

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/2

Lynn Lifshin

WILLOWS YELLOWING

he says he and
his wife see each
other so rarely,
they really ought
to have a date.

I think of the women
he holds all week
in his arms. I think
of his arms when I
should be typing.

Reading a book on
the metro I try to
escape, try to imagine
the warm quilt waiting,
the cat maybe dreaming
of flayed fish.

And why can't the
one who'll curl into
my hair and want to
hold me be less
real than ghosts of you

WITH THAT ONE NOW, DEAD LOVE

it was the same,
something wild and
rare as Siberian
tigers born in
captivity, nothing
you'd expect.
If the mother
doesn't kill them,
who knows about
the chill cement
floor. Somewhere
else a man straps
explosives to
a belt. There's
not much time.
Too soon to the
woman with long
legs who knows
she will be older
than her mother
and then finally,
everything dreaded
like the end of
every deep love
kiss, that too
will be done

WHEN HE SAID YOU'RE SHOWING SOME SKIN

when a boat neck velvet slipped
an inch off my shoulder.
Skin. His fingers holding,
When I wasn't scared
I couldn't follow. Who knows
if it was a night I
couldn't sleep, if more than
his touch was throbbing.
Slant light, the wild cherries opening.
When he bent me, bent me
in places I never thought
I could go, over, water in his
arms. When I wasn't thinking, just
trusted him. Then the waltz
stopped