

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

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A NEW GOD

A new God has risen from the ashes; omnipresent and omniscient. The new God reveals the great mysteries with force. No quaint superstitions as in the past. It's grounded in fact. The new God is science.

Mystery and magic are for the fainthearted who haven't the stomach for logic. The rigor of analysis is too demanding. There is no magic about the full moon. It's just a big rock. Any magic comes from distorted psyches.

The new evangelists hawk their new God, from the Big Bang to evolution. Rest assured those who preach the new religion are not scientists. Their new faith is based on the arm of man.

They proceed with proper vigor and remain aloof. They manage to neuter the poets and artists. A painting is just splotches of pigment on high grade burlap. But their reductionism builds ivory towers out of dust. Unfortunately, their findings are based on how they beat on their voodoo drums.

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A ROUGHNECK

The plane was full.
I stared at the man across the aisle.
He was dressed in coveralls.
His hands were massive and he had
dirt under his fingernails.
He wore a shaggy beard.

I struck up a conversation with him.
He was a roughneck from
the oil fields. He was the man
who operated the huge drilling machine.

He was leaving the oil fields
and going home. He had been laid off.
He said that he would have to wait it out
but he thought he'd be back to work in a
few months.

When I looked at him with a puzzled look,
he laughed. When the price of gasoline
dropped below two dollars, the company cut back.
When the glut of oil runs out, they will jack up
the prices and he will be back to work.