

*Wilderness House Literary Review 4/2*

*C.N. Bean*

**The A-frame**

I should be dead from drinking  
water out of an aluminum can  
that held thirty gallons instead of trash  
in an A-frame basement half buried

with no A on top of tar  
bubbled thin by constant sunlight  
a make-shift roof in need of resurface  
by a family who had no money

a family that rationed black sticky patch  
after nights the rain reminded us  
where to look on the unfinished dream  
home to us the year my grandfather died

with picture windows and water not potable  
except for the water in the lidded can  
that my parents drove to town for once a week  
and left me curled in gut-wrenching pain

on the living room concrete  
four nights and three days  
confined to a Lazarus pallet  
during the season of the grass fire

and the neighbor's cow that got  
into a field of clover and bloated  
though the cow looked perfectly healthy  
as she lay breathless

on her stiff-legged side  
one glassy brown eye fixed on the sky  
while I wondered how six thirty-gallon jars  
become wine could ever turn sour