

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/2

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Burial

The green above belies
black earth below
of the final journey

Death brings the new
knowledge we all seek
yet no one wants

Drained of blood and brain
turning black like earth
we are stored for eternity

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Her Ending

Every man in town had taken
her to his bed
In the morning he was
found dead
Today she is alone in the town's center on
gallows, rope on her neck
Widows and orphans have left to find
new masters
She must step off the foot stool
her father made so she can
Join him somewhere else

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Croatia

At the pinnacle of San Marino, after
I have had my passport stamped with
a special stamp, after I have strolled
past souvenir after souvenir shop stopping
to buy a magnet or trinket to take home,
after I sipped tea and bitten off pastry at
a small cafe, I reach a little park overlooking
blue waters of the Adriatic Sea and across
the water I can see land and on the land
are whitewashed stucco houses with
orange tile roofs that look like the houses
below in Italy which I passed on the way
to the summit of San Marino
I have heard of Croatia and its role in the
Kosovo War and papers told me Croats
were vicious, but I look at these simple
houses, maybe with a small plot of land for
a vegetable garden and I imagine the husband
at work, children in school, wife already
cooking an evening meal taking a break to
feed the few chickens or goat which is
tied to a post outside the back door

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I know these are not the war mongering
leaders or cruel soldiers, these are not the
same people who aligned themselves with
the Nazis, these are simple folk like me, I tell
myself, who work hard to keep their home and
land to feed and clothe a family yet I do not
really want to cross the expanse of water separating
me from them and I do not want to buy their goods
or drink their tea or shake their hand as I would
with any of the Italians at the bottom of the hill,
so I turn away, leave them to lives I try to forget
though the scene is embedded in my head like the
stamp in my passport