

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/1

Chris Crittenden

Paper Money

sour creatures
with presidential faces
and green behinds,

flat on all-fours,
soliciting,

dragging fingers
into old buildings
under latin phrases,

between pylons like lewd teats.

who knows what's happening
behind greengray
paper walls,

which mottos are abused
to cloak what orgies-

gold thighs,
jowled dresses,
circus bread-

which illusions
weave what humans into banks,
make them beg for more

of these little sheets
hard to hide under,
easy to masturbate.

Psychic

dead creatures
herd and revolve,
persistent as a net,
tricky as a waltz,

touching

every part of him,
till memories blush:
a cut from a fence,
a cyst on allhallows,

he feels what they did,
his skin swarming,
snow on his nape,
wax in his navel,

the ghosts herringboning,
meshing into burlap or seaweed,
a tactile hemorrhage

where cobwebs do-si-do,
ants skirt his nipple,
puppies lick.

words
leach through the slow chorus
of wavy limbs,

mishmashes of utterance,
crimes that own his mouth,
make it kiss, forgive or berate-

he chokes
on the flypaper of their beggary,
unable to assure every loved one,

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or say such naked things.

when he passes out
they disperse and wait
on the meddlesome shore
of time.

A Moment In Her Beauty

she weaves clay,
sculpts fleece,
joining them
with her magic.

hands
like meshed pentacles
hypnotize earth,
swim across looms,

each thread a strand
in the fur of a spirit;
each touch a leap
through gardens
of fabric-

she a sail
over loon-blessed waters,
guided by crystals
in her gaze-

blue eyes
like steppingstones
on which heartbeats
and tigers

float.