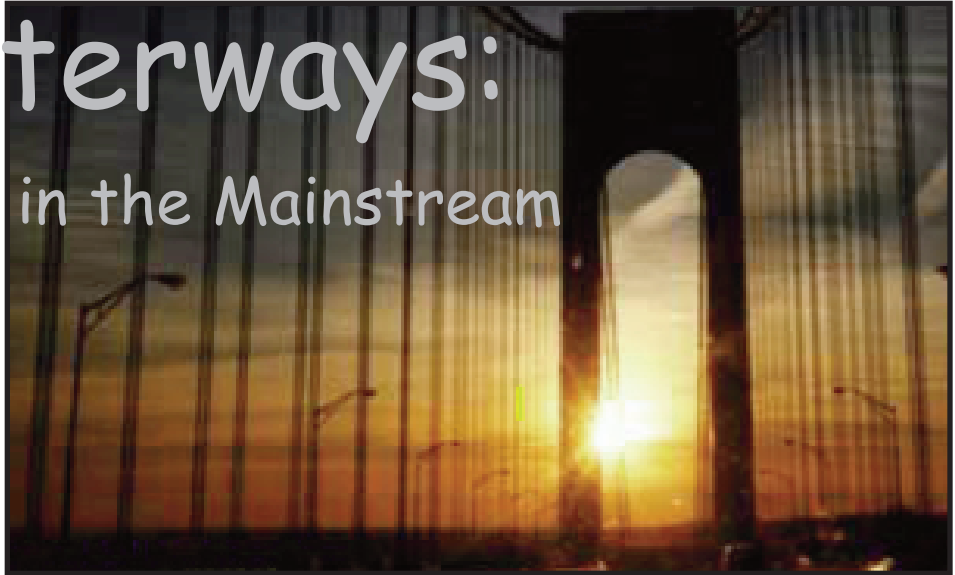


Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME

29



#1

Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream, Volume 29, #1

Let my words be
bright with animals

Joe Bruchac,
excerpted from *Prayer*
published in On Turtle's Back (White Pine)

WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream

Volume 29

Number 1*

Designed, Edited and Published by Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

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The Katy-dids — Joseph Bruchac

I love to hear the katy-dids,
their breathless song
says summer's here.

From every corner of our yard
their chorus comes
from far and near

She did, she didn't, on and on,
we only think
they disagree

When all they're saying is I'm here.
I'm here. I'm here.
This is my tree

It seems the summer cannot end
the nights are warm
the sky is clear

The stars are gold dust glittering
the August moon
will soon appear

And katy-didn't, katy-did
calls echo, echo
all around

I'll close my eyes tonight and dream
soothed into slumber
by their sound.

Artist's Profession — Noel Sloboda

It's almost too easy to paint goats,
Stefan sighs, from behind his easel.
It's cats, you know, that are hard.

How do you make them look
like the selfish things they are?
They always turn out cute.

Goats, though, I can capture;
they appear natural, as they
should, hindquarters toward you,

horns arching backwards,
making you think twice before
you move, as you listen to them

chewing on something you never could
digest if you swallowed. Simple
animals without any more lives than us.

Feet — William Corner Clarke

It's the feet
That give us away

Despite the secrecy
Of our shoes
And the vanity
Of preachers
The feet declare us
Animals all

Essential
But underused
Especially
Their facility
For peeling bananas
And hanging
Upside down

Last House — Hugh Fox

All the legs, quills, feathers,
claws revolving around my sun
days and claws especially on the
moon roof
nights, not to mention the whisperings
of the bushes-trees and the trying-
to-talk acapelling jazzing arms
and legs grandkids that (as yet)
haven't escaped me.

On the Film Romance & Cigarettes — Donald Lev

Accompanied by singing and dancing relatives
enemies lovers and others, a burly chainsmoking everyman
wheels, wheedles and wheezes his way to the grave.
I am watching this, wheezing with pleasure.
He is buried with military honors, which I won't be.
He looked so much better after he shaved his moustache.
I wonder if I should shave . . .

11/07

Trainer — Anselm Brocki

Let loose idle,
my mind turns
against me,
plainly needs
a short leash
or will paw
every mistake
in my past
over and over,
like what I said

to the Cockney
girl in an East
End pub during
the blitz or
backing down
on two pairs
in my first big
poker game
north of Pontoise
in the 495th
Bomb Squadron.

Honest to god,
just walking
down the street,
it turns me
into a mean
little Nazi trainer,
jerking the choke
chain, snapping out
"Heel" at every
painful memory.

Patricia Kelly

eye opener

the used angel fish skirt

fits me just fine

Tiny Spider — Hugo DeSarro

Tiny spider on the clothesline,
spinning silver threads
that glisten in the sunlight
without substance;
each day many times broken,
each day many times repaired.

In your little world,
your pinpoint of existence
is as genuine as mine.
You ply your wily tasks
without approval or applause;
building snares to trap
the unsuspecting traveler
that ventures into your domain.

There is mercy in your motive;
you catch and kill to live
and never catch and kill to kill,
as we have done
in our gargantuan world.

Geoff Stevens

When I say "kitten", I want it to purr for you
when I say horse, I want to nuzzle you
gorilla to hug you
puffer-fish to kiss you
I want all my words to be like glowworms
with something to attract you to them
and when you are,
I'm an incandescent iguana

black-tailed deer — R. Yurman

break the silence
snapping twigs
with their delicate steps
pronged heads dip
through light and shade
greens and browns
I stare after dark flanks
quicken past

the little one who follows
has long-lashed eyes
a spotted rump
were she human
I'd be in love

Little Italy Caterpillar — Sylvia Manning

lemon yellow caterpillar
over grey brick of
Piccola Italia Montréal
moving from young maple shade
to young August 13 2007 sunlight,
brave brave brave

pigeons and woman in heels
whose demeanor has one deem
she'd step on a little yellow caterpillar

but I think it's going to make it - yes!

it reached the green of grass!
across all those sinking places
between the bricks, calmly,
certainly, in the bliss of not knowing
the dangers of this little place,
this little bright yellow
(citron yellow)
caterpillar reaches green!

I Was a Serial Bug Killer — Dave Church

The other day a June Bug
Came through a tear in the window screen.
A long time ago I would have crushed
The tiny invader.
Instead,
I let it crawl up and down my arm
Before holding with finger and thumb —
Marveling at how fast its legs could pedal.
Then I set that June Bug free.

A spider swinging the air landed on the sill.
A long time ago I would have blasted that spider
With chemical warfare.
Instead,
I followed its chase of June Bug —
Rooting for both of them.

Do Animals Have Souls? — Joanne Seltzer

Do people have souls?
There's no emotion
in our DNA
that was not shared
by two rabbits
of different species
at the farmers' market
one early spring day
shivering in a cage
the larger licking the small
waiting to be sold.

First published in *The Pegasus Review*

Loner Whistling for Your Dog — Marguerite Maria Rivas

Loner whistling for your dog,
don't you know the musked air calls
both creatures low and highbrow?
Fireflies signal lamping looks,
distract me from my careworn books,
enchant the heart to ponder these
more rutting, howling rites of spring.

Loner whistling for your pal,
she's gone the way of weary wives
and worm-sick apples o'er ripe
to dream the nightmare vernal
where heavy fruit hangs pendulous
but she's forbidden to pluck it sweet,
for underneath its red skin, taut,
mealy, brown flesh bruises.

Loner whistling for your dog,
today the cool air beckons her,
and she, uncaring, fearless roams
the streets in search of heart's blood rich
to subsume the obvious
and then eschew all sentiment.
Called to roaming, rolling, rutting,
she and I are element.

First published, 2007,
'Pet Shoutouts and Poems',
Ten Penny Players Inc.

The Window as Meditation — Ida Fasel

Frost on
the window pane —
little by less whittled
away — the morning sun at its
busy

routine —
spring approaching:
As if they had never
been — all these beautiful strange beasts
wiped clean!

The Sleep-Over — Madeline Tiger

Sally tried to go to sleep but
she couldn't, she missed her
Dora doll and her old baby-
sitter and her dad and her
cousins in New York and
the doggy she'd wished for
but didn't have yet and her
old school and the new one,
her kindergarten and the
teacher who, Sally said in
a thin voice, between noisy
breaths, is — nice, sort of.

She missed her pink rain-
boots and her high bed and
the ice cream she couldn't
finish and her mom
whom she didn't mention and
the pony at Turtle Back Zoo.

After we'd whispered the list and
I sang the old songs — My Little
Nut Tree, Loola Loola Bye-Bye,
and she hugged Fishie, she fell into
the long night.

Opposites — Davide Trame

You watch the opposites of your anxiety:
the flotsam and jetsam your dog jumps on,
picks up in his teeth and shakes in a frenzy so that
even the hazy sky smiles and stirs,
the tide out and the pools it has left on the strand
and the scattered feet crunching shells
and the meandering trails of silence
that is the water lapping among the stones of the dam,
the flock of gulls on the rotunda taking off
as you go near them, just gliding
not much further on, skimming the water
and re-grouping in unison,
the cormorants on the edges, wings open,
very still or just quivering, heads tilted upwards
for ages,

the swishing of the digressing air,
the unpredictable courses of small pebbles in the wind,
the universe's lace your dog loves playing with
and in the door's shadow your crouched cat
who knows the door will be opened on his shore
and whose knowledge is too strong to let him mind
each passing instant.

It was their turf — Barry W. North

until we emerged,
from the pain in the eyes of a gorilla,
determined to press our advantage,
and throw our protests up against the skies,
until we crumble the keystone of eternity,
'and bring everything below God
crashing down upon our heads.

Before the Beaver Slits — Lyn Lifshin

pewter's silk
this warm spell
with dandelions
in bloom, a coppery
glow thru dark
cotton, I walk
thru bleached grass,
light rose as cats'
feet, before a
buttery lemon sun
or crows wild as
hands on fire,
black ducks float
on silk and stars

This December — Lyn Lifshin

It's almost 70
after dark.
I stop by the pond
instead of
shivering back.
Shapes in clumps
like tumbleweeds
floating on
some prairie,
the moon in haze
dazzling as
pale teeth of cats.
Silver light, a
blaze of willow.
Lights from the
metro, rhinestones
thru trees,
branches of stars

A Wedding in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, July 14, 2007
Paul Kareem Tayyar

I stand on the hill and watch the wedding down below
The veil of the bride being teased by the wind, the laughter
Caused by the priest fumbling the name of the groom

What luck for the fog to have settled on some other part
Of the city this morning, the warmth of the sun matching
The warmth of the ceremony

Diego Rivera, *The Flower Carrier*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, July 13, 2007
Paul Kareem Tayyar

You are the painter of strangers,
You are the painter of soldiers,
You are the painter of slaves
Who will never be free.

They see that you regarded
The working poor as divine,
Rugged saints whose prayers
Would never be answered,
But this does not mean that
They ask what those prayers
Might have been, or whether
Your saints left children behind
When they passed.

The World's Last Traveling Circus — Bill Roberts

A leather-clad brown bear smugly riding a Harley,
a heavily-lipsticked monkey clinging to his back.

Two dozen powdered elephants in tutus,
tiptoeing out of a vintage Volkswagen.

A blue-collared seal glistening from exercise,
tooting a truck's horn with its nose.

Oblivious giraffes, their heads in the clouds,
searching for the missing tattooed lady.

The skeletal-thin man, bent over double,
peeking up the fat lady's tent-sized dress.

The intoxicated trapeze artists flying first-class,
with neither luggage nor a safety net below.

Mischievous clowns looking at us cross-eyed,
catcalling from windows in a stretch limo.

High-stepping ponies with stand-up bareback riders,
all circling and in full control of their sphincters.

The Wild Man from Borneo in a gilded cage,
tossing love notes to adoring ringsiders.

A double-jointed beauty fired from a cannon,
one shapely leg landing in handicapped parking.

The world's strongest midget perched on one finger,
swollen as thick as one of his stunted legs.

The bombastic barker taken with sudden laryngitis,
stuttering through the voice box of a ventriloquist.

In Old Chicago — Rex Sexton

the ragman's horse drawn wagon . . .
the vendors and the junkman . . .
the blind man tending his news stand . . .
the derelicts picking through trashcans . . .
the knife-sharpener bent over his whetstone,
sparks flying in every direction . . .
his shouts of "scissors, knives, axes!"
in a duel with the wagoner's "ripe watermelons!" . . .
the pushcarts clattering through potholes . . .
the pigeon lady tossing her bread crumbs . . .
the organ grinder's uniformed monkey
tipping his cap to everyone for money . . .
the storefronts' food displays,
gathering flies under the awnings' shade . . .
the maze of narrow, ramshackle, streets
crowded with houses, tenements, factories . . .

the pig trucks, cattle trucks, poultry trucks,
criss-crossing from every direction,
(chased by the mutts who add to the bedlam)
the ward heelers passing out chickens,
the day before an election . . .
the nuns sweeping down the parish steps,
winds rippling their holy black habits . . .
the priest in their robes and vestments
praying in candlelight and incense . . .
the old women in babushkas
telling their rosaries in sanctified stillness . . .
the legions of raggedy kids
swarming the walks and streets and parks
(amidst a menagerie of birds and cats and squirrels)
each day flew through the air
landed in fairy tale dreams . . .

Breaking Rules — Michael Hathaway

i love guys who never wear ties,
gals who laugh too loud,
women who beat wife-beaters,
& men who cry
when animals die.





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Number 2 (deadline for submissions is June 14, 2008):

Hoping to fly like birds,
But utterly exhausted,
One can only watch the twilight pass away.

Phan Thuan

excerpted from *American Moon*

(translated by Ai-Jen Lin Chao)

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