

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/4

G.B. Ryan

I BELIEVE YOU, A THOUSAND WOULDN'T

1

I have nothing against people who bring
their screaming infants inside a sports bar –
they can't be heard when a good game is on

2

Cars strung out on an oval track
may not look like they are
traveling very fast

but when one blows a tire
you realize it is
doing two hundred miles an hour

3

I try to keep this sound advice in mind:
if you cannot be honest with yourself
at least be honest with other people

4

After two whole weeks
below freezing in New York

you lower the car window
in Los Angeles

and scents rush in like
perfume sprayed in Bloomingdales

SAY NOTHING AND I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND FOREVER

1

The ding and dong and ding and dong:
the elfin hammer blows of rhyme
that lead us merrily along
to hear the bells we know that chime.

But find totem rhymed with scrotum,
ask what elves are now in elfdom.

2

Remember that dream in which you
repeatedly knocked on the wall
and loudly wailed your daughter's name
in a cold early morning hour
so the newly arrived couple
in the apartment next to yours
wondered if the place was haunted?

3

The cat has jumped from the boxes
to the tabletop and now stands
with the tablecloth rising up
around her like Marilyn's dress
when she was caught in that updraft

4

Corroded sheets of corrugated steel
for a roof, hardly enough to keep out
the wind and rain

with massive supporting I-beam pillars,
enough to withstand itchy haunches of
wintering cows