

Wilderness House Literary Review 20/4

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Feathers

Crows, who clutch at bones oaken
in their nakedness, assize December
streams.

Scant autumn rains leave them jejune
in every sense.

Farther afield, Cardinal rivers feed
upon rich aortic seams: plush snow jangling
from the beaded belts of trinketed mountain
waists.

Winter, it seems, favors
those tall in stature,
but Crow creeks will out
for they can fly.

Their beds, feathered and carved with a beaky
cunning, know that quills haven't any twin.
Drought and flood, snow and melt, a Crow will
find water with a twig.

True night

Midnight in my room of minus
12 Imperial to pluck the blent wool
of frost, a fire-festooned dusk
whose vitrified stars seem static
like felt across the eyes

I am one of many who ask
the Moon how January moves
past her iron skin of adhesion
towards a honeyed pose of snows
soft as any Tchaikovsky composed

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His winter, with its skins of regal sable
not hunks of rock proud to surpass
the Sun's low solar elevation by a valence
of vain affection.

But as a veil between worlds:
cobalt and diamond, bitumen
as only true night can be.

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Early or late

Two women sit on a bench
in a park, snow a cover
for their blush and the last
leaves falling on hair and shoulders.

There is snow in their laps,
slush on their gloved hands
which smoke and talk
while frequencies pierce
the overcast, signals which
count the twitches, the sighs

Gaps in the garments winking
like tower lights.

Two women on a bench
with clouds of things which
aren't supposed to happen

This early or this late
in the season.

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Stone

I dream I am a stone whose mind
is my own; I cannot remain in
such an intolerable form

But the decision is not mine

I didn't ask the world to warm,
to make stones with a persistent
hot breath

People cast in mud,
petrified for all time were
curios not destinies

Winter has a way of seeming permanent
regardless of what the thermometer reads

How much longer before I am a waking
rock, pleased I can move but mistaking
the Moon for a star-

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Roses

There were roses inside my coat
and I would give them to you in
the front yard where the sky was
clear enough to see the furthest
planets

Roses, kept in freezers all year long
I would give them to you, my hand
coming down from the sky, a comet
crossing the dark space between us
a tracer

The roses, a gesture so new to me
as foreign as red stars and planets
but close to my chest as though
music -Holst!- had composed the
universe

Creation is a dense bud, bound tight
on cold lawns in February.