

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/2

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Third Morning

i missed the moon-rise coz i didn't know where to look, the mercury in my eyes,
not a skeptical compass but a belief in square that works better in the city
except my birth city:

if i only had to swim back once,
if i took a long time in circling and the subtler movements of time changed just enough
i entered the wrong state, like when we visited relatives in a newer suburb
and i walked into a stranger's house, when i look in the mirror and see someone else
its time to either wake up or let my voice adjust its timbre and accent,
accept this unfamiliar collar, shoes bouncier, a 5 legged cat doesn't make me sneeze

here the gps uses the cyrillic alphabet--that's not a decimal point but a poppy seed
i draw arrows in the carpet but next day theyre circles, run through my open door
and interrupt foreplay. i could follow my nose but coffee is everywhere

"leave room for milk?" i don't know
am i gluten free, lactose intolerant, only eating three colors a day
depending on the stars. when mercury goes retrograde i binge and purge,
for the full moon i fast

the mornings ice melts in total denial
no clocks, no calendar, my pulse is thready and speaking n several voices
why do i have to duck for every door? some windows wont open,
all 3 along this wall are aquaria, one with tiny water-breathing mice of many shiny colors

when the second sun rises, approaching chartreuse, i admire the thick sienna fur
on the back of my hands. my dreams were crowded with recipes,
breakfast is about to land

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“Detroit was once America’s fourth largest city”

don’t forget the motor city:

6 mile road, 9 mile, telling you how safer you are

hugging the lake into the stubbled forests, the failed wheat.

as if the lakes were the Gulf and the rest of michigan was alabama.

sucking the ore, coal and trees from hundreds of miles away;

yanking in the scots, poles & negroes. enthralling more distant towns

who smolder tires, machine heads & coil solenoids:

shape to fit, fit to stay, run til the futures too muscled to resist

as if Chicago’s a step up

as if St. Louis and Cleveland not boogie men warming us

as the lakes eat the beach

as those who wont work for 40 cents an hour get lost in food they cant pronounce

we’re sending coal to China, we’re sending oil to France, over half our cars are Asian

if Mexico bordered some other industrial nation they wouldn’t come here

the president signs bills but he never signs a check

maybe Detroit’s ruined enough we can give it back to the natives,

as someday Texas will implode into a toxic vortex

as Los Angeles will get so thirsty only the salty can survive

when we make the first city in space, carved into an asteroid,

mining and melting whatever we can find, we’ll name it Detroit.

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Noon Fireplace Downstairs

even on the hottest day the hotels fireplace keeps burning, gas.
slowing for the midnight ghosts, unseen flares stepping into half asleep skin
strike another match, draw a square of paper on dark air

when trees stop giving milk we let them run
gliding on their own shadows like wings the wind avoids
I spread my 20 fingers beneath the relentless sun
but get neither sweeter or more energized

takes the first cold night to remind me of fire not in the sky,
sky that would rasp my fingers clean, fingernails gathering their future
with dreams of a spring no ones yet savored

what do we do with the heat we keep exiling from our comfort,
getting the oven up to 600 degrees to bake a pizza in 7 minutes
the oven so hungry & premature

every so often the first shovel into dirt brings water pungent with festering silence
more silence than we can handle with our clothes & skin removed
the moss of our souls keeps us together, our mycellial momentum carrying us
from ice to steam escaping the soil in a 30 year elevator
opening into everything