

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/3

Michael Estabrook

Blaise Pascal

He often saw a bottomless void
open up along his left side
making him having to cling
to his chair in terror

Sometimes temptation forced upon him
the urge to jump
or lean over
and fall in to have done with it

Or he was desperate to find a way any way
to discover some means any means
to hide it push it
out of his reach

Mostly he liked it there
a reminder of what would be
if he didn't strive endlessly
to find meaning in life

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Susan

She never said a word
not one word
to me in high school

but I never expected
her to why would she have she
was stunning – beautiful and confident

athletic and popular
with her blonde hair and tight
unstoppable teenage body

so when I received a Facebook “Friend Request”
from her I hit the “Accept” button so fast
I almost fell off my chair!

And yet I still had the audacity
to expect her to respond
to the dopey note I sent her:

“I just had to say hi
now that we are ‘friends’ on FB,
how are you?”

Of course she never responded
how could she, no of course she couldn’t
reminding me that even after 50 years

some things never change
without upsetting life’s delicate balance
reminding me that I should have remained

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tongue-tied and awestruck, content
with my humble place
within the universe's unimpeachable physics
and oddly I am.

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Another Quarrel

Minding my own business
reading David Markson's This
Is Not A Novel
in bed
when for some
reason looking beyond the vastness
that is my belly
I notice the lamp
hanging on the wall across the room
a dusty dull off-white shade contrasted
against this repetitive
bile-green flowerish pattern
leaves and sticks, begonias and whatnot
and I realize it's an ugly lamp
and I hate it.

Who bought that lamp?
My wife did you moron, you know that.

Oh yeah, guess there's nothing we can do about it then.
No, nothing, you know that.

Cluck, cluck, cluck.
You can cluck, cluck, cluck all you damn want
but the lamp stays, it's a fine lamp.

OK then, what about that bilious blubbery belly of yours
can we at least do crunches or leg raises
or something, a diet perhaps
to get that hideous eyesore into a more manageable state.

Oh for crying out loud shut the hell up!