

Wilderness House Literary Review 18/3

Glen Armstrong
The Have Nots

We've chosen fire
over our last wooden chair.

Another storm approaches.
My daughter changes

the station,
on a radio that no

longer exists.

Jellyfish

Uncertainty that foot
and footprint

have any causal bond
ruins my day at the beach.

These teenagers seem to think
that jellyfish

have no souls.
When I was their age,

I was loud
and empty and did my best

to communicate that nothing
had a soul.

I failed miserably.
When I was their age,

ghosts were never photographed
in anything other

than bedclothes.
Souls and nightgowns.

Sand and impression.
It was as if no one ever died

in a J. Geils Band tour shirt
and cut-offs.

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Now ghosts are aliens
or skittery orbs

of light that wash our way
intermittently

from an ocean that never existed.

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Something Light Never Agreed To

I found a wife, and together we found an apartment. She found the building manager aloof and condescending, but I sensed in this snaker of clogs and twister of lightbulbs a scuffed soul, a man estranged from words.

A window hides all but what it displays: a sidewalk in need of rain, a passerby in green shoes. Summer loiters, making ill-advised wagers with wind sheers and power outages. It knows we can see it; it gives us the finger.

There was that one photograph that forever revealed too much. To this day, I regret talking it. There would never again be hats to wear, meals to prepare, polite conversation. You were a flower designed by a catatonic. You were something light never agreed to.