

Wilderness House Literary Review 16/3

Tomas O'Leary

What the Geezer Wants

I'd half a mind
(the old man writes)
to give you a piece of my mind
about your wanton shenanigans
that raised the awfulest racket
a brain in search of a thought
has ever been subjected to,
but as I was poking about
in my garden of struggling fruits
and thriving weeds
the next morning, it dawned that
what I truly rue is
you failed to invite me,
your neighbor way hipper than you
though I'm four times your age.
Now you're all dead asleep
from your nightlong production of
idiot hoots and roars, songs
blasting and screams of glee,
while here am I, bereft of all but
the memory of your noise.
Next time you do this
I'll party among you, else
call my important connections
and make bloody sure
you'll be run out of town.
(And he tacks his note to their door
with a dead rose tucked under.)

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Novice Challenger Takes a Crack at Print

If it were merely to spite the fool who saw me
as more the fool than he most utterly is
I'd not be bothering your worthy brains
with my rebuttal to the slipshod slanders
he snottily slung me in yesterday's edition
claiming I am so many things I'm not
I grew momentarily rabid reading it
over my morning egg (might've choked to death
but for grace of my back-whacking wife)
I'll not speak ill of him, he is detestable
beyond the refined constraint I exercise
for the sake of civil discourse, I even
consider him my dear friend in a way which
escapes definition. Yet in our battle of wits
it is clear he has none while I am replete
if mildly upset beyond gracious solicitude.
Let me share a small secret: I'm new at
composing a letter to the editor and solicit
your candid remarks because my candidacy
depends on the open mind of every voter
and I need you to know I speak as your next mayor.

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Now That War

Now that war is in
the pancake batter, the kids
fortified for their morning march
to school and war-themed learning,
the Pentagon can breathe
easier knowing its ranks will be
freshened with after-school blood
in that immanent future conjectured
by the guardians of war
who are sworn to snatch us victorious
from the jaws of peace.

How war gets into the batter
is so secret, no one knows.
Peace itself must be kept most secret
even as it seems to exist,
lest the idea of it hobble a nation
at its best when war threatens.
And the kids go off to school
full of pancakes and vague ideas
about how they must grow to the challenge
treason throws them in the guise of peace—
and truly it's a hell of a mess,
and who's going to question those pancakes.

Pipers on the Moor

Oh such a fierce gust bent
the pipers' skirled notes and raced up
their kilties as they strove
to keep faith with a grand old tune,
"Scotland the Brave" . . .

Indeed they did acquit themselves
nicely, the wind no match
for full-blast blowing into bags
that ballooned and were squeezed
to push air through a piper's reeds.

Had you happened by the moor that day
you'd no doubt of the power of the pipes
to sound brave and equal with nature
even in driven weather, but why in hell
must they do this by the moor.

It was an awkward trek for villagers
who wanted the fullest experience of
the thrilling noise of the pipers.
It was only the notes that were played
yet they knew all the words.

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Savor the Moon

Savor the moon for that lunar flavor
you taste with your ice cream
and the sound of waves

Stars twinkle like golden jimmies
on your triple scoop that dribbles
from cone to wrist

Through the soles of your feet
a chorus of vacant shells
crunches the dry sea code

The moon, the waves
and the streaming ice cream
integrate the senses

No moment outdoes
any other for grace, why not
wake up in this one

Often the impulse
to seize on faint outlines
rubs time the wrong way

What a good idea it was
to come out here by yourself
hopeless and open