

## Wilderness House Literary Review 17/2

*Joyce Wilson*

### **Riddle**

*When love can be two things at once*

Blessed are the children who can see  
two faces when the sadder one is scowling,

Who know the touch of the rose's sharper thorns  
beneath the rosy castle of the worm,

Who reach between the double window frames  
Where wind is caught like feathers in the frost,

Who follow saturated banks between  
The stones to find a path, a grassy road

Where willow branches hang like silken strings  
Of a harp, in tune, waiting to be played.

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### My Mother's Blues

She tied her unconventional habits  
Around her waist and fastened them with a pin.  
When other women wore printed muslin,  
She wore those trousers rescued from the Blitz.

When other women harvested the same  
Species of beans and corn from local seed,  
My mother celebrated every weed  
And learned to recognize each one by name.

My father was enamored of her gifts  
And praised her for her ingenuity  
But not their daughters' sexuality—  
He died before these matters hardened into rifts.

When other women feared the years that rob  
Their youth and take the luster from their skin,  
My mother moved away to Washington,  
Fixed up a rented house, and got a job.

And when she reached the limits of her years,  
She summoned up her winning turns of phrase  
And savored pleasure in her dwindling days  
And watered blues of oceans with her tears.

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### Skating on Kuerner's Pond

We skated all afternoon in circles  
determined to dig in our blades  
where the house on the hill above us  
seemed tipped and pitched at an angle,

a home for the difficult people,  
the ones we knew and didn't know,  
who were strange and hard to handle  
with stories of mayhem and wars.

We scored the surface of the pond  
determined to make our mark  
before we too would soon slide off  
and plummet into history  
underneath the ice.