

Wilderness House Literary Review 18/2

Garth Pavell
Luckily I Was Fired

The boss said
he could not
control me so
naturally I was
flattered to go
to my corner
store and free
earth-scented
peanut butter.

I never liked
sitting all day
at a computer,
feeding people
caged words
advertising
ungraspable
recognition
of birdsong.

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Ruminations of a Plant Man

Within the Empire State Building lives a business man who works for the railroad. He says, I'm just a paper pusher. When I visit his office so full of itself, the locomotive logo levitates from the tracks that climb the walls in the clouds above its bylaws.

I've got friends in high places, he jokes, and leans back when I come to care for the potted Ficus tree that's been losing leaves ever since his new admin soaked the soil until the roots could not breathe air through the earthen pores of the tan terracotta clay.

I dump the excess water from the plant tray and push the pot away from Earth's hot flashes by the window and wonder aloud how we got here. I was hired right out of college, says the businessman, while you were an English major. He laughs as leaves yellow in light.

He triumphantly initials my scorecard of horticulture horrors so my boss can bill him for his insensitivities and then I get in the elevator littered with lunch people that scatter into midtown's hot and cold countries, not aware they are being dragged by the global food chain.

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Love kills

if there's too much or too little
bad weather, Willard said, you
got to get the tension just right.

I tasted coffee through a paper
straw and listened to him share
the inner workings of his lawn

care business as I rode shotgun
in the sun, heading to a big yard
at the top of the Hollywood Hills.

Grass is passive aggressive, he
went on, you can't just sit back
and enjoy the silence otherwise

your cucumbers get strangled,
you dig? I dug and said the land-
scaping business reminded me

of a girl back east, she once dyed
my hair to look like a cold sunset
until our growing pains smeared.

Don't mourn accidental love,
Willard said, our job is to cut
grass into an upright citizen.

That's how people in the house
see it, he assured. I got out of the
truck and mowed down the west

side of the lawn while Willard

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pruned a tree poking from the
shadow of a neighbor's facade.

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(Bumbling) Love (Confession)

When we took shrooms and I said
you're a cute kind-looking potato,
it was not a psychedelic statement.

I always felt you looked that way
especially lying naked in the tire-
tattooed dirt road up at Blind Lake.

I tell you now because I want us
to put away chopping boards and
farm the hell out of our first crop.

Hoe the hardnosed images of each
other into easygoing free verse that
sing of down to earth asymmetrical

love. So what if ur potato-shaped?
Your antioxidants and electrolytes
turn me on! Wow, I'm craving carbs.

But before I get a little snack I want
to send this poem and see if there is
a possibility we can start over, over.

Gosh, this was half-baked but I hope
it makes ur dirty dimpled smile come
say smear me with your salted butter.

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Prehistoric Conversation

existed before beer-toned babes with booby-trapped dresses spritzed in perfume ached for the ambient touches of the alien meteor showers, you lean over and playfully explain.

I suggest this means nature's ingredients dose the unconscious to connect as I drink my way to the stool standing on the corner and clink your pink lipstick-tattooed glass.

A candlelit moon bounces off your nose ring when you say beer blindfolds after I order us another round and guess backwards, wishing I could bend the romantic rules into your ass.

The future is creeping in, you profess as if a spell has been cast inside the outside dim patio where we sip liquid love until talking takes off words and our lips hold its breath.