

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/1

Jeremy Greener
Palimpsest

Where are the scars
Of pathless North
Waxen on the hand,
That halves and quarters down,
Stripping flesh to text,
The shadows tumbling from sky
In strange arbitrage,
Years growing on cones like fables?

Beyond the bluest angles
Of ice and wood
The red sequoia
With two millennia in its rings
Waits breathlessly
Through fire
For the seedling names
That rise each age like fathers or virtues
From the artifice of snow locked roots
Spread wide and deep,
Under the white cristae,
Trunks grand as slanted ribs.

Out of the shaggy green,
Needles vexed to stars by frost,
I saw that sleek proscenium,
The space arcing from light
Then plunging on itself
In tectonic folly and genius,
Knew that grudge of love
Vast and silent
In that snowy trade,
That palimpsest.

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Macaw

Say only of earth
That it is a paradise for the boy
When waking upon his balcony,
He sees his uncle,
Robed in rich colors-
The bird perched upon the tan arm-
And knows his uncle as both macaw and man,
And knows him for the first time.

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Wormhole

When the door hinged shut,
Trap-clapping your shadow,
I saw a worm burrow into your word,
Settle, and make a home of it,
Not so much the word
But the mane of the word,
Tracing the earthen schemes radially,
Hot with the marrow of apple towns,
First past the head
Then past the slanted haunches
To the end of the tail-
The nerves branching into crowns,
Two crowns, I thought,
Behind the quickened spoilage,
Calloused with utterance
And fearsome in that early light-
Paws measuring the distal conclusions
Of my strange seams:
Cage, sling, stone, arms!

Our eyes met at the very pang
Of its thorn
And there were two crowns,
There *are* two crowns,
One golden, smelling of apples
And one that falls.