

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/2

Tom Montag
AT THE MARSH

A shine of rushes in the marsh.
Autumn comes this morning.

You can wade in. You can walk away.
You can sit here in wind, in silence.

Silence does not mean sadness.
Decay does not mean death.

What flies away flies red-winged.

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THE POET DREAMS SUNDOWN

There is the long light of the setting sun.
There is dust in the air, the silhouettes
of worn buildings only half-seen, as if

I am here and not here. A western town,
this is, and I am not a western man.
Yet I taste this light, this dust, these images.

I feel the heat, the burn of light in my eyes.
I can see it now — I am in the street.
This is a gun-fight. I am not a gun-

fighter. I am a farmer. Something bites
the dirt near me. I walk forward, firing.
Something burns my shoulder. I don't stop.

I am a farmer. I walk forward, firing.
I walk towards the sun, towards a silence
that breaks into cheers. I taste the long light.

I see my friends moving towards me. I am
stumbling forward now. I can hear them

MULBERRIES

Bed sheets laid on the ground
beneath the mulberry trees.
Boys up the branches shaking
the trees fiercely, mother
and sisters bending to gather
the heaps of purple berries.

Now the boys come down
and now they wait for winter
when those berries come back
gleaming with cream and
something in them of summer.