

Wilderness House Literary Review 18/1

Dana Ravyn
Ovation

Your hands lure damask notes
from the ebony of your violin,
nuzzle a tiger sealed in shellac.
Hands that ignite skin,
exsanguinate lemons.
Wide to swaddle a child's tears,
insect-like lacemakers.

You fold them, a chalice.
to cup moonlight blood.
It sifts through,
confetti settles,
consecrates
my belly.

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anniversaries

rain slips off the roof
to dead leaves,
a metronome counting
echoes of my footsteps
toward a vague future.

In my age every day
is the anniversary
of something.
i ratchet through days,
the cistern brimming
with dreams.

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Irreconcilable

I'm used to being stalked by paper and pen,
but these occupy the room.

A bomb. Which wires to snip? I cut them all
but can't disarm it. Red light pulses. Ticking.

Pages of accounts reconciled to cents,
but no accounting, no reconciliation, no sense.

How to allocate Christmas Eve ardor
on the floor before orange tendrils,

snap pirouettes from birch logs,
Winton Marsalis blanket of blue snow

for us, 'twas the night. I watched you sleep,
perfume of seasons coalesced in your breath,

sugar plum dreams. There is no place
to divide it on this form.

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On the Anniversary of My Mother's Death

"I miss you more than remember you."

—Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*

Cold December night,
the naked dark, a reluctant
home for remembrance.

Memories of you
ageless as lichen,
always facing north,
just away from sunlight,
each layer forgetting
the one beneath.

Love for you
roams empty boulevards,
sleeps on steam grates,
under blankets
frayed by years.

Your blood lopes
in my veins,
your eyes stare out
from my mirror.

The parts of you
that made me are
nomads now,
with no place to go.

Where is the thing
I was made for?

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At last, unappeased echoes,
swallowed by the longing
of trees. They drop
their head to a garden of
milky lichen.