

Wilderness House Literary Review 16/3

Joseph Kleponis

Light in the Morning

There's a hole on the horizon, chainsaws
Did it, I'm sure, but I did not pay heed
As they snarled and growled their way through the trees.
They're common, the sounds that is, we hear them
Every day – the hum of the lawn mower,
The whine of the string trimmer, the roar
Of the leafblower. They're summer sounds,
Our scared suburban symphony,
That we welcome in early spring, thankful
That winter is finally being beaten back
By the crescendo of rising light,
And we take to shaping our neighborhood –
Machines stemming the growth that advances
Over and toward our houses, our decks, patios.
So it doesn't surprise me that I missed
The rasping rattle of the chainsaws that surely
Ate a hole in the distant treeline.
That certainly explains why there's sunlight
Where there's been no direct sunlight
For years; why the aggressive fingers
Of the rising sun push through the blinds
Waking us from dreamy sleep. That is why
The mourning dove has returned singing
Its repeated lament, for the neighborhood
Hawk, stripped of its perch has gone elsewhere
In search of cover as it seeks its prey.
For now, things are different, but that too
Will change as change surely comes once again.

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Forest Bathing

There was that morning we took a walk
Along that wooded path around the lake
To escape the rising noise of the day,
The chatter of news that seemed to drown us.
Sun filtered through the just-leaving trees,
Warming us and heating the still damp ground.
Dormant leaves, as if having their own mind,
Began to rise in a swirling ballet
Opposite of their long spiral from branch
To earth, where we expected them to stay,
Resting in decay. We were struck silent.
This defiant dance filled our heads with thoughts
Of magic, of incomprehensible
Forces bent on overthrowing nature's
Constitution, supplanting what should be
With a new unthinkable order, but
Even leaves rising on a windless path,
An event that seems to topple reason
Has explanation, if only we trust fact.

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Matins

Repeated incantations and visions:
birdsong breaking the silence of darkness,
gold and then powder blue pushing away
the purple blush of night's fading veil...

We are blessed by hope at the horizon,
the ritual of a new day for us,
independent of us, always ongoing...

The first light of morning is a prayer
By which we consecrate our daily tasks.