbornness match yours
at times, and then we two, although
not kin, are kindred for a while.

Hugo DeSarro

New Season

Today I planted trees
full of new beginnings,
fast-growing birches,
flowering dogwoods.
I dug them up from where
they grew against the house,
where they could never
grow further, roots
bound up with walls,
limbs hemmed in
with hedges. I dug carefully,
using my hands more
than the shovel, scratching
soil away with fingers,

lifting roots like petals
cradled in my palm.
I thought of you, transplanted,
returned to your mother,
free of the dark walls,
constant pruning of husbands.
I wondered if your roots
were still intact, if your limbs
would still turn to the sun,
welcome the wind's soft caress.
I know you've always wanted
to know love differently,
to love with the hands open.

Scott Owens

Winter's Fuel

Hauled home in the pickup
ash logs loudly crack as they rip apart,
the wood splitter having a lightening
steel blade strike.

On rescued used pallets
my husband stacks pieces
for our barrel-bellied stove
warming a farmhouse's heart.

As I view a heaping woodpile,
my decades tip like windfall
when I think of Grandpa

his R Moline

spinning belt pulley
screeching buzz saw
flying wood chips

pulp thoughts
fuel for winter

ties to trees long-burning
like hardwood.

Mary Belardi Erickson

Memory as We Drive Home from the Cancer Ward

My grandfather rides atop the rusty seat
Guiding the team pulling the twin-bladed mower.
The noise is a steady swish-swish of the blades
Punctuated by hoove beats. Occasionally the horses
Snap their necks, turning heads to reveal
For a moment ferocity at all they must endure
Before once again bobbing their manes along
With massive shoulders. Only flicks of their tails
Counter their submissiveness. My father is,
As he is accustomed at the age of seven,

Standing on the thin bar at the mower's base
Gripping his father with narrow, bony fingers.
One finger finds a hole in the faded flannel shirt,
Threading it through and tugging at threads.
The gaunt figure on whose back my father leans
Hunches with reins tight around both wrists,
As if startled at stuttering leaves or snapping twigs,
The team will rear and bolt for the jagged tree line.
My father glances over his shoulder to see dozens
Of baby rabbits skittering away like blowing leaves.

Now as we drive home, his own back bent and bony,
Threads of his gray flannel shirt unraveling at the ends,
I can imagine myself gripping my father's shoulders,
Standing on the narrow bar pressing with both feet,
The team attempting to shrug away his commands,
Reins wrapped tight around those wrists.

Thomas Reynolds

CA

Well, they've found the node
the core, the hot nucleus
and it's not good, soft tissue,
fast spread, prognosis guarded,
the options remarkably primitive:
cut, burn or poison — that's it
no matter how you dress it up,
call it mono or polytherapy it's
still one step up from the jungle.

Gilbert Honifeld

The Elephant's Lament

A word please,
to document
my discontent.
I'm out of style,
in lead and ivory,
constantly stumping,
probing family
bone pans,
reviving darkest
jungle pastimes,

booking it out of wallows
and drying out.

Swarms of flies
worry my ears,

ignoring
midnight moans,

I've grown callous
to slick cheetahs,

hyena rolling
in the green.

My tusks splinter,
craquelure,

crave ink and chisel
and permanent display.

Scatter my hoary carcass
My chalky, broken slate

Maria Marsello

Survival Mode

Stiff pastel leaves fall through
The horse chestnut branches
Silent or rattling,
Sliding or butterflying.

The trees hold their breath,
Undeluded they'll soon be
Denuded, that without leaves
To hold the weight of snow

And break their boughs,
They'll best survive
The winter.

George Held

Dent-de-Lions

Jagged leaves
yellow buttons
silky seed heads -

dreaded weed
or salad green?

Downy tufts drift
into my tidy garden.

Arlene L. Mandell

Lily of the Valley

On Pitkin Avenue we lived
in crowded apartments, played
on street corners.

At P.S. 159 Miss Livingston
inspected our hair with two pencils.
Emily had lice!

In spring we cut red tulips
from construction paper,
taped them to the windows.

One day our class took a trip
to Audrey's garden. Her mother
wore a pink dress and pearls.

We were careful to stay
on the brick path, didn't
trample her flowers.

We remembered to say
"Thank you, Mrs. Alexander"
when she gave us sprigs
of Lily of the Valley. I saved mine
even after the white bells dried-up.

Arlene L. Mandell

To Hear the Wind Moan

There's that but
you wouldn't think so
this being the case
though there's the other side too
'course maybe you wouldn't know
about that
but I know where it went
before it moved on
to where it was
before they stopped
to put it in the car

while it was stalled
there beside the hill
where the grass was as tall
as an elephant's ass
just at the time
you said you wanted a pickle
O you know how you are
about pickles O yes you do
don't say you don't want a pickle
just like I want to hear
the wind moan more'n
the sputtering of a coffeemaker.

Wayne Hogan

ISSN 0197-4777

Very limited printing

Ten Penny Players, Inc.

(a 501c3 not for profit corporation)

Subscriptions -- \$45 for 11 issues.

Sample issues — \$5.00 (includes postage).

www.tenpennyplayers.org