

Wilderness House Literary Review 15/2

Barrett Mohrmann
Covid-19

Silence hung like a bad omen,
a druid curse dangling from an elm branch.
The Olentangy swept past, mud-slicked
and littered with black branches.

The Horseshoe stood gray against a
sky stone-washed with cloud.
Distant, spectral, the arena appeared
to vanish into that indefinite plane.

Where cheers and jeers once swelled in
waves crashing in white foam against the jetty,
the stadium now resembled a still, silver
pond where lowland birds might wade and fish.

A single fluttering finch broke the stillness,
threads and twigs caught in its beak, preparing
for the impending storm, neither tree
nor shelter in sight.

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A Widow's Pillow

She worked by lamplight,
cutting his letterman jacket that
sixty years later, still smelled of the timber
farm near their high school.

In the cool, autumn months when
buzz-saws whined, the cedars reached
out and farewell-kissed their warm
fragrance onto passersby.

The bergamot and spice of his Pall Mall
cigarettes lingered, muddled with
the drugstore aftershave of
nocturnal, teenaged flings.

Checking the dimensions, she sowed
the woolen fragment over her pillow, the
Gurdon Go-Devil grinning up at her,
the fabric pulled taut over phantom muscles.

Smiling, remembering, she held the
pillow to her cheek, breathing deep the
ether of their youth, feeling his heat
return to her flesh.

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Sing Moon

Sing Moon, with your buttermilk voice
and that country lilt that rings like
green bottles chiming in the graveyard.

Sing Moon, let your breath of gardenias
cool the earth and ferry dandelion
silk over the valleys.

Sing Moon, shawl yourself in silvery
light and clouds rattling with thunder
Like coins in a rusted coffee can.

Sing Moon, weep over houses
marked by sorrow, where laughter remains
like the gray ghosts of old paintings upon a wall.

Sing Moon, settle into your bed
of purple cosmos with one last kiss to
the sun, across the blue shoulder of Mother Earth.