

Wilderness House Literary Review 2/4

Helen R. Peterson

Bye, Bye Love

Embers still chatter in blackened grass
memory of the house here--
and here--
running through a road now gone to tar
a school once, this rectangle of glass/sand
burnt between... church? post office?
...something. there. rock hewn and crumbling
gasping ash wisps of unread declarations
no heart left to quicken, no heads to turn.

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Fragmented

Today I wrote empty basement feelings
your 5 o'clock jaw line like home –
I am home sick arms wasted spoons cracked
bottles shoes left in the fridge, grapefruit in
the closet, cupboards Mother Hubbard bare.

Leaving me dog starved dog tired, dogged
selling the good beer steins on Ebay
giving the rest away, erasing your was
in preparation for the maybe—

starved for attention
I eat a lot of pastry,
(no one misses a fat woman)
as I spread out you whither
wither, Mr. Sprat?
whist, Fat?

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Jan Van Tristan

"Five minutes, Jan" the stage manager calls
but his rush is lost on me. Three performances
today, last one to go, and Honeybaby,
it's beginning to show.

I lean back from the mirror glare to examine
my mother's ice cruel eyes.
"You aren't *my* son," she's said—
Adjusting my lipstick, I bat
eyelash curtains at the proof winking back at me.

Wrapping myself in feathers and curls,
I exit my room in a sparkle of pink
and make my way out of the womb backstage.
Hearing in the tight darkness the faint restless murmurs
that give way to shouts of love and applause I burst forth:
Reborn.