

## Wilderness House Literary Review 20/1

*Pramod Lad*

### **Picture Perfect**

Studying white streaks in his hair, hearing  
The echo of his mother's loving but nagging  
Voice, " Thirty five and still no girls" he felt  
Obliged to do something and turned  
To the internet. Arrays of faces to melt  
Any heart. Why were they there? Spurned ?  
He quietly mulled his obsession  
With faces; what to make of the body's hidden  
horror , the unseemly innards, the generous ration  
Of blood and spit, the well meant but stale passage  
Of morning breath with the kiss . Not to mention  
Fragrances unquelled by myriad sprays the secret tag  
Of desire . Yet he returned to one picture twice,  
Oblivious to a wrinkle's first loving trace.

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### The Flea

Is the timing right? "I do not know",  
Bored you remark it is always so.  
We talk and jest, words flow and flow ,  
as the cortex advises, shut up, time to go.  
More time passes, years have passed in fact,  
as we note how few marriages are still intact  
among the best of our friends, how we knew long  
before they did or guessed, that they were all wrong.  
We hold hands of course, exchange a careful kiss.  
Do I hear the storied serpent's hiss,  
or does routine bludgeoning doubt return,  
warning more caution, lest we burn.  
The only way we will mingle fluids that I can see,  
is if we both are, by sheared chance, bitten by a flea.

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### Blue Voyage

A casting off? Why reason? Why guess  
What was floating through my lover's mind  
Or mine? Did it matter, the intervening mess  
Of blue, so long as there was a real end,  
Some horizon, a distant line, a limit.  
Mid-sea he said, " Do you think about  
What lies ahead, or is your head in the clouds?"  
Should I don shades, shield my eyes, hit  
Hard by unending blue, say nothing aloud,  
Being partial always to a gentle drift,  
Away from anything too near. I tilt  
My head away to something safe, a horizon.  
He sees it all. We lurch. A sharp U turn  
Back to certain shore to find the need, the reason.