

Wilderness House Literary Review 20/1

Kevin Bardosh
10,000 Books

You accepted a gift
& made a simple request: would I mind?
For a new exoskeleton – rafters & beams in the rotunda,
Temple of this fragile sandcastle.

I thought it was a diatribe
From an old scholar
In all seriousness. Esoteric arts,
Sorcery even: the dose makes the poison.

You wanted them all plastered to the ceiling in rows
To consume them like Dorian Gray
Until the equinox.
Real people, adults even, they'd become,
Spreaders of your ideals, to the sun.

I made a plan to burn them all
Fiery, fuming eyes.
To save a lost story wherewithal
My asymmetric eyes & travelers sack
But could not keep my matches hidden.

You wanted them still
& found a way, bibliomaniac, as you always do and did.
But I was trapped under mounted walls & foreign language hardbacks.
So, I moved this literary mosaic more literally,
To slip out before I was crushed.

Wilderness House Literary Review 20/1

False Wisdom

Do not accept yourself
Except as a plentiful fountain
Of generous transmutations
Sputtering & springing
Being & becoming –
From wine to water, bread to butter.

The necessity of each forceful moment
Gravitas through the silver pipe
Unpredicted by the watchmaker above,
& below – fleeting, beating atoms
Alone, & united, held in the company
Of one another, labyrinthic – white & blue in waves.

Peer into these gushing waters, young man,
To see your fate & circumstances.
Two warring tribes, competing buoyancies,
Crashing in countless probabilities, impossible odds:
What will you become?

Ignore the weather, now,
The sky & stars & clanging gongs.
& accept: you are conductor, & orchestra & audience,
All three-in-one.

Wilderness House Literary Review 20/1

Collected Poems

Those floors of wooden parquet stretched
Through endless galleries –
Ages upon ages, faces upon faces
Some known, others not
But all forgotten, in most ways.

I had come here to find The Self
A traveler in need of respite
To hear, nay to taste & smell, the stories of yesteryear,
The people and places of my kin.

From James to Charles, & back again.
From Elizabeth to Nightingale.
Tales of power, sacrifice, duty, of day & night.

Rebellious writers, conversing in Virtuosis at the Kings Arms by a cat.
Painters painting with peacock hats.
Men in uniform, grey with brave faces & red lapels
Overseen by that man towering over Chartwell.
& philosophers with twisted nostrils russelling among the leaves;
A bright raven over this our open society, to retrieve.

& it is open, this whole place.
Airy in its congestion.
Inviting the shuffling of ten thousand feet, & more,
To come along beyond the pale placid day.

To see the Nation,
From humble beginnings to glorious incandescent expansion, once upon a
time.
These painted faces invited to grow 'round Thy Self:
A delicate yet dexterous moss
In the old growth forests of time.

Wilderness House Literary Review 20/1

& so I came here to receive, like you.
To struggle with the dragons on the floor
Those labyrinths - wild hinterlands, frozen rivers.
To find the hidden embers in the ice.
To peer at the expressions of our dead.
To hear their sounds, to remember & recount again,
For tomorrow, & today.