

Wilderness House Literary Review 20/1

George Freck

The Things That Matter

When apple blossoms fall
they quickly blow away,
but their scent still lingers,
while the stars slowly burn,
but eventually they too must die.
Time is meaningless to objects
in that cold, distant sky,
but it means a lot to me.
I place flowers on my wife's grave.
It's what she'd have done for me.
A spider emerges from its
concealed web near her grave.
He knows nothing of where he's at.
His tiny world is complete.
This is simply nature,
and nature knows nothing
Of remorse or sympathy,
or of love or even pity.
That's how it must always be.

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On My 70th Birthday

I've decided to stay in bed.
I drink a birthday toast,
as a million stars pass over my head.
The night is like a book written
in an incomprehensible language.
The illusions of my youth
were necessary lies,
but I know that soon
I'll disappear like dish water
down the kitchen drain.
I notice a shooting star
fizzle and die, and then
it quickly fades from the sky.
I've now turned seventy,
and it doesn't help to lie.

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Uneasy Night

I'm weary of looking at snow,
of looking at dead trees,
and walking on dead leaves.
My friends are lost
like the toys of my youth.
My mind wanders
into worldly realms,
as I think of my wife,
who is also dead.
Crows sit in branches
and stare at my bones.
For now, they'll go unfed.
Self pity is a shameful thing,
but my heart is like molten lead.
As the sun sets,
night envelopes me
like an invisible cocoon.
I turn away from it.
My shoes stay under my bed.

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On A Painting By Ku K'ai Chih

The clouds reveal cracks in the sky.
They warn me trouble is near.
Life is half pleasure and half fear.
Sunlight falls to earth like swords,
falling in orange and crimson streaks.
High on the tallest mountains,
clouds catch on distant peaks.
They're the only things I know.
They tell me soon it will snow,
but I must walk slowly behind my plow.
No way can I hurry my ancient cow.