

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/2

Robert Tricaro

The Intention of Dreams

They work the graveyard shift.
Most are well intentioned, aiming
to sustain my industry; keep the world

in mind, as my eyes close to it.
A letter to write, a duty-bound
dinner party to plan, a phone call

I'll apprehensively place,
tomorrow...or the next day.
But with sleep narrowing the body's

throttle, dreams become underpowered
visions that can't quite match the pieces.
Grasp, rooted in disjointed images,

is knotty—
crafting outcomes that are often bizarre.
A postman writes my letter, addressing it

to me. That dinner becomes a banquet,
repeated as a nightly event.
Doctors say dreams are often

assuasive. Asleep, I place that phone call;
the MRI results are negative.
At times they don't succeed:

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I dreamed I was sipping wine
from a pilsner glass, making travel plans
to Seattle with my wife seated beside me.

Two years ago, her ashes were scattered
near the shoreline of that city.

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/2

Picturing Shorter Trips

My cousin's face pales
as the engine muscles into the station
like a tank picking up its crew.
Her son, wearing camouflage fatigues
departs on this 8:02 to join his activated
National Guard Unit.

No fishing pole or thermos
with Ovaltine this trip,
but Gail will picture her boy
off to summer camp again.

Laverne next door hugs her dying
mother and a moment later,
they squeeze each other's wrist,
holding fast for a minute—

a rite, when one of them would leave
for a weekend religious retreat.
These short-trip fancies lighten
pain—like a jump

from a ground floor window
onto a bed of marigolds.
Better than my telling them:

*I have a cache of unused prayers.
Here
Take them all, buy yourself some peace.*

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/2

Limited Engagement

He balding, portly, she beyond full-figure—
they sing Shakespeare's tale of hormone-driven
adolescents set to Gounod's music,
in a language few in the house understand.

We are expected to suspend disbelief
for what we see, while we hear voices
Stradivari couldn't craft;
their timbre, honed for still another decade.

Across the street, in a symphony hall,
ninety musicians are in their fourth
or fifth decade of life. Maestro, seventy one,
has just flown the Atlantic to conduct.

Their Berlioz symphonic version
of Romeo and Juliet is followed
by a protracted thunder-crack of applause.
But on the ballet stage, entrechats and jetes

are performed by lithe bodies; sturdy bare
legs and tight butts.

Little suspension of disbelief here;
Capulets, Montagues, Mercutios,

move to Prokofiev's score,
dying in their youth on stage.