

## Wilderness House Literary Review 19/1

*Lenny Dellarocca*

### **That Wonderful Theory**

The equation is of a humble hand that saves the idiot world  
from gargoyles  
of a savage god.

Someone has risen  
from the rhetoric  
with a mandrake.

She says, Galaxies  
shine in the smallest things.

She says, There is glory  
in the darkness. She says,

Love makes the last walnut  
in a never-ending cupboard  
a meal. She says, Fools

fall up the ladder of  
bewilderment. She says,

What grace there is in death  
shines like coal. The dying  
woman on the verge of ninety-six finds laughter  
in the palm of her hand.

She has come to break  
the backs of wolves  
that believe their own howls.

Miss Ninety-Six, woman  
with a soothing mother tongue  
for every crushed star.

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The equation. She drew it  
in her sleep, which means  
there's more than  
Fibonacci in the numbers,  
more than dark matter  
in the space between us.  
Kiss one of us here,  
says she, and one of us  
is kissed on the other  
side of the moon. It's a kiss that saves the wicked world.

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**A New Way of Falling Asleep Has Been Discovered**

*-John Ashbery*

How could anything so fundamental be so overlooked.  
Something as obvious as this  
should have been found  
in the beginning,  
at the invention of zero,  
when folks thought  
a hole in the ground  
went as deep as  
the other side of the world.  
My friend Jack said  
he knew. Watched horses  
sleep standing up.  
A clue, he said. Look  
at them run, burning  
at the edge of sundown,  
fall off, come back.  
And clouds.  
All of them give up like balloons. Or friends  
who drift away.  
But the sun knows best  
how darkness comes.  
Half its life it's been  
spinning fire to keep  
the world awake.  
But Jack said he knew  
a new way to do it,  
sleep wild and easy.  
Came to him in a dream.

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Too bad life kicked  
him out. The heroin angel  
said Go to your room.  
Say goodnight. But I say,  
come back, come back  
like those horses, Jack.  
You. You're the one who knew all along where to look.

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### The Last of the Balloon Dancers

leaves the festival with eyes that say We're finished.

And it's true.

Their playful movements

have lost their

daydreams.

Once called

sweetly cushioned,

and wonderfully plump

by folks who

knew such things,

the still-limber

aerialists gasp for air.

Gone too their famous

story-telling

with color wheels

and bubble wands.

But we still want their fat ludicrous twirls, hand stands

on the tops of archery

targets, the way they

bounce sky high

when a boy

with his tuba

finally gets it right.

Naked mothers

wait on the lawn,

and after they watch

the dancers topple

with little

pops of breath,

they lift them

carefully, place them—

so drowsy now—in

children's toy boxes. We'll never see the likes of them again.