

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/4

Marg Walker

I Heard Cathy in My Room Last Night, Singing

"I heard Cathy in my room last night
singing," my mother confides,
speaking of my sister far away.
"But I know she wasn't here."
She turns pleading eyes to me –

and I think of my son at three,
the earnest clamber into my lap
when the callous world confused him
and he trusted me to explain.

This is life, my darling.
It's difficult sometimes. I'm sorry.

"Can we go upstairs now?" my mother asks.
There is no upstairs here. No downstairs.
"She was dressed all in white."

We sit quietly in the falsely cheerful room
looking out at the blank lawn
waiting for something to happen,

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In Your Own Hands

I lived through it.

I took my time.

Night wind riffling the cottonwood
outside my open window

the kitchen corner where two walls met
and where I placed my forehead more than once

the headline posted on my refrigerator:
Scientists prove the body's supply of tears

is endless. "More bad news,"
I penciled in the margin

and went off to work. All of it
helped. Meanwhile the faithful moon

silvered my pillow. When I'd learned
enough my heart returned to me

whole and unashamed.

Let no one say you are not enough.
Let no one stop you from regarding your life

like a treasure, flawed but dear,
holding it up to the light

and turning it to radiance in your own hands.