

## Wilderness House Literary Review 6/4

*Mark Lee Webb*

### **Art Lesson**

Little Lauren wildly splashes watercolors in Miss Geneive's  
first grade art class. Today she's painting a picture of purple  
Pawpawsaureses standing in forests of dark blue  
Betula pendulas. She has been known to stipple  
portraits of her calico cat Seamus,  
daubing amaranth where there should be grays  
replacing blacks stripes with harlequin zigzags lines.  
And it's rumored she once painted a horse  
in shades of a tangelo.

At the end of the forty minute maelstrom  
it's clean up time for Lauren and her classmates,  
each waiting impatiently in line  
wearing a smeared smock  
or daddy's work shirt now slathered.  
Borrowed subtraction waits, a spelling test, too.

When it's Lauren's turn  
she guardedly steps up  
on the Blue Bell Dairy  
milk crate, reluctantly  
scrubbing her  
polychromatic  
paint-caked nails  
at the once-white  
sink.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 6/4

### No Extra Charge

In the front window  
of the corner Five and Dime  
it sat illuminated by a single

yellow incandescent spotlight.

Two eye pieces included  
plus custom wooden case

guaranteed to discover  
hall bathroom sink  
protozoa no extra charge.

Through the summer  
dollar bills come by hard  
crimped and folded

sweaty and damp  
retrieved from deep down  
inside dusty Levi pockets

deposited week after  
week seven dollars  
ninety nine cents laid

away enlarging the stinger  
of a bumble bee captured  
in a patch of white summer clover.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 6/4

### The Muse

She missed me on the One-Oh-One. She missed  
me in November clouds where I had found  
a pass to take me up the mountain top  
(the sun's cold shadowed secret path) then came  
back down earthbound and far from One-Oh-One.  
She missed me she the solstice Feast of Fools  
princess, riding her Ferris Wheel, spun free,  
Merry go Andrew round the mountain top.

One dark and pained November day her voice  
went mute, that day on One-Oh-One I missed  
her thumb out on the road. Just like a mime  
with painted tears, she played life's game, twisted  
reality, and somewhere lost her way,  
the muse Mneme there out on One-Oh-One.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 6/4

### Carnival's Man

Possessed by a carousel fantasy,  
polka dot steeds of hardwood  
lacquered in ridiculous lavender.  
Tangerine pineapple splotches  
blonde manes scuffing the wind,  
grinning as the children do.

Old man, bent by too many county fairs,  
wheeze, then blow your Cracker Jack  
whistle. Reach out your veiny arm.  
Release your master royal  
spin the tourbillion round and round,  
the vortex of gilded wooden horses  
whirling to entrance squealing children  
who mount Preakness thoroughbreds  
at dizzy speeds.

No such potent image for Carnival's Man,  
no fantast of the universe is he.  
Only empty lots of paper cups  
and rotten cotton candy  
lie in his realm, feeling  
the sting of night  
behind a wide grin,  
minus two-and-a-half teeth.