

**Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3**

*Julia Carlson*

**Beautiful Dead Boy**

*[in memory Ian Curtis, deceased 5-18-1980]*

dark brow and lash  
white pale skin  
fluttering eyelids  
as if on drugs or screwing  
legs long as night  
our dead boy  
how we loved him  
how he took our breath away  
his breath became our own  
moving manic  
the breath song  
coming from  
his deep place  
we sucked it from him  
our dead boy  
at the shop  
where he toiled at  
a job  
meant nothing to him  
packing shopping bags  
checking out videos  
dishing up fries & hot dogs  
parking cars  
taking tickets -  
could have been an engineer  
or bank teller -  
but awkward  
young  
bored  
his paleness offered up  
to strangers  
his voice simple

## Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

innocent  
a crumbling wall  
between us  
he set off  
on his chrome-lit path  
To brightly lit clubs & music dens  
leading to his end  
standing on the sidelines  
thin frame languid  
poised  
leaning  
waiting  
watching  
to let loose  
his glorious terrible howl  
our boy  
on the verge of greatness  
only 23  
we loved him to death

## Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

### Commute

I undress men on the train  
My trip being too short to read  
Anything substantial  
Why waste time otherwise, I say,  
Then -  
Oh come on, shit  
Because I read the Enquirer  
And the World News  
And any other trash I can find  
However my vanity  
Orders me  
Not to read that on the train -  
So this guy sitting across from me  
So neatly dressed  
His ankles crossed just so -  
I imagine him in bathing trunks  
Sitting on a beach chair  
Reading the NY Times  
His legs stretched out  
His ankles still crossed  
His feet dug into the sand  
I imagine he has chest hair  
But not too much  
I imagine his sunglasses are wire-rimmed  
But not clips-ons. In fact  
I don't think he'd  
Be caught dead with  
A pair of Foster Grant clips-ons.  
Glory be glory be  
He'll be in Provincetown  
Or Morocco  
While I continue on  
To North Station

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My end-o-line destination  
Check in with reality  
A daily round of unhappy addicts  
Wait for me  
And other do-gooders  
To fix them up and  
Send them on their way  
And God knows I rarely succeed  
And if I do it's just  
A fluke of nature.

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### I Miss Pluto

I miss Pluto  
tiny planet at the end of the  
then-known universe  
the planet still not breached  
unable to achieve equilibrium  
the planet that began  
at the beginning of infinity  
sweet distant icy Pluto.  
Yeah I miss Pluto.  
I'm a throw-back  
I like reading newspapers  
I still iron  
I like how the steam gets  
into the cloth  
takes out the wrinkles.  
No-iron shirts are like robots  
stiff perfect boring.  
Yeah, I miss Pluto.  
I miss your hands  
their rough warmth  
the short hairs  
on the back of your knuckles  
and after a night fueled by sex  
having breakfast together  
smelling like each other  
instead of just ourselves.  
But somehow it was decided that  
now things had to change  
since the universe was  
evolving miraculously expanding  
and I think maybe your hands  
were already wandering outside the perimeter  
while I was busy reading the paper.

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I should have been paying more attention.

I guess.

Yeah, I miss Pluto.

Thank God for black holes  
where my tenderness was swallowed  
and transformed into ether and stone.

Thank God for super-dense space particles  
and other extra heavy metals  
that crushed my ragged breathing  
when you left the building.

Our building that is.

I still miss Pluto  
dwarfed, denatured, demoted, disregarded.

Yeah, I miss Pluto alright.