

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

Martha Boss

old lady mile

I'm sporting a satisfied smirk.
it's supposed to come from walking outside
& serotonin to promote accurate recall.

I did the mile.
I used to call it the housewife's mile.
now I call it the old-lady mile.

which equals the distance
measured by the miles between servitude
& the strength left to do the morning laps.

in other words,
the ground covered in,
how do I get out of a marital mess,
turning into thank goodness
now all I have to think about
is walk outside, stir up some chemicals & carry ID

the ID can't begin to say the miles it took & takes
to arouse immeasurable in-hiding hormones
& I should let them take the credit?

I don't think so.
no. in old lady steps,
making things up, reinventing true adversity,
then proceeding to names & faces
trading places
makes an authentic memoir.

imagination in good shoes
accounts for my silly smile.

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crossing

oh the walked-over bridge
is long
& longer
in the cold wind.

one bridge, on one day
can be like a lifetime
of all the "I'll cross that bridge
when I come to it"
times.

the expanse of ice.
the inching up to
the cold leaf edge.

the rocks stored warmth
imparted to the
hard hugging water
to the bed
where questions settle.

my strides to beat
the recall
of collapsed connections.

this & more
to the other side,
forever away.

then, at last,
crossed
& looked back on,
that same old bridge,
looking different.

hammer pangs

mornings from my window
are heavenly,
watching the rooftop work
pretending I'm a carpenter
or a crane operator
raising & lowering the city.

now it's a moonlit night.
the hammers are quiet.
the cranes sleep.
I drift off & in a dream
become a giant crane, a bird
remodeling the cosmos.

my wingspan wide as a continent.
my black hole gullet
sucking up all abominable things.
my talons the best tools.

hammer hammer hammer
pings & pangs
into wrap around gold
the great bracelet space.

when my work is finished
I awake
& get back into my robe of real world,
back on the scaffold,
picking up
the feathers from heaven.

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for my 77th birthday

I bought crest teeth whitening strips
& black eyeshadow .
pretty scary.

when I went to open my apartment door
to go out
& empty the garbage
the doorknob fell out of the door.

I was struck dumb standing there stupid.
a knob in each hand,
2 black eyes,
& white strips on my teeth.

I tracked down the maintenance man
& put on a 77 yr old
forlorn damsel holding doorknobs look.
he said, no problem,
took out his screwdriver & got right to work.

I've started a book.
"Life Without Doorknobs."

I will star in the movie
& I'll do my own make-up.

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eulogy

I have roaches
in my bathroom.

I also have a book
of Bukowski poems.

I read them long ago,-
"Burning in Water,
Drowning in flame,"

many of them
about his rooming house days in L.A.

the book is just the right size
& very appropriate
for whacking roaches.

slam dunk,
you see a roach,
whack it.

very satisfying.
thank you mr Bukowski

we all want to write
killer poetry.

people say,
knock em dead.

so I do.