

The Symphonic River
by Jerry Prager

The symphonic river plays both sides of the bridge,
the flow of the gathering descent softly erupts
in white cap resistance to submerged rock, a gentle,
reiterated resonance heard under the concrete road span,
the lyric arches on each side posted with listening chambers.

The fall over limestone ledge levels
are accented with cascades of plummeting scales
across last year's rushes and grasses, effervescent cadences,
improvised gurgles and plops, whooshes,
plunges and sprays that whisper downstream and escape hearing:
variations of nuance layering the soundscapes,
isolating strains of melody from the air.

Too diverse for fixation, too alive for inattention,
the symphonic river plays both sides of the bridge
conducted by water levels over the bed of its movements,
themes of melt-flood voice solitudes of winter, internalizing
the virtuosity of a bend crossed by a country road.

And now, hours later, days later, an exuberant tranquility
continues to heal my inner ear – aching from the work
of mallet on chisel on stone – through nothing more than
memories of the hot sun of that sparkling afternoon alone on
a rural shoulder near Irvine Street farm fields, remain
as moments recalled: the cool shadows of the cedar-lined banks
and the receding flood plains;
instants of the awakening Earth relived, like the chorus of insects
thrumming counterpoint to the rolling valley runoff
wash over me like a balm still, long after leaving
the lyric bridge and the symphonic river
and the glorious light of fleeting impressions,
harnessed now to the page for the sake of spoken song
and the traces that you bring to the verses
of your own winter resolves.