

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/2

Cameron Morse

Episodes

March is having psychotic episodes of rain
snow, never mind which, with Arlene's
magnolia cracking open its first buds
down the street and mommy awaiting discharge
with baby at Centerpoint Hospital,
our other children froth and smash their war
path to bed with where's mommy's and mommy hugs.
Daddy, I am neither here nor there.

I want to believe a new beginning is what grins
through the riptide at midnight and not just another victim
of the Ripper on the foggy streets of London,
another season of The Walking Dead. The child
is a bud, a frostbitten thumb on the tongue,
a warm bath bringing back the yes again.

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/2

Heart Monitor

I could hear the whomp of your heartbeat
a while before you appeared, daughter
conceived in the window between
me getting off chemo and back on it again,
daughter delivered above an atrium
of bedraggled trees and the watercolors
of rain, Dillard's and the Independence Center,
forgive me for putting off death
a little while longer to be here despite the lost
left hand, misplaced somewhere, like the pen I am
constantly in search of. I know it's a raw deal
you're getting. Your siblings have already
received the best of me, but here
is your dwindling share.

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/2

Staring at the Screen

Snowfall a staticky screen at the window,
an interrupted sentence. I have lost
reception, drifting beyond the tower's reach
the way my left hand's lost its connection
to the source: Cut off from the electrical
wellspring of the brain, my rowboat rocks.
My blood oscillates on a colder current of ice.
Frequently, I find it difficult to believe
in anything. The clear signal I started out with
has ruptured. There are stark intervals
of silence, rolling blackouts, and the silk screen
of distances does not part. Inside the house,
inside the cocoon sewn into the hem
of my robe, I hold a grudge, a boiled grub.

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/2

Golden Acres

My grandparents are gargoyles
in this dream. A wormhole swallows
the woman I married in her sunhat
and dark shades steering a white Toyota
Sienna through the neighborhood
I was born in, all of a sudden, outside
my son's preschool, Hanthorn. I go missing
in the passenger seat. The woman,

Chinese, in this dream, turns the wheel.
The wheel turns and I vanish.
The first six years of my life swivel.
It's as if I never boarded
the plane. The preschool vanishes.
Our son was never born and now he's four.

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/2

Lost in the Showroom

You can imagine in the labyrinth constructed
to confuse the minotaur that you are the minotaur,
lugging the head of a bull through compact
kitchenettes and TV rooms. On your way back
from the bathroom, you are surprised
that all the books are now in Swedish, though
you have never been to Sweden
and outside the rat's maze it's actually Miriam, Kansas.
What the hell, right? Your hooves are stilettos
clicking among the shrieks of the young, echoing
through plasterboard displays of the family
you have lost somewhere in the twists and turns,
the switchback of years trying to find your way back,
and rejoin your mother, sister, daughter, wife.

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/2

Schopenhauer

My student gets a discount ticket
for the exhibit at Union Station:
Auschwitz. I'm scared of what
my entrance might cost me, how
many days might flap off. Sitting
in a café during the abortion, reading
Schopenhauer, as if I had no say,
no stake, no scorpion in my pocket.

I climb out of the driver's seat, my license
expired, my membership. I may not
listen to the valley song of the living
bird below the parking lot, plagued
by phantom flocks, the suffering
of the factory chickens in my salad.