

## Wilderness House Literary Review 10/3

*Mark Luebbers*  
**Near Home**

Dust giant in the field behind the superstore, rising  
in the late sun over offices in the strained wind, built  
from worn air. The ambitious heat rises, spins  
and strides away, across the access roads,  
away from a tangle of derelict shopping carts.

Chrome baskets piled into an architecture  
of rusting discard. Wheeled feet splayed  
up in the dry weeds. The latticed tenement  
of voles and crickets, of perched starlings,  
impatient crows and spiders squatting.

A cross-hatched catch fence for coupon flyers,  
flayed cardboard, erratic plastic bottles.  
Chaff and leaves collect at the feet of small flowers.  
Wind, in discordant song, plays in the geometry  
of bent steel wire and small creatures.

Dusk wanders slowly into the space left by the wind.  
Lights from cars and parking lot reflect from the junk,  
onto shy hares, possums sidling through hairy grasses.  
A jaded, tattered fox passes in evening transit.  
All these residents in the business of procurement.

Gleaning for themselves, across the bound,  
meager landscape. Enough, or nearly so.

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### Evening Commute

Wet dusk, and all around, the land settles lower.  
Seeds, billions, sink through the leaves. Into the old  
clay. Pressed between tracts, districts, homes and stores,  
a rag of stubborn woodland reaches  
out with the hands and arms of its branches, seeming  
to smile, assured, facing toward the careless townships,  
like a proud woman, yet modest, secretly with child.

The local roads are frantic with traffic. For Sale  
signs bloom like mushrooms on the lawns.  
The storm drains are squatter homes to clans  
of raccoons, hunkering, keeping themselves  
scarce. Just enough afraid of lumbering  
Suburbans, or Labs off leash, they wait to surface  
under the street lights, and move off to the backyards,  
the gas grills, and trash cans. For now though,  
their chittering arguments rise, through the red  
drain grates rusting, and the early dark.

The road from town rolls between sore hills. Carrying  
shadows and headlights, the pavement reflects and echoes.  
Between fall and winter, the day pulls shut its door.  
Above the asphalt, wet with reflections,  
there are dark trees. Small life around the clenched feet  
of the hawthorn: something grey noses and excavates  
through the leaves, nosing, searching, in modest hope.

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### Dragonfly Atlas

These words could be written in the border margin  
of a map rendering the assembled counties of Ohio.  
The page in the bare sun presented to the reader's eye  
on the side of a county road wavering in the green heat.

The road ahead meandering and inscrutable, nameless,  
as all roads to themselves are, bisecting farms and woodlots:  
homes of creatures domestic and feral. The reader perhaps a  
pilgrim, expatriate or lost, and as such, in hope of bearing.

This map could resemble dissected arteries and organs:  
the topography of a peculiar creature rendered for study.  
The lines surveying a foreign anatomy of township,  
like a confounding specimen: illegible, though exposed.

As these words are written, the page of this map  
could be attended by a dragonfly marked red and blue:  
nameless to itself, born of connate ponds and fields.  
The clear panes and regions of its wings bordered in black.

Like roads on a map, each arterial line housing a lens, now held  
over the routes and destinations in red, blue, green, and black.  
The projected lines, the compass rose now legible, the bearing  
clear, as if foreseen, the way forward open and understood.