

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/3

*Dov Weinman*

**Im-i-sul-étiku**

*Missoula, Montana*

there the glaciers walked—carved earth —  
formed the narrow valley that holds the river  
that the Salish people followed into the  
flat prairies to the east

they named the place *im-i-sul-étiku*,  
place by the cold chilling waters,  
where Blackfeet men hid in the trees  
along the steep slopes

years later the French trappers, afraid,  
gave the place a name of their own  
calling it *Porte De l-Enfer*—  
they called it Hell Gate

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### Camas

Blue-stars bloom in early summer,  
suspended in native grasslands with  
faces opened waiting for fly-by kisses.

They grow west of the mountains  
and follow the contours of rivers  
all the way to the jagged coast.

In these places the people will return  
and lift the ground away like  
pulling the sheets off a sleeping child.

They will hold the bulb in palm  
and wonder if it keeps its memories  
asking it, are you Death?

They will place the prairie barrel-capsules  
pale as salt against soil like charcoal,  
sweep their rough hands over the ground,  
dark earth carpeting the bulbs  
the same way dusk blankets the afternoon.

A year from now they'll follow the same trails,  
notice the same flattened spaces from  
bedded down does and their spotted fawns.

They'll feel a heavy weariness,  
perhaps divided of a little more hope,  
wishing they could just lie down and  
find their rest among the crushed grasses.

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### A Cage in Cincinnati

with her tawny colored head pivoting in  
that bird-twitch way typical personi-  
fies them as so curiously alert Lady Jane  
spends her last days dying in a cage in  
Cincinnati

her sunflower shoulders her green feath-  
ered robes

mottled and beginning to fall a few at a time  
to the stained newspaper lining the cage's  
bottom listlessly she drags her crumpled  
tail hunting out fallen birdseed dragging  
she marks the complete extinction com-  
plete end of the Carolina Parakeet