

## Wilderness House Literary Review 11/1

*Ace Boggess*

### **Ultra-Deep Field**

“Whenever we don’t understand something, we call it dark.”

—Father Corbally of the Vatican Observatory

to free eyes from the keyholes of the skull  
give them feet for walking crystal ladders

how better to seek out the Infinite  
than exploring farthest bubble edges of the finite?

what appear to be stars are galaxies so distant  
no one thought to look

so much to measure in these shaded fascinations  
wherever the Artist scattered paint

polishing a long lens more delicate than skin  
the Franciscan nods as he announces “I don’t know”

the human answer not the holiest: “don’t know”  
he says to questions about life destruction some space-

booted intergalactic one true God “I don’t know”  
his light heart full with unseen matter

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### Mascot Damnation

Caught up in the zeal of reading religious billboards south on I-75  
(vacation kitsch like snow globes & key chains I can't take with me  
though the posters want me to) I hit a quick stretch of *Jesus  
Loves You, Is Coming Back, Will Rescue You from Sin,*  
which leads to my misreading the next as *Mascot Damnation.*  
I almost stop the car for pause to process a lake of fire  
reserved for padded antiheroes on the sidelines at sporting events:  
the San Diego Chicken, Phillie Phanatic, Marco the Buffalo  
from my alma mater. How they must cry out, unable to appreciate  
the ultimate comic turns they've taken. It's the last slapstick,  
a fatal, final juggling dance, mitted hands held to ears pretending  
to hear applause. Then I'm past the sign, still trying to apprehend it  
with its accompanying photo of a spotted dog, black & white  
like newsprint, friendly eyes smiling up from arms of a loving fireman.  
It takes a sun-blind mile before I find my sighing moment  
making sense of the genuine slogan, what it asks, intends, although  
I much prefer my muddled version, laughter & suffering holiest of all.

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### Voice on the Phone

she called for the third time  
caught me napping in my windowless dark  
a dream—what was it?—  
swirled in my head like drops

of red dye in a can of silver paint  
while she whispered the erotic  
cutting of my ampersands &  
words without enthusiasm

*yes yes my God* I wanted to say  
as she spoke to me of things more intimate  
than couples share  
perhaps expecting argument

oh but I wanted this:  
a touch of her tongue  
to the word 'penknife'  
a murmur of her appreciation

how the phone's alarming voice  
invited her into my bed & I  
awoke to softness I embraced  
like an unlocked valise on a train