

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

Irene Koronas

listening for emily

I

how odd for this late hour
when usual men sleep-
if only I could hear them,
yet, they disappear like crickets
or grasshoppers deep in field
their chatter explains nothing
not even the hour

II

words dissolve like paper
opens the sky, where once
childhood was only present

I never was young, never
was I young

III

sleeping on hard mahogany bed,
pillow cases' cut lace edge
and the windows misshapen
leaded glass distortions, pains my view-
watching the see-saw riders,
robins, peaking noise

IV

then memory reappears-
what would you have me do,
forget sunrise and the ripples
that gather in pools on rainy days,
the pollywogs deep in wooded meadows
or the blah blah blah on sunday morning
before neighbors try to sit quietly-

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of course I remember the touch
of every day
of oranges in pewter bowls
of ironing boards in kitchen closet
the pretense of smooth

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dear emily

how could we know each time your pen touched paper,
the yellow turn words, perennial hosts repeated year
after year, your folded metrical garden scraped clean
before entering your inner portal puritan church, hard pews.
who could know this intimacy with self would become
expository tramping through every thought trying to partner
and lead, stepping on what we perceive as actuality
we find your dogmatic loneliness not an able companion
and you say no no to the exercise of power, fantasy, no
to another's reality, consummation, intrusion, translations,
yes to the infinite point in a single lavender bloom,
the slightest difference might carry chrysanthemum back,
cut it's existence, dash all stanzas

there is no apparent reason to dismiss wild angst, ileum,
thorny notes, rose petals you stuffed in envelopes
for someone else to deliver, you dare not walk across the lawn
yet book after book on almost everyone's book shelf
appears ready as ball gowns on hangers, the occasional formal affair
most of us no longer yearn for still dusting our own appearance

we call upon vanity on all fronts, we shout buy my way
our hearing so remote we twist loudly we divide your shadow
eat your poems nevertheless no one can diminish what you said,
your eve inheritance piling stones across oceans of rhetoric,
the cool breeze of early june, the whippoorwill sun,
the way your face reflects from ground, your only dark dress,
ribbon around your neck, an ordinary parting of the sea and your walk
through barriers across over across back, we enter, exist, unfold your verse