

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/1

Monty Jones

Linotype

We were twenty-nine or thirty – little smudges –
lined up or bunched however we could manage
so we could see the man at his performance,
pulling one letter after another out of the air

to cast a literal line of type anyone could read
the next morning. Suez or Birmingham in flames,
a southside woman murdered, the Dodgers beaten
in Game 5, Ike scratching his wise bald head again.

The letters opened out before him like an organ,
and he, a Schweitzer to our savage ignorance,
composing, as they did call it, a song of the world,
his fingers flying across the racket of the keys.

It seemed a shame, after so much toil, to break it apart,
to have to make out of that jumble a new work every day.