

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

Lylanne Musselman
Cruising, 1975

We drove the small town strip in Bill's Corvette,
from the carwash on the north side and around

the A & W Root Beer stand, next to the cornfield,
back and forth on State Road 3, going nowhere.

I sang "Love Will Keep Us Together," out loud,
even though I knew it wasn't love. I felt safe

with Bill who wasn't like the small town policeman
who violated my virginity when I was fifteen.

In the rearview mirror – reflections of a female friend,
in her small Vega with a bronze body, made my heart skip.

Oblivious of the implications, Bill and I revved our drive-by
love – eight years and two daughters away from a divorce,

racing towards a lifetime linked by grandchildren and silent
stares, two strangers who tried to drive their dreams home.

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Some Memories Are Better Than Others

A midnight Kenny Rogers cuts in
Lady, I'm your knight in shining armor...
2009 fades into 1980 and I'm married
to still Bill who says I don't stir
spaghetti sauce right. He hurls
pottery I made to the floor, and accuses
me of holding our baby daughter too much:
"She'll grow up to be lesbian." He swears
I won't leave him, no one else will love me.
He killed my plans with women, friends I loved
before him. My philandering fear
chewed and swallowed what he dished.
I sat at the table beside myself,
digesting raw conversation,
when aversion finally belched.
Bill bellowed, "You're as spineless as boiled shrimp!"
In a saucy moment I shot his malicious words down
faster than Dick Cheney on a quail hunt,
and served him
leftover marriage stew. A delicious recipe
that slowly simmers and spurns.

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Outside the Coffee Shop in July

Jayne and I, two Midwestern daughters – fed up with the closed-mindedness and extreme climates of Naptown, vent frustrations over

frozen caffeine while mugginess trickles down drinks and brow.
I swear I can't sweat out one more day of spinning

my wheels in this Circle City, where people fly
checkered flags and fund huge buildings for good sports

fans who can recite Peyton's stats faster than poets can
recite their poems, faster than those who flock to Danica Patrick

for her autograph, but don't subscribe to letters in their own lives.
Jayne rallies around my laments, adding a few of her own –

in the sweltering heat; she longs for Washington state
or another tolerant place where women are appreciated

for their independence, not accused of being a Femi Nazi,
a man hater, or an out and out bitch. Lesbians are cool,

and the Hoosier sun doesn't boil clouds into a gray frenzy
even when there's pressure for change in the atmosphere.