

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/3

Tim Suermondt

BILL CAN ONLY STAY A MOMENT

I don't pester him with questions:

"So what's the composition of heaven
or whatever place you're at?"

And despite being high on the scale

of importance I don't ask him
why the Mets can't display any heart
on the road—I don't even mention
my frustration at the dive

my hedge fund has taken
as I take him across the Brooklyn
Bridge and point to the Manhattan
side where a schoolyard used to be,

where we played hoops, trying to craft
shots that would gracefully fall through
the bent rims—he was the better
athlete and I tell him.

He lowers his head, watches the sun
dip its glared feet into the river
and insists his repertoire isn't flawless
but he has eternity to make it perfect.

I can't imagine anything better—
and whatever fear and apprehension I have
disappears. "I'm glad I came back,"
he says. I'm glad I made it possible.

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THE HOUSE OF THE WORLD

Doesn't hold the entirety—it only wants to.
As you might have guessed, books predominate—
a Titanic here, a Sputnik there,
a woman weeping in a war zone,
a man marching in Philadelphia, Mississippi—
the life and times of the philosophers
and the history of words themselves,
endless, endless. "A Paradise," as Borges put it—
Jorge Luis who's included on the shelves,
a slim volume of stories tucked between 'Mementos'
and 'Trying to Help the Elephant Man Dance.'

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THE TINY, UNNAMED MOON DISCOVERED
CIRCLING PLUTO

It's glad for the recognition
after millions of years—
better late than never
as the perfect cliché goes.
Yet found or not it's enjoyed
the circling for the circling
itself, like a poet who doesn't
obsess over the stress
and the unstressed as long
as the rhythm of the line is true.
The three moons, Charon,
Nix and Hydra will have to take
in this orphan soon to be given
its name, its spotlight in perpetuity.

THE BOSTON COMMON

A very nice relief to come upon
after having tramped the length
of Commonwealth Avenue—
I take a picture of my wife
in her strange and beautiful hat,
the strange and beautiful swan boats
in the background, bordered by tens
of thousands of American flags
covering a wide patch of the field
on this Memorial Day, overwhelming
the bronze statue of Paul Revere.
We curve around the lake and head
straight for Kennedy's, the bar where
I read poems years ago, winning
the approval of a rock star who stumbled
in by mistake and stayed to listen, who
told me "Man, you're almost as good
as Bukowski", which I'm sure put Buk
at eternal ease. As I tell this to my wife
she clings to my arm as if she fears
losing me and while I want to assure her
of the impossibility of that ever happening,
I like her kind desperation and let her squeeze—
and let that damned rock star eat cake.