

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/4

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THE FARM

I remember when finding the fool's gold
brought me joy
there in the old gravel pit
before the rains were caught and formed a pond,
which we skated upon in winter

there, life seemed free and easy
the air was fresh and filled our lungs with hope,
as we darted in and out of the woods
exploring nature and playing games

the old farmhouse was always at the
epicenter of our wanderings
from whence a billow of smoke from the chimney
signaled the way back

past the unmarked graveyard
near the unpaved road
where father warned of falling into the boney laps of the dead
buried below our small feet

the image of grisly skeletons
reaching out to grab me in my mind
punctuated by the crackling noise of twigs
under the hooves of deer observing us unseen

as great-grandmother baked a pecan pie inside
while the blue sky,
with its endless horizon at the top of the hill,
would encourage us to stay out as long as there was light

around the old New England farm
that long-lost sanctuary
the temple of my youth

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GIVING WAY

There was a crack in the foundation,
which allowed a trickle of water
to run down the old cinder blocks
in the unfinished basement

Somehow, time got away
too much time,
or not enough,
the walls still held up the house

The dingy salmon paint was peeling
mold and mildew were forming in the crevices,
while a musty odor clung to everything left down there
why did we ever leave anything important down there?

Old vinyl records, high school year books, family photos
all tainted
could nothing be saved?
should anything be saved?

Slapping on a thick, white sealant
made it look cleaner and brighter,
but it was hardly paradise
just a little less hell

We didn't fulfill plans to fix it up
we just never got around to it
life got in the way
and something always has to give