

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/1

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A Disappointing Birthday

I said I wanted a puppy
which meant
give me something
to coddle
care for
coo over
which meant
I wanted a baby
you see I gave up being christian
and feel empty
with a mind full of measurements
the distance between here
and the next planet
the distance from here to infinity
in every direction
and how a microorganism
living on the barely-there hairs
of my forearm
might be calculating the same
and what a long miserable infinity
it is to the ground
I want a baby
for the mind-numbing immediacy
of hunger
of lifting a growing body
rocking unspeakable worries
to sleep
kissing brand new skin

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A Woman's Worth in Fruit

Red, tough flesh yells yellow as I pull it apart
in search of seeds, a topping for salad or curry
a spoonful to savor after a meal. She is a fellow
woman, this bleeding specimen whose important
parts I have separated into a glass bowl.

I picture my own worth, spread across the counter,
dripping in its life force, microscopic diamonds,
futures, half-possibilities stored up in a sack
too much like the thin pale skin that separates
clusters of pomegranate seeds. She is a fellow
woman, this delicious winter fruit, shipped in
from holier places to remind us of Jerusalem:
Palestinian men trading in Jewish currency.

Ten shekel a pomegranate, ten shekel to taste
Jesus's blood. She didn't ask for this: to be a symbol
of hope, abundance, desire, prosperity,
the return of spring, a mother's love for her child.

Why does fertility inspire us?

Why is it so desirous?

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The Baby and the Bathwater

you would be amazed
at how my thermometer
for good and bad has

changed how I will stick
my hand into a bag of
bad spinach unfazed

by the smell of rot
the journey back to black earth
is an essential

embrace for kitchen
life I will not punish my-
self by pitching a full bag

of precious spinach
I will put up with the black melt-
ing corpses held back

from the grave for a
few green leaves and one
less trip to market