

Wilderness House Literary Review 18/2

Peter Urkowitz

When Next We Meet

When next we meet

The old historian will bring axle grease

The questioner will bake galaxies

My auntie will make her enigma salad

The pastor will bring her book of pterodactyls

And I will carry my capybara in her pelican palanquin

When next we meet

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We'll ring the carillon five times around

We'll dance in the reactor spent fuel pond

We'll break open the casks from the celandine poppy

You can ride in the widebody jetstream with Molly

While I yoke up the oxygenation event

When next we meet

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My brother in law will call his halogen lanternfish

Back from the skies with its struggling prey

My uncles will pull down the branches

So the little cousins can pluck farthings

The sandlions will lie in wait with their puzzles

For the young philosophers

With their two legs, three legs, five arms

When next we meet

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A New Heaven

I lit a fire on the kitchen table
Kicked it off onto the floor
Set the drapes alight
Picked up a hammer and nails
And commenced to building a new house
While the old one was still burning

I read in a book pulled from under a pile of books
Where I had toppled over the shelves
"As if a mighty river overflowed"
Slammed the book closed
Opened it again
But could not ever find that page

The weight of time crushing my spinal column
Gangs of weasels churning the butter in the pail
Buffalo cyclists roaring across the Great Plains
Meteors slamming to earth all around the jamboree pit
Ten thousand cheese mongers pause at noon to sing

Pain in my knee
Can't see through this mist
When the emancipated sharecroppers
Harvested the coreopsis
For its medicinal powers
They found the weevils in the root nodules
Were the secret ingredient all along
Buyers at the market weren't too keen though,
Despite the testimonials of famous chefs

Everyone is afraid of dying
But I bet I'm more scared than you
But even I am not as afraid

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As those guys over there
Building a whole new heaven

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Owl Sanctuary

My childhood home is now an owl sanctuary
The cat is digging in my bag, looks like a lotta poetry in there
Would make a tasty snack if he could understand it
Whiskers picking up the radio station next valley over
I called them to request they play more treats, we're hungry over here.
Munching on the cap of the pen, trying to squeeze some words out of it
A few quatrains for lunch could get us through naptime
But it's the dark hours before dawn when we wake up starving
So we yowl at Mama's bedside until she writes us a few rhyming couplets