

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/1

Russell Rowland
Leggings

The longer I live, the more my desire
becomes like David's cup in overflow,
like costly oil poured out upon his hair.

Up-to-date young lady saunters past
in clingy leggings, second skin to thigh
and calf— anatomy's moveable feast.

Excepting the color, her buttocks look
as bare as in the ladies' changing room,
or at a midsummer evening skinny-dip.

If the innocent little boy who was me
didn't know that little girls are different,
the likes of her would be an epiphany.

Better a disapproving grandfather here
than randy old man. Since a look away
is more socially acceptable than a stare,

I will take homeward with me, in trust
for one best suited to it, in privacies of
love under cover, my ointment of lust:

running down on the beard of Aaron,
down upon the collar of Aaron's robe,
like dew which night distills over Zion.

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Rainy Memorial Day

Cub Scout sneakers, Reverend's brogues,
squish through cemetery mud as thick
as any at Gettysburg, Ypres, or Dak To.
Mud is mud. Rain has postponed a few
invasions and dampened many a victory.

It will not cancel our observance. No,
get wet is the least we can do. It does
keep speeches brief. The sound system
shorts out. One rifle misfires its blank.
Umbrella bumps umbrella during Taps.

None of us knows what it is like to fall
like the Moriarty twins in North Africa,
or imagines how the *lux perpetua* shines
through dirt's six feet, on down to dark
divisions forever impervious to the rain.

They died for this town and way of life,
says Pastor. We shift uneasily, sensing
our collective petulance, as downpours
cleans past of a present in which we
are offended at the price of gasoline.

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The Lunar Guest

Full moon of the night of nuptials trails
its reflection across rippled Meredith Bay,
like a wedding veil — after the J.P. shuts
his good book at Church Landing, once
a Catholic parish, now an inn with views.

Romantic moon. Today's happy couple
probably took what was available; did not
make their reservation with the Farmer's
Almanac open before them (just imagine
how the bottom line would escalate).

Picture-book wedding, sans extra charge.
Few weddings make or break a marriage,
yet recollection of moonlight on the soft
shoulders of bridesmaids and the gold
of rings might reconcile them, at a time

familiarity breeds contempt. By symbols
of memory held in common we are led
to harbor, like boats on the bay at night:
guided safely back to berth and hearth
and bed by an accommodating satellite.