

# Waterways:

## Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME  
26



#2

## Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 26, #2

we would rather be rowdy and gaunt and free  
and dine on a diet of roach and rat  
than slaves to a tame society  
ours is the zest of the alley cat

*mehitabel's extensive past  
from ARCHY AND MEHITABEL*

# **WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream**

Volume 26

Number 2\*

Designed, Edited and Published by Richard Spiegel & Barbara Fisher

Thomas Perry, Admirable Factotum

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

Sylvia Manning	4	Patricia Wellingham-Jones	14
Joan Payne Kincaid	5-6	D. M. Ross	15-16
Julie Lechevsky	7-8	Anselm Brocki	17
Bill Roberts	9-10	Ida Fasel	18-23
M. M. Nichols	11-12	Richard Spiegel	24
R. Yurman	13		

Waterways is published 11 times a year. Subscriptions -- \$33 for 11 issues.

Sample issues — \$3.50 (includes postage).

Submissions will be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope.

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

©2005 Ten Penny Players Inc. \*(This magazine is published 9/05)

<http://www.tenpennyplayers.org>

photograph by  
Barbara Fisher



## Must one see? — Sylvia Manning

They expected two million  
to view the Pope in state,  
and another billion  
to anxiously await  
his successor.

Our black cat, whom we love,  
killed two birds in our yard  
that morning. Nobody  
gave a farthing,  
but we were the lesser.

One may have been the famed  
Secret Cardinal, though  
I wouldn't know. The shame  
of it (I learned through Joe,  
the cat's Confessor)

kept me from seeing  
their remains.

April, 2005

## Some People Take Him for a Mush — Joan Payne Kincaid

This dog will take you down  
one hundred pound rebel without a cause  
too much wolf to live with  
there are bars on the windows  
to keep him in  
when certain trucks pass by  
he will turn on whoever has the leash  
when a motorcycle roars  
you better be tied to a tree or nearest fence  
when another male canine

looks directly at him it's cause  
for escalation of fire in the eyes  
bared fangs and instinct gone berserk  
to the death  
at the moment  
he is limping from trying  
to destroy the front door  
and take the mailman to his maker  
for being on his turf otherwise  
on walks he is happy to accept  
biscuits from the man.

## Scarcity — Julie Lechevsky

On any given Monday,  
    only so much grist  
        is allowed in the world.

If you don't use your share,  
    someone else will get it.  
        Then you can't get it back.

The hand you did not take  
    is a chair at a café.  
        The whistle on the street becomes a bird.



In science this is called  
the principle of scarcity.

Dogs,

Who do not have a whole lot  
to do each day,  
get many scraps.

Children tagging at your heels  
wear the rags of your lost fortune.

## How It All Got Started — Bill Roberts

I imagine my father said to my mother something like, "Would you care to do it? Go upstairs and start a family?"

No, it couldn't have been that way. There was no upstairs to their two-room apartment in pre-war D.C.

Probably more on the order of "Hey, good looking. Let's make a baby!" Naw, my father didn't talk like that.

He was kind of shy, probably  
came at Mom from an angle. "After  
dinner, I thought we might, you know..."

Nope, it didn't happen like that either.  
Probably after cooking dinner and  
washing dishes, my mother confronted

him and stated, quite to the point, "Say,  
handsome, I'm in the mood. How's  
about putting down that stupid book!"

First published in the fall 2001 issue of  
'Concrete Wolf' Vol 1, No. 3

## **An Early March Memory — M. M. Nichols**

*from a 12-month sequence, "Going on Nine"*

Is there any neighborhood  
but this? We want the way out of it  
to be secret and arduous.

Tomboys, legged gang of four,  
we explore territory we're  
guessing is forbidden as we shin posts

and wobble the wood planks behind garages,  
squeeze past fencing barbed or beset with  
cantankerous vines or torn open

—invisible, we suppose,  
to all but cats & birds those fellow fugitives  
from eyes of the dozen houses.

Spring and we  
together inch toward a new world  
sudden with chirps of arrival

or muttered irk, or loud  
poor mew, having climbed  
higher than we can foothold a way down.

## Spiders in the Sky — R. Yurman

Columbus Day

just past noon a predicted  
partial solar eclipse  
we strain our necks  
peering up

and sight tangled webs  
strands hundreds of feet long  
thin as ghost trails  
strong as ship's rope

filled with the millions  
of eighth-inch wide  
newly hatched  
riding currents of air

20,000 feet  
above Christopher's ocean  
continent to continent  
they glide

## Ends — Patricia Wellingham-Jones

Thankful  
that pizza with anchovies  
still tastes good,  
that baby jays  
learn to snatch seeds  
from a suet block  
while we watch,  
that friends stop by  
for a glass of chilled  
chardonnay on our deck,  
we live out our ends.

## Usurpers — D. M. Ross

Business suit pants  
Hang on nails in the basement  
And dress shirts with threads haywire at sleeve and collar  
Father clothes smelling of Old Golds  
Loose tobacco stems in pocket seams  
Initials on sweatband hats, broad-brimmed  
Hats only fathers wore  
Sweat on sweatbands  
Small feather like a fan  
In the band around the crown  
Johnny Krieger and I put them on



Stumble up the stairs, out the side door  
Dwarfed by fabric, clutching pant waists  
Hands swallowed by jacket sleeves  
Hats riding the bridges of noses  
And pose for their wives

**Boring or Worse**  
**Anselm Brocki**

They must be always  
happier and have less  
need to be in control  
of their minds because  
two very noticeable  
differences between  
me and most people  
at work are that they  
chatter to each other  
all day, sometimes  
straight through lunch,

and often say how much  
they enjoy a day off  
with nothing to do, not  
even chores or taking  
a shower, whereas that  
seems stupid, dull,  
boring, or worse yet,  
a perfect opportunity  
for my worrisome mind  
to take center stage  
and dredge up a lot of  
grudges and mistakes  
that make me feel awful.

### Hammock Time — Ida Fasel

Did I fly the Atlantic for colon relief  
at a public latrine in an English town?  
A Wendy's hamburger at San Marco franchise?  
A picture taken before a moss-grown  
Roman fountain run (more efficiently than  
anything else in the city) by computer?  
Airport delays, bus breakdowns,  
thin-walled hotel rooms, slammed doors,  
nightlong voices, showers, TV.  
My foot futilely rubbed cobblestone red  
pursuing a Tintoretto stolen, barely  
concealed scorn for my accented

but respectable phonetic pronunciation.  
Off the beaten path museums open only  
at odd hours. Everywhere eyes avid  
for the dollar by trade or snatch.

It was the worst of times, the best of times  
and the best of it, I need not go back again.  
Vacation now in hammock time, basking  
in rope webbing, a baby seal in sun. Warmth  
works its way within. In Avignon I stand  
on the bridge and the old children's song  
*Sur le pont* comes back loud and clear.

Lugano. Just the sound of it. More than  
a passing-by on the way to the Italian border:

something in the air of here-long-before.  
I shop. I take an espresso amid flowers.  
I stroll under magnificent old trees.  
The alps a glory. The Lake a familiar.  
Via Nassa, Piazza Riforma, Parco Ciani.  
Is anything real or sensed real  
too wonderful to be true?  
Castle more than home to bishops.  
Cathedral where I walk the long aisle  
In the pure thrill of faith  
Undiminished by the conversation of time,  
Durham not merely a pass-over to Edinburgh.  
Durham for another day.

## Called Back — Ida Fasel

1.

I hang from the plane window  
like a spider plant,  
its ends avid to grip earth.

2.

The island is hidden in morning haze  
but the ferry docks in clear  
as I am clear of the world I wandered  
for what I didn't know I was looking for,  
living free. Buoys in the sea world  
clang sea-raw. Benevolent.

3.

Scarred bricks scribble the grassy slope.  
Crossed-out rooms, might-have-beens.  
A panel of wood that glowed  
in its dark grain jagged, black-streaked.  
My father and mother framed in space  
look out at me.

4.

At the solid oak dining room table  
mother reading  
coming to the part  
where the piano got stuck being moved in  
and they had to play it from outside,  
The best laugh of our lives.

5.

No clock on the shelf, no shelf.  
They are there, and they are quiet.  
And now I am.



## The Cold Dawn — Richard Spiegel

After leaving the Peace Corps,  
I stayed a month in Morocco  
before traveling to Spain.

On the train from Madrid to León  
I sat beside a soldier in Franco's  
army.

We spoke of women.  
He shared his sandwich.

Wearing a djellabah,  
I arrived in León before dawn.

It was February,  
my eyeglasses  
cracked as I walked off the train.

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 -- \$33 for 11 issues.

Sample issues — \$3.50 (includes postage).

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