

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/3

Howard Good

How It Is

The pretty young receptionist
reaches up for a file,

and the tops of her breasts swell
like luminous snow clouds,

and I savor the glimpse,
though a husband and father.

It's just how it is,
the heart sleazes around,

dirty, unshaven,
a hobo living on handouts.

Apostasy

I plan next summer's garden in my head,
where the bluebells will go,
the sunflowers, with the round faces

and bright yellow haloes
of the martyrs in religious paintings,
all those bloodstained saints

whose lush wounds gleam like wet mouths,
and over here, I'll put pink speedwell,
or maybe purple petunias,

weeping trumpets brokenly announcing
joyful tidings, and over there, the lilies,
licks of orange flame, because what's heaven

without a vestigial concept of hell,
the windows in the house vibrating
to the rumble of ecstatic thunder,

the mammoth heartbeat of God, if God existed.