

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/3

Julia Carlson

Letter From Andrew

In your last letter you asked me
If I didn't know a woman who would marry you
Always the same question
Who will save you?
You wrote about the treatments
How they locked you up
Dried you out
Gave you a suitcase full of drugs
And pushed you out the door
Hitchhiking the next day
You were beat up and tossed off a cliff
Then lived at your brother's
Until you threatened to kill him
Violence wore your name like a badge
You called home at midnight
Cried
Said the doctors were idiots
Poisoning you
You were dying
Then I called you myself
Your voice faded in and out
Across the Atlantic
So our letters began
Our history
The fight in an Allston bar
Me knocking that guy to the floor
You dragging me away
Painting your room purple
Like the wisteria outside
Kissing and kissing and kissing
Knowing it would never work out
Both of us so wild and desperate
So we vowed to be friends forever.

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Forever seemed so safe
But it was short and too soon
And one night your head down
On that black table
Blood curdled in your lungs
And you ended.
Just like that.
Sometimes now, years later,
When I open my mailbox
And find a red and blue air mail envelope
I expect it to be yours
To find your letter inside
With the same ending
Yours Truly
Andrew S.

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The Unwanted Guest

At lunch she talks about
Her out-of-state neighbors
Who we do not know.
Pushing salad around she continues
And not nicely either.

It Rains In My Sleep

I am drowning again
They bring the obituaries
To the green box
Under the lamp
The radio is on
Jr walker and the All-Stars
The motor is running
My head falls rolling
Around under the wheel
The beach is foggy
The mountains are smoking
I spy her in the bathroom
Her legs are so long
In magenta leggings
She combs her hair
Her teeth are rotting
She puts on her lipstick
It smears. I laugh
Look at her magenta legs
I am so small
The trees have large yellow leaves
And there are so many steps
Leading to the mountain
When I crack the egg open
I climb inside
To the burning beach.