

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/2

Dennis Herrell
Flight

If a bird wants in a bird way to go somewhere,
it flies there.

A bird is not a pilot who reads gauges
and makes decisions about fuel loads for destinations.
It doesn't worry about safe arrival on time.

If a bird needs to be in another place,
it's on the way right now.
It is not a licensed navigator who checks radar
and plots a way through fog and rain.
It doesn't have to file a flight plan.

A bird is not an engineer
who studies speed and friction,
uplift under a wing,
density of its skeleton -
this miracle called flight.

A bird doesn't think about how its wings
will get to that other spot.
It just wants to go,
pursue the ever-greener tree.

For some reason or not,
a bird wants to fly.
And so it does.

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Poetry in Decline

I get tired by old men
writing poems about growing old.
It makes my hand tremble
more than usual,
and anger provokes more drool
than ever down my unshaven chin.
That poetic tripe sours my disposition
to eat what nurse brings for supper.
Reading their clichéd nonsense
clouds my mind so
that I can't remember
what I might want to write about.

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Self- Exam

She held her breasts,
one cupped in each hand,
questioning by touch and thought,
looking down
and wondering
if they were not as perfect
as they seemed.

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Twelve People Waiting for a Trial

My seat neighbor looked a geek,
a narrow body eating a banana
along with wheat crackers
while doing serious computer things.

The woman across the aisle
crossed her legs 22 times extremely well.
The fabric swish and flash of long legs
helped me to pass the time.

I overheard nearby lawyers
conferring with their clients about bad checks,
dwi's and past convictions, and saw
one dancing man always making a point.

Deana, my neighbor on the left, talked
along about a tv special and how much she liked books.
She had beautiful bare feet in sandals and I studied them
too long for 80 minutes while pretending to read.

The geek then discovered
he had an apple in his plastic grocery bag.
It was a huge apple, red and crisp, and soon
juice and pieces of flesh were falling into his lap.

Just as my eyes began to tire
from watching legs and feet and falling apple pieces,
the bailiff summoned us to court,
where the high judge sat, looking like Sonny Bono.