

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/4

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bioremediation

I've seen enough bedrooms
of (first born) baby boys
to know that my brother sleeps
in an industrial wasteland.

where clouds trickle through glass window pipes
and trans parent pains let them fill that space.
where the smoke and smog drown sinking sons
and spider web sisters dangle doubt from dream catchers.

enter the hard hat (baseball cap) zone:
dirt diamonds are but brownfields
if the shovel in hand suggests toxic sludge
"make this valley full of trenches"

please let me unfurl your fists
tell me when and if
shooting shouts or shots into the void
might help

please keep scratching poison sumac records
if perry panics and requires
backup en route to Babylon
please don't ask me to fill
hole-hearted serrated sorry
ditches you haphazardly dug
mathematically mapped,

six feet deep but if his body should be compost
may it be the bleeding, breathing
lifegiving kind, so that
weeping willowed boughs are enough
to whisper water exists nearby.

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no one forecasted the faltering, now falling,
half audible shadow of an exiled saint
bowing his head to pray in papers
already licked, already lit, already
cried enough rainstorms to send
(first born) baby boys
rolling over reefs of cracked coral kings

I've seen enough
baby boys
to know that my brother
could light up a room.

the candle melts quick but truth is
all those tricks we were taught, how
plants only grow in the light,
the fact of the matter is
manzanita seeds germinate
following fire
the way spathodea might smolder this spring and bloom the next

the way I'm burning here, too,
(big) Brother
breathing myself into existence how
Allen Ginsberg writes the way he respire,
how sunflowers turn to face the sun,
illuminating railyards
accumulating nuclear waste.

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untitled for the painter

As we unravel the archives besides Venus' shrine of cut coin lips
and surrender to the reptilian spine projector,
now melting onto the wall and glowing of the same heat
as gently curving tubes of the hospital bed,
where I have lied to you and lied with you again,
pulsating different color spectrums—it is blue that brings me back
circling your contour,
pawing you in sleep deprivation,
lining my boa constrictor scales along your crescent moon,
snapping my jaws, seeing if you'll fit whole in my mouth.

As an offering to love in death,
even as I choke on obstinate bones lodged in my throat,
I'll continue making love to love.

If safekeeping is an act of preservation,
how ironic that everything loved is imagined to be free
and yet confined in mind or glass.

I have seen you now naked and laughing and suffering.
I pretend I won't touch you as though a spider tempted by a bath
into you I can slip and stay awhile longer,
the same tepid waters in which the psychotic drowns and the mystic
swims.

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epistolary for a girl I knew

In the season before black-eyed susans
there were lily of the valley littering the
stony creek grassy marshfields
where we stomped and waded through brackish waters
where we believed nature was uniform that
your birthday would always follow mine

There are snake tracks
under the cul-de-sac house and
a dog named Joscie out back
A tree growing feathers for leaves
slipping through our fingers and
our knuckles release,
I knew you wanted to hurt.

But I will never find a reason to drive
down that dead end
remember
how you held a purple sharpie
that night your father broke
down at the feet of divorce
Or how you proofread
your mother's email to him
The same girl who took sadistic pleasure
in the suicide of her Sims

My black hole star sting
Broken bead string
Half dead something
Song she likes to sing

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I've nearly forgotten the bend
in willow tree limb
how I called after you
higher Lily higher

you'll find his happiness
hanging from the guise
of the next branch

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Flash tattoo
Self-defense
Suddenly psychic
Old friends
Militant chaos
Negligence