

Wilderness House Literary Review 5/1

Joshua Willey
On Montague Island

Afternoon's furlough, midsummer
Anchor down and the skipper
Sleeping beside the chessboard
We took the skiff ashore and
Filled ziplocks with blueberries
A fawn reclining in a dry creek bed
The mechanic cradled her as though
She was his very own everything
He didn't care about mosquitoes
She didn't fear the look in his eyes

A swirl of smoke and
We throw handfuls of earth at each other
A gesture of love, a reminder
That dry land is not a myth
But a thing, blessed in its objectivity

The pines, the time dissolving until
It is a faded photograph in a crowded room
In a big city where mystery is a profession and
Everyday the sky grows nearer. Lo
Silence is not a myth

What talk of health care? Which man
In your memory, flicked his moustache
Before explaining the particulars of your death
What became of the pies? Of skipper's queen
Felled that day the summer after next

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Casing the Promiseland

Hot middle-aged women jog
Through the subdivision in September
Following their strollers
Soon they will be charging on
The cafés for skim lattes
Reading Elle and Real Simple

But they remember the land
Before golf courses, the river trail
Lined with marmots in March
No cell phone, tevo, trans fat
When they still snuck away
For a cigarette before bed

Though they are happier now
That efficiency has become virtue
The dog's head out the hybrid window
Power walking to the promiseland
What type of agave nectar
Is best to sweeten the fall?

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St. Emcee

Crows caw in the trees
Below Sutro Tower
Where I wonder what
Would make you
The happiest man on earth

Yours is not to desire
Anything which might be given
Or taken away
And this makes things difficult
Around the time of your birthday

Maybe you are that man already
In which case I wonder
What possesses the strength
To lay you low
In this world or the next

Not I, nor the powers that be
A diminished seven, Toto the Hero
Or that darkness, latent but swelling
In the deep end or the hottest
Corner of the steam room

The Sava pool is empty at noon
No birds brake the stasis of limbs
Meet me in Port Blair and remind me
What is contained in this gentle breeze
In those strings, in these trees