

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/1

Alexander Etheridge

Lorca

He is a light falling through water.
He changes,
moving among orchards and prayers.

The gacela looks for birds at nightfall.

I can hear the bull and the horse
running on the moon.

I've let the stars in through a door
in the side of my head—
I can see the shore of a different ocean
and wings catching fire
above the trees.
I can hear a funeral song
in Granada.

He listens for a voice in the lightning.
I've waited for him on the
other earth
where centuries changes into
grass, and where he walks
toward the green moon.

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Pictures of Abigail

Empress of the Psalms
I learn your open eyes

By milk riddle and glance you startle
a listening of the cedars, ravens
over the sand
and we know that you've come

I send my asking up to you

Summer in the ruins
and smoke in the salt wells
June's drought
burns the black honeycombs

But through the marrow and thorns a crawl tunnel leads out
to sapphire light



Your high windows watch the hundred lakes
Little bells

follow the mouth of the sunrise
There's a trail up to the tower
and great open cypresses
ranged by the sugar fields

You gaze the apricots
girl of the minor key, candle eye
beneath the forest arches

And the streams bring their word to the white of your hand

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Even I know this
a roving shade far from the tower

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World Alone

Of white marble — white seas
turned by the halo wind.

Be here where God is not.

It's all been given up — office towers and grain silos,
libraries and telescopes . . . a stairwell leading down
into the grave. Everything's lost
in the rubble of continents.

The thread runs bare when the dawn comes.
Be here.

Of massive craters in the ocean floor.

Of snowdrifts and cathedral dust,
the illegible voicelessness—

There's an open window in the empty
hospital, and tracks leading out into the stones.

And each thing everywhere
is left to its own
great solitude.