

# Waterways:

Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME  
32

#5



# Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream

VOLUME 32, #5

Silence is  
eerie,  
the  
way it smells  
like rain

James Penha

SILENCE IS

Waterways, Volume 16, Number 9

# **WATERWAYS: Poetry in the Mainstream**

Volume 32

Number 5

Designed, Edited and Published by Barbara Fisher & Richard Spiegel

Thomas Perry, Teaching Artist

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*A Secluded Forest after Rain*  
Ni Zan (1301-74) China

## Quiet – Holly Day

It's been years since he left us, but I still feel a warm spot on the carpet, right where he used to sleep. Late at night I swear I can see his shaggy hulk looming in the corner of the room, barking deep

low, quiet, tongue lolling, tail wagging, waiting to be taken outside for his walk. When we took him in, full-well knowing how sick he was, how he would only be with us for a short while, we had slim

knowledge that he would still be with us this long, years  
after dragging his limp body out to the car,  
his last breath cooling like wax on my skin.

## Why I Look Out Windows during Rain — Daniela Buccilli

I study the gutter's pour after rain,  
so to conjure it up later,  
when the dryness peels at my mouth  
and there is no balm.

Or if I cannot, at least when a person  
describes it as dainty applause,  
or liquid silver, or how it slackens —  
when I hear it fall in a novel  
about love and abandonment —

instead of crying, I may remember  
what Lao Tzu said: Water  
benefits all things and does not  
compete with them.



## **Late on a Riparian Afternoon – David Chorlton**

A blue shadow falls  
across the wet stones beneath a cliff  
that has risen against the sun  
above the slow passage  
of a shallow flow. A Cooper's hawk  
  
crosses to the far cliffs  
and dissolves in the light  
while, low among the winter branches

where the earth is dark  
a fox moves  
a little, stops, and dips  
under a broken branch  
leaving space for nothing more  
than the scent it follows.  
The rock face

Tilts across the stream  
Whose banks  
Tighten their grip  
On the bed  
As the water carries

Its portion of silence to day's end.

## **Alone with Your Thoughts — Scott Owens**

It's never as they say.  
Loneliness settles in.  
Things you forgot to do  
keep pulling you back.  
Regret takes a seat  
in your mind and refuses to move.

Any silence is quickly disturbed  
by unexpected traffic, telemarketers,  
the dog wanting in. The chime  
on the dryer goes off, the fire alarm's  
battery, the mailman with something  
to deliver. Your own feet  
won't stop drumming. Your eyes close.

You'd like to have thoughts you never  
imagined, make original  
connections, see the reasons,  
understand how things work  
and how they ought to be.  
You want to hear poems well up  
inside you. You'd like to leave  
this body at dawn and not return  
until darkness falls around you,  
but even then the wavering light  
of a single star intrudes.

The artificiality of night reveals itself  
in the face of an ugly man,  
foolish hope blisters up  
like sores that never heal.  
Even the hand that always picked  
you up seems determined to hold you down.

They've never yet been right  
about how any of it feels.  
It is most honestly, terrible.  
Only a moment alone and the green  
pool of the past becomes nothing  
but another place to drown in.

## **He Seeks Solace - Richard Spiegel**

Warm blanket woven with my fears,  
covers my dreams from the world's unrest.  
Ragged fabric, of threads time tears,  
spreads a vision before the night's unrest.  
Pacing long and cluttered halls,  
watching the dust collect on walls,  
searching in circles for the measures of my heart,  
I seek solace in the murmurs of my art.



Wait for me my wild companions;  
let us slice this stagnant air.  
Just as the rivers carve deep their canyons,  
let soft thunders lead us where  
Aurora lives in liquid skies  
and silence sings in silken sighs.

## Everything Was Explained — William Corner Clarke

At last  
Everything was explained  
Everyone got to know  
What was what  
And why it was  
The way it was  
Even the amoebas understood

And after that  
The Universe closed down  
And all the props  
Were packed away  
Just like the fairground  
Leaving town

It was hard to take  
But what was the point  
Of keeping on  
When everyone knew  
How the tricks were done  
And all the mystery  
Was gone  
Where was the fun?

**when the age came... — michael d. sullivan**

when the age came  
we were left to dine with  
most of our lives, that somehow  
we knew.

there  
in tunic and picnic bib,  
i saw the very swift in me  
slower, yet assured, a flow.

I saw the dreams in me  
delicious  
and not dusty  
or yellowed.

i saw the child in me  
undressing and holding my face,  
combing my hair, calling my name  
in rhyme.

I became of the moment,  
became of the years,  
became of a kindness in  
me that I had not met, not touched  
yet warming  
and full of my smell.

i held all the air in  
my lungs and breathed to the  
creation in me, breathed to my soul painted  
in the sky, fixed to my shadow, suspended  
in my face, birthing...

when the age came, I landscaped, and there all  
who loved me shared a common table, a common whisper.

we dined and reveled and sang.

there could be no end, as I would tempt a return.

## Before Roanoke — Sylvia Manning

before winter  
before breakfast  
before I think of you  
never beside me again  
in Virginia  
in November morning

These blue ridges  
this state of being blue  
this state where stalks  
stand high for silage,  
I think.

I think.  
I could ask you.  
  
These blue ridge links  
to you.

*Hwy, 81, Virginia, November 9, 2009*

## **Saturn Girl Lover — H. Edgar Hix**

I remember when Saturn Girl  
changed from that pantsuit  
to the monokini. Adolescent,  
I couldn't get to the bathroom fast enough!

Now, I see she's back in long pants.  
Mind reader, I wonder why  
they always go back to putting you in long pants.



Always the smart one. The tough-minded telepath.  
God, I wish I could find a lover  
who was a telepath and could change  
from pants to monokini to pants.

I went to the comic book store and found  
they've completely redone the Legion of Super-Heroes!  
They've turned my adolescence into someone else's.

## **Contrasts — Gilbert Honigfeld**

Everything today is black or white,  
the ebory keyboard before me,  
a piano's infinite varnish.

At my back, through leaky windows,  
a frozen inland sea whitewashed  
and ringed with basaltic rockpiles  
is in full winter camouflage.

The music, itself black on white,  
I play to a resonant vacuum,  
stopping, first now, then then,  
convinced the wind keening overlake  
and struggling through the glass  
is a distant mezzo in a distant room.

## **thought — Wayne Hogan**

thought is  
music to the concept  
it flowereth 'neath bridges  
and skippeth o'er ice  
it lingereth in the shadows  
of stepladders it  
speaketh your name  
it reineth and reineth

Readers have requested more information about the photographs we used in Waterways volume 32, number 4.

The cover photograph, Sarah Peltz Mandel and her three children, was taken in Bialystock, Poland around 1916. The children are from left to right: Regina (Rachel), Matilda, and Annie.

Shortly after this picture was taken Annie died of disease and Sarah was killed by Cossack horseman in a Pogrom.

Regina and her older sister, Matilda, travelled as children with their aunt to America. She was Barbara's mother and died in 2009.

The photograph used as frontispiece was taken in New York around 1909. It is of Bella Flyer Saltzman, Barbara's paternal grandmother.

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