

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/2

Robert K. Johnson

WHEN NIGHTTIME COMES

If after I awake
I've used my hours well,
by evening I'm the boy
slumped in a chair because
he's played too hard all day.

Just like him, I defy
my heavy-lidded eyes--
I won't put my book away
or blank the TV screen.

But when I do surrender,
do slide my body's aches
into the dark beneath
my blanket,

I, unlike

that boy, am soon wrapped tight
in sadness, aware I might
never see another sky,
dawn-whitened, make my pulse
thunder with excitement.

SCENES OF BEAUTY

Seeing

summer-green leaves
brings almost

as much pleasure
as looking at
winter branches

and seeing
remembered
summer-green leaves.

RITUALS

Think of a baseball player
who, waiting on deck to bat,
takes three, four practice swings,
then pauses at the plate
to refasten his gloves--

 before
facing a pitcher who looms
on the mound just feet away

and you will understand
a poet who carries strong coffee
into a study walled
with blazing Van Gogh prints,
then rereads four Basho poems
he loves--

 before he looks
at a blank computer screen.