

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/1

Joan Colby
ARMS

Today, the engine of the rain
And two suitcases on a lonely road
Contain the bodies of women.
We aren't told if they were cut up
Or merely folded like napkins.

Two people chalk their faces,
Pocket swastikas to paste on victims,
Head for the convenience store.
Slinging rifles over shoulders,
Pulling cammo hats down on brows
Stern with dissent. This is how
One stands astride a crevasse,
The fiery heart of earth exposed.

You could tear up the morning paper
And scatter it in the forest grim with shadows.
The paths that vanish as you stride. Or you could
Look out the window
Streaked with rain that has always fallen
Beyond reason, beyond faith, beyond the motion
Of someone unholstering a pistol.

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LANIAKEA – IMMEASURABLE HEAVEN

Here we are in the confectionary of the Milky Way,
One of a hundred thousand galaxies,
An immense pharmacy where
A hundred million billion suns
Dispense the elements of sweetness,
The acid components of despair.

We float in the Virgo super-cluster,
Children of an immaculate conception.
The mechanisms that conspired the air
Our primitive gills learned to love.

Our bodies imitate the way
Tendrils of the cosmic web connect the nodes
So nerve and muscle let us rise
To walk the finite earth that flows
Inexorably fueled by a dark force

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PERSIMMONS

Green, they stung the tongue, puckered
Taste buds until a boy squinched his
Eyes half-closed, still sucking
Sour juices from his dirty fingers.

Those trees in spring could lure
A boy like a girl in velveteen
Ribbons. Green as all the leaves
Opening their gloves to grab a boy's
Attention. A boy who couldn't
Wait for ripening.