

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/1

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The Bathroom Route to Hell

The thing might overflow,
or you might not be able to go.

As you sit half naked,
you catch yourself praying
to God...

Oh my God, you realize,
it's not polite to pray on a toilet
I might get thrown into Hell,
if there is another hell
besides life on earth,
with its miracle of birth...

I was born to sinners it once seemed,
fighting all the time
in front of us kids and the dog.

I hid in the toilet
where it was private and silent,
except for the drip of shower caps
in the tub, that moldy, wet plastic smell,
so gross, so gross to be in this room,
the smell of stale Old Spice and Colgate.

So I prayed to God
to help me escape from this hell,
as soon as I was old enough
to go to college.

But it's not polite to pray on a toilet...

So I went to my room and cried.

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Sad Sixteen

My age 16 boyfriend
brought me blue daisies
every week.

I was so bored
with the blue dye.

He wanted to marry me
and have lots of children
as soon as I turned 17.

I didn't like his watery kisses
at all the red lights in his car
named Renee the Renault.

I couldn't stand him.
I made him the best pecan pie
of my life.

He was going to be a pharmacist
and have his own drug store.
In Detroit that meant you might get shot!

I told him goodbye!

Still I wonder, 40 years later,
and husband-free,
would I have liked to be a mother?