

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/4

Philip Newton

Just After Noon

The town is a lonely nation
of Sunday, of cigarettes
of walls and sidewalks
Here one woman steps
slanting across
the empty street
Her hair is short
becoming gray
She used to be young
but she
stayed here too long

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Penumbra

Between the rising
and the falling
there is walking
placing stone on stone
making a little place
to defend and worry over

Maybe you'll love someone
One of you will leave
First one, then the other
An emptying out
of arteries and memory
until the day is clear
thin and cold as alcohol

Everyone embraces shadows
Everyone is kissing you goodbye

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In the Littoral

I will be your shoal
You should crush your
earnest and hopeful
strakes, your proud
ribs against my ore
against my native
submerged veins
still hot with making

I will be your shore
after a week of water
and the deep salt
weariness of shops
parks, dull offices
swindling restaurants
ravenous clocks and
unsatisfied ledgers

I will be your dry land
Break on me slowly
your warm, fatal rest

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Blow

Jangle of your
hip's crisp edge
thrust jagged out of the frame
like a threat
like a minute
like a lightning flash
full of curses
Smoke inks the sky
draining ochre into blue
a filthy fire
pulls down the sun
stuns hawks in midflight

Far too much to remember
fists punch
wind blows
we can never learn that
this love kills

Nothing stands
Nothing holds
It all runs out
When it's over I'll
sweep up the broken parts