

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/4

John Sibley Williams
An Aftermath

There is a car
exactly like mine
where I parked.

The key will not open.

There is a word she once said
I knew would change
everything.

I am afraid to remember.

There is a child
whose unseeing brown eyes
like me would perceive only silhouettes

and whose vanity would tremble
while releasing all he thought
he held.

He is the door I cannot enter.

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Artificial Light

In darkness still
clouds are uniting, disbanding,
supporting the steeples
from above

and men are acclimating
their sight to artificial lights
and clothing the world
with songs of their flesh
that ages no faster
if starlight alone
be their measure.

And alone in starlight I
am wondering if a pause
is conversation's evolution,
a more discernable place and time
to commence movement.
If the single anti-sound
of dying
and the din
of waking again
balances each word
upon its many meanings.

If darkness
is its own light,
supporting the steeple
from below.

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Everyone is Cold, Sometimes

Unearthed from the white sand
gray feathers and shards of wood
splintered from schooners and boardwalk,
both in this weather abandoned,

cigarette butts dancing red
and blue plastic cups,
leaves and more leaves
leave the wind thick and sharp-edged.

The few passersby grumble
about a nameless hunger that, once sated,
will yield a new thirst.

Oversized watercolors of the North Atlantic
stare defeated from their windows
out at what they depict.
But five p.m. and the moon is too high
to still call it day.

And most seabirds have vanished, naturally,
and the few perched upon the balustrade
listen to our grumbling,
deep in our down feathers and wool.
We the only ones who cannot feel
so must seek god
and the woven strands of energy
behind his name
and a warmth without hand-rubbing.

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We who seek absence
to prove its contradiction:
that somewhere
there is enough.

Enough even now to stand huddled
in the closed shops' doorways,
warm in each other,
looking out at what we depict,
content as the gulls that stubbornly remain
while following those flown
with our eyes.