

**Wilderness House Literary Review 10/2**

*Marc Frazier*

**Photo of Picasso and Françoise-Gilot**

He holds a large umbrella  
    over lovely Françoise  
    her body torqued like a

sculpture he created to  
    joy, her wide-brimmed hat  
    needless now; in black

and white they move  
    along the beach of Golfe-Juan,  
    she with a sense

of purpose, he, short and  
    slavish behind her ebullient  
    lead; roles

reversed, a parody of their inter-  
    twining: she lighting the morning fire  
    in his studio; he, helpless,

demanding: an infant; here  
    she leads—taller, smiling,  
    assured as he hurries

to keep the sun off her  
    fair skin tinged with ruby  
    like the cherries he presented

in the café to introduce himself  
    to a beauty several decades younger,  
    still sure enough of himself

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to court a new lover

before he shed his old one,  
his power to create

stirred again;

still there were surprises  
as in the death's head appearing

in his work as this new liaison

entangles; what might such  
momento mori mean now

at sixty-two, a child as much

as a man embarking on a last  
great romance as he empties

himself in all forms, still reinventing

everyone; for a new love there were  
risks; Olga still in tow,

sees his new trophy lying brightly on the

beach and with high heels  
steps on her devoted hands.

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### Without Words

*The body contains the life story just as much as the brain.*  
—Edna O'Brien

Even now I stiffen when you hug me,  
frozen in an infant's body memory.

Each word I write aims to uncover the damage,  
to express trauma that happens before language.

But a body remembers.  
How I want to surrender, to let you reach me:

My body's wanting to love is not the same as loving  
though wanting to be loved is the same as loving.

For seven months your crazed depression  
nursed me as if the cord had never been cut.

When you threatened my life they hauled you away  
like one of your drunken uncles from childhood.

There is no such thing as closure,  
nor did we find that new opening that rewrites trauma.

The body will have what it will and never let go.  
Still, other selves survive.

There is not enough light to bring us into it together.  
But almost.

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### What is Unseen

Not so much the worm, the hook  
Sun bouncing off Lake Ripley

But the little fish reeled in  
Flopping in the boat

Gills miraculous to watch  
The entire idea of life

Retrieving the hook  
Without looking into eyes

My aunt proud of my conquest  
A tiny nearly-dead thing—

That's what childhood is filled with—  
That we slice open

Scraping away guts, rinse  
Grill outside our cabin

While she and her "friend" Pat  
Drink Southern Comfort

As we play badminton and argue  
Like winning matters when we already

Sense that it doesn't  
And practice our swings for thwacking

Lightning bugs in dusk  
Then plop our quarters

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For ice cream on the counter  
In the beachside store

Where barely dressed adults  
Full of Milwaukee beer

Throw lopsided smiles at us  
From the dark, smelly bar

Confident that each of our fears  
Is real and can undo us

And everyone around us  
Though no one thinks children

Know this, we do, I do  
As I memorize Latin responses

*Et cum spiritu tuo,*  
As I inhale the scent of wine

Harbinger of my grief to come  
*Habemus ad Dominum*

As father wipes his fingers  
Daintily on white linen, builds

The house of God by placing  
The square Pall over the chalice

and as I genuflect  
*Dignum et justum est*

I hear the sunfish gasp