

Wilderness House Literary Review 16/3

Bruce Morton

Laundry

Hung out to dry, they move
Dancing disembodied
In the breeze, colors not
At all coordinated. Not
To mention unmentionables
There for all to see. Neighbors
Will no doubt talk, naming
Them in the daily gossip. So
It is in the airing out of laundry.

So she thinks as she pins each
Piece to the line and pushes it
Out, turning the pulley, each
After the next, until the line is full.
She leaves the basket empty
On the porch, to be filled when she
Pulls in the line, harvests her crop,
Dry, folding it fresh, her basket full.
Let the neighbors say what they will.

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Scarecrow

A scarecrow left out in
The field, alone, attired
In someone else's scrap.

He sags. Flour-sack wan is
His complexion. Rictus
Stitches worn on his face,

At a loss for the joke. One on
Each shoulder, two crows
Await the night with caws.

Button eyes, small, somewhere
Between a squint and wince.
The last straw — to endure.

He shrugs in the cold wind.

Cracked Ice

The cracking ice is loud
Enough to make us stop,
Anxious to be on the lake.
Consoled that thin ice sounds
Like the crinkle of cellophane,
Not the boom of the rifle.

We feed the fire building
In the fifty-gallon drum
Set out on the ice to beat
The cold, to warm us,
The hockey players that
Brueghel would have painted

If he had time travelled
To Connecticut. But Jesus,
Walking on water is easy
In winter. We skate on rough
Ice, the snow newly shoveled.
The shots go easy with no goal

Slap shot after slap shot cracks
The cold air, echoes crisp
Across North Farms Reservoir
While we disciples lean on our sticks
Huddling close to the barrel together,
Thinking it will be miracle if we play.