

Wilderness House Literary Review 18/1

B. Lynne Zika
Dice

Heal the one who carries your sickness.
Heal the rapist, the senator,
the husband drinking Chivas at the local bar.
I carry Eros in the womb of thought;
Yahweh strikes my veil.
Even the sirens pause when my feet
dance the grasses in the field.
How can I choose only laughter
or life over death
when in our wakes we feed each other
and do what needs to be done.

I misread a sign and am whipped,
and even when they bring glasses
and set the black frames on my nose,
the mother does not bend.
In the piney wood I built an altar
and worshipped the self I would be when I am gone
and was glad for the gladness I would someday have.
Who, then, can I become when there is no more of me,
and how can I celebrate a joy I used yesterday
for tomorrow's peace?

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I buried the locket Sister Ala gave me,
and when I returned to claim my doubloons,
the field was a corporate office
and the cotton gone.

Yesterday I weeded the corn
standing on a plank
with the red clay gummed to my shoes
and strawdust clods in my heart.

I wear a bewildered body,
choke-stumbled grasp my only hold
against flying time-betokened home.

Come. Your warrior heart
will birth the child you were
and your withered breasts suckle the maid.

Listen, I've waited for the phone call
that never comes.

The silence is roaring.
I hear myself, finally,
able to speak.

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Sky Writing

This is where I knew I was going to be famous,
by the fence weeds, a tetherball chain
still creaking nearby.

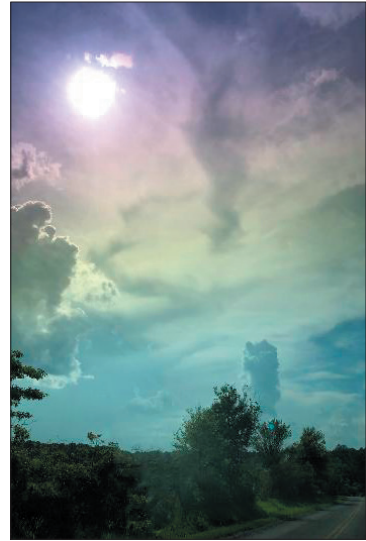
I stood there quietly, listening to a rasping saw
in the next yard over. The ropes were not even
chafing my hands or feet.

I was a ghost already,
watching my skirts whip around me,
nothing but a clothesline
hobbling me to the ground.

This is the airplane that made white letters
scatter across the sky. One is shrinking,
bent on becoming invisible.
The paint is cracking on the planks of the fence.
A line of blue holds on. This is the way

my hair blew across my eyes, still blue,
the left one already listing inward,
keeping watch. That's my quill
and my jar of ink. From a distance
the back walls of the shed turn grey.
Buildings wash themselves of color.
Walls are kind that way.

This is my satchel and those are my tennis shoes
marking the lawn; the flint of that knife
belonged to the boy who came and cut me loose.
I think I am hungry. I think my arms
are white. There's a bowl at the end of my nose.
Usually I am barefoot. No one ever mentions



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the fellows who tied me.
No one ever says why four boys
tethered a girl like me to a post,
as if I might fly away, as if
a schoolyard couldn't hold me
and I might escape
from our patch of playground shade.
No one ever wonders how I had the patience
to wait.



