

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/4

Molly Mattfield Bennett
Two Room School – Circa 1950

It was raining and the old man got wet bringing in the leaves
the fog horns hollered in their sleep
and the hollow people walked in puddles
their mothers didn't mind.

There's a marble in my head
if I shake
you can hear it rattle.
But I walk stiff stiff
no one knows why
and they say to me, "Tom"
(that's not my name)
"are you sick? Why do you walk stiff?"
I'm a sick stiff, and they'll come
Clang Clang
and the cars will jump
for the trees, and they'll take me
away in a red scream,
but I won't scream,
I'll bite my lucky penny
and not make a sound.
Hound sound
Sound of hounds.

LOOK OUT

Mister
I'm coming
through.

It was raining, the mail truck dove under the hedge
where Mrs. Green hides liquor bottles
the street was red, green, yellow under water
and the basset mourned something gone
Oh, I am gone long gone
and I shall be late
too late for supper

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the pie crust will be
cold wet paper
and someone will have
eaten my pudding.
They will say
"Pudding head Stupid
pudding head
there's no pudding for you."
I'll smile not say anything
unless I say I met the thing
it was horrendous.
They'll smile
and say "Yes dear
your pie is waiting."
Cold pie Pie cold
'Take it away.'
When they took Elliott
where did they take him?
I've been to school
the dentist, the zoo, but
where is away?
Away and away
to a whisper place
that's where he went.

It was raining, the green busses crawled into the tunnel
and didn't come out
the shops put on lights for burglars
the church steeples tumbled pigeons to the streets.

When the chimney swifts fell
we cried and buried them
under the roses;
they were stiff
and had no feathers.
But I am swifter than swift
and pass all the cars

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on the street.

Clang Clang

LOOK OUT

I can't stop.

Would they have taken Elliott

if someone

anyone

had out looked for him?

They said "It was an accident."

It was raining, the hedge dogs chased flowers

as headless cans grumbled in the alleys

and fat people fell home in string bags.

Hugo has a ball of string

in a bag as big as

my head. I wish

I had a room full

of string balls

each the size of my head.

Then I'd buy

funny hats for heads

and put the body-less people

at the windows.

Headless body-less

people-less people

and I

like to jump rain puddles

feet wet hair wet

all wet. But they'll say

"You've been walking

in puddles, and Where

is your hat?"

It was raining, the city hung upside down by its heels

and worms ferried aging crickets

as the streets swapped places with the river.

I AM a great green tug boat

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on the great black harbor.

I tug and push
freighters and liners

Toot Toot

I'M COMING THROUGH.

When I fought the playground
they killed my hat
and buried it
in the trash.

'Bat bat come under my hat.'

But there are no bats
and I have no hat.

It was raining, the flower shops steamed yellow and white
in the street the old man returned the sticks
he'd stolen from the gutter
and the oaks talked of a party they'd been to.

Shocked she said
'there'd be no party'
though the cookies sat
fat on the window ledge
and in the sun
the chocolate chips smudged.
Maybe she'd eat
them all herself.

There she'd sit hanging
over the edges of a chair
her mouth would yak yak
and her arms hit the air,
while we'd dance
in the aisle and jump
off the desks;
then she'd
stay after school

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by herself.
Only the bad are kept in
the very bad
the bad bad
who wear dirty socks.

It was raining, the football team got stuck in the mud
and the proud pig from across the way swam
in the river and didn't get wet,
as the moth-eaten squirrel fell out of the tree onto its head
and ran round and round
and square.

Mother will sigh
and rub my head dry
but I'll not cry, for though
my head goes to a point
it's my very own head
and I can't buy a new one
when it wears out.

If it did
I'd be Elliott
and not know
round from square
and I'd sit all day
watching the pigeons
on the blackboard.

Except Elliott's gone
away away
to a whisper place.

If she hadn't hit him
would he have stayed here
but would there have been
any here here
if he'd stayed?

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It was raining, the cars got homesick and sent flowers
nobody wanted
the geese flew over talking of snow
and the seals at the zoo ate fish
but no one laughed.

I am late late
and can't stop
for the mail
must go through; the pudding
will be gone
and Ginney will have eaten
the bears off the plate.
Elliott's got a plate
in his head;
it can't be a dinner plate
his head's too small.
I wonder if he
can feel his metal plate.
maybe that's why
he can't add
 $2 + 2 + 3 + 6 - 7 \times 9 + 21 = ???$
QUICK QUICK
QUICK FEET QUICK
you can't die yet
two blocks

over the wall
and you're safe.

It was raining, the zipper got stuck tumbling down the snow bank
the tennis ball fell in a puddle and drowned itself
and the policeman in green galoshes had the hiccups
and couldn't sit down.

Down
down
down I go
if I don't look out

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the hill will fool my fast feet
and I'll fall down
 down
down to the bottomless bottom.
I'll lie in a heap
for ever and never
for no one will find me.

I'll have a soup plate
for a head
and someone will
hit it
and it will CRACK
When they came for Elliott
he just sat
looking funny
funny sad funny bad
then clang clang
they took him away.