

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/2

Martin Willitts Jr

Singing In the Apron of Stars

I did it. I sang full-throttle
while the neighbors glared suspiciously,
and it felt right, annoyingly right,

the word "proper" did not fit into the scales,
nor "consideration" for melody or harmony,
or if the words were well chosen,
or if anyone listened to me,

I was liberated, for even a moment,
to do what my heart knew instinctually right,
and I was doing what I should be doing

I was clipping the hedges with hymns

Caterwauling, one neighbor judged,
but I could not help it,
I could not bear my silence anymore
and I needed to join the choir of nightingales
singing well past bedtime
into the apron of stars

I could not help it, my longing was so great,
so impetuous, I could not stop the ocean of song,
nothing could stop me, not dusk,
not coal-dust night

my throat came down with laryngitis,
until I croaked from my swollen belly

I sang, even in my sleep,
on bed sheets of music
beyond and into the A cappella of new mornings.

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Every Spring

I pry loose wet, brown, crinkled leaves
from the downspout, a premonition of spring.
A tree's roots extend into our yard.
I section off parts of the garden
with recycled red brick. There is much to be done,
and there is no end of it. I put my foot down
on the hoe and push. I am determined
to make something of it. *This* is my demarcation line.
This is where I will grow things. The grass,
weeds, and dandelions can have the rest.
The garden hears me coming, a week away.
The ground gears-up for it.
I wish I could say the same for myself.
Someday, I will be too old for this. But for now,
I try to be up to the task, gauging myself,
sectioning off work so it is less work.
Getting older and gardening,
I have learned to spread myself
as if I had all the time in the world.

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Cataracts

The garden is writing its messages.
Frost cracks and crackles on windows.
Swarms of birds practice flying in synch
in the papyrus of night sky.
The whimper of chimney smoke is intersected by wrens.

I miss those small spaces between your skin,
how water beads like glass snow-globes.
It is these things I want to remember
before I lose sight of everything!
Things that matter, things that count,
things that fractures the heart
into slivers of lost light.