

Wilderness House Literary Review 5/1

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Thinking outside the box

is a lot easier for a claustrophobic
because of the worms in here
and the water that is everywhere.
Out there you have the cosmos
beneath and among the nebulae.
In here, you have it all in a box.
Five bucks and it's lunch like that.

But it's spring and I go outside
like the crocus or the snowdrop
pushing up right beside your door
on the other side of the country now
where it's still raining again.
If I make myself think, I rise from
the roots I laid down over years
and I become what you will pick
and place on the dinner table in front
of your husband when he comes home.

It doesn't matter...just thinking out
side the boxes of carnations and daffodils
you brought home from the garden shop
was too dry, but it doesn't matter to me.
Dry roots are not like worms, not soft,
not flexible to your accommodations, and
mine, it doesn't really matter now does it?

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Moving Into the Hills Beyond Boulder

It's not so much living
simple in the woods, catching
your own food, cutting your own
wood, but living there long enough
not to grow 23 rows of peas but
to start to change the one-room cabin,
straighten out the water systems,
bring baling wire to string up antennas
to listen to the media or to the crickets
in the night, depending on your need
and at times depending on which they are.
It's learning to like the balance of perspective
moving up and down these canyon walls
in both directions at the same time.
That way you're always going home..

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Two Ends of a Shoe Lace

come apart every time Timmy plays dodge ball,
and they trip him up, causing him to leave his flesh
scraped on concrete. He associates pain and play.
His mother tries to stop him on the way outside
by saying your shoes are coming untied. They flap.
They will get caught under your soul. Again and again,
growing more flayed and thinner, dirtier, day by day.

He remembers this and ties polished Oxfords tighter going
off to his office where he slides among slick papers, but
they still untie beneath the fabric of his dark blue suits,
slapping against marble bank floors or wicking water
from the slush filled streets he dodges among. His hands
before meetings begin to be stained with mud from fields
he has crossed in coming here. He dreams of animals
that inhabit those fields and hide from computer screens.

But he ties the shoes tighter anyway. He double knots
loose ends that fly loose to lift him from his tracks.
He keeps his poise at last although it finally may come to loafers
with which he can't run as fast but at least can hold his own
ground with, gain his mental and physical poise and pose
the same way his polished desk does, his swivel office chair,
leaving little indication of the lives left changed at his hand.

Growing more important, he slips his evening slippers on and thinks
of the two ends of shoe laces and mother from those winter days.
There are so many loose laces of untied shoes sitting on shelves
with their tongues lolling out, stitching their eyes together, their
souls flat, black, ridged, well-heeled, tied together with each other.
He can't believe that after all these years he still comes untied so
easily whenever he is thinking of something else. And thus
he thinks that two and two are one at loose ends, and he is right,
but soon walks bare-footed where men can never talk again