

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/3

Ruth Holzer

Where

So this is where our virgin forests went:
leveled into strip mall paradise
where you'd be hard-pressed to find
a quart of milk or a loaf of bread
or a book, should you by chance
want one. Where, on the other hand,
if you need to have any of your body parts
pierced, waxed, tanned or tattooed, you'd be in luck;
where you can have your fingernails
decorated with multicolored designs;
where you can get your hair extended
to dangle down as long as you desire.
And where you're spoiled for choice
if you must have your eyebrows threaded.

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In Gordon Square

(in memoriam J. T. H., 1931-1991)

It seems like just the other day
we were sitting in Gordon Square
with our books and sandwiches
on a rare spring afternoon,
discussing the Mycenaeans and their script
that only a happy few could understand,
he foremost among them,
master of the syllabary,
and I, timidly testing
his great patience,
learning, trying to.

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Camps

Heavy rains inundate the tents of the camp;
waste flows knee-deep through the refugee camp.

They round you up and haul you away
to await annihilation in a transit camp.

Black snow falls from an indifferent sky.
No way out of the KZ camp.

One place left for finding romance—
survivors marry in the DP camp.

Ruth's mind freezes at the thought of the tundra
and men among wolves in the forced labor camp.