

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/2

Lorian Brown

NOCTURNE

*The long grass lies down in September,
wind-licked swales shining in sunlight
like the thickening coats of calves or fawns
too old to recall rough June tongues
pressing them up from grass*

summer we lay mouth to mouth
in the narrow bed, scissored lines
a kind of scrim, false witness,
not what it was—your tongue
and my tongue those June bug nights—
carrying the water up, quick wash
in late sun, vodka on ice, ice too
carried up. And my not believing it yet,
believing this too would fail

*close-lapped blades still glistening
for these with no knowledge of barns,
no memory of descending into
the black cold beneath the cedars*

THIRST

Once I lay in hot rain
halfway up a mountain
climbed alone—throat, lungs, heart

wrung by a heat viscous as clay.
Chalk white birches leaned upslope.
Our bodies also breathe

they said. What could I do but kiss
mouth after mouth, suck rain—acrid, sour—
rivering striate bark.

July. Leo's month of flame.
What could I do but use my body harder,
this, my only body?