

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/4

Simon Perchik

*

Again this snow, its cry
seems to come from a bird
from a simple sip at the headwind
and melting cramp --I have forgotten

plant empty jars, opened boxes
--it's useless! a branch from nowhere
and the sun's cut through :a scalding rain
half feathers, half ashes, half gravestones

--I forget, rinsed cans and plates
still buried, filling with snow
and the Earth each Spring heavier
--I water and from my other hand
an underground stream somehow
wandering away --I water the lost

and under the snow
this raging hillside tightening
--I still collect cardboard flaps
stuffing lids and bottle tops
wait at the holes the way I once called out
sifting each damp shadow.
You were always thirsty.

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/4

*

And in the dark my pillow, abandoned
shimmering --you've heard its cry before
tell me Try, get some sleep

take something from the night
even if it's only the continuous rails
or the train that is invisible
against the black, drenched mountainside

washing out its sweat or from under my cheek
the river wider, wider
--what I think is my arm
you say is only the window holding on.
There's room for a real arm.

You say I need more leverage, to sleep
on my side, that just this simple posture
props up the Earth till it sees itself
in front the careening head beams: each train
as if all the stars are late
from everywhere, from nowhere

--rejoice! all this darkness, you say
from just one shadow :the sky
black all those years --even today
no one can count and I am older
than the sun, you say --that's why
the night is so familiar
so heavy on the windowpane, on the sun
and turning --I can stand in front a star

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/4

certain it will come so far and no further
--I am the waters, the strongman :the night
and all those ruthless years
fill into me and I --you say this

--are you sure? I still cringe
gathering my bedside lamp
into the darkness that never moves
that lives forever, close to the divine light
rising toward the sun, close to those stars
whose light is still invisible
all its own and dying.