

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

Benjamin Schmitt
These eternal times

There is
nothing in these times
that cannot be used to frighten you
puppies and kittens play with sinister intentions
there are dangerous chemicals brewing
under your very skin

There is
nothing in these times
that cannot somehow be sold to you
and yet the silence of this great Utah desert burns
money with silence, diamonds disappear
in the black ravines

There is
nothing in these times
that appears to have any real kind of value
besides this stone wall of green vines cascading
the rain falls down, sperm find their eggs,
they crack into tadpoles on the rocks

There is
nothing in these times
that cannot be twisted to benefit the few
young men go to war, Pepsi is sold in schools
to sponsor the football team while books
lack covers and immediacy

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

There is
nothing in these times
which should make you lose hope in you
remember the mountain we climbed, the path ended,
became sheer cliffs, it'd have been better to die,
but we decided to turn back

There is
nothing in these times
that is really different from any other time
the Crusader walks the bloodstained stones of Jerusalem
ridiculed in the dark in the Arabic of the merchants
he remembers his Germany like a rose

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

The demons outside

I like to lie naked
on Saturday afternoons
reading books in the countenance of my body
my many flaws revealed
testicles, anus, and hairy patches renew close acquaintances with my
sheets
my large belly forgets himself in the childhood memories of cool fabric on
bare skin
there are mad demons outside:
a Buddhist with a ponytail wants to discuss his manic depression
a failed actor wishes to read from the script of bitterness
the self-hating ex-girlfriend makes you feel the same
snobs invite you to parties to dance upon your frailty
and the pious will open up their homes to make you feel guilty for sitting
on the couch,
these demons always come back
even after
holy water hangovers
neon crosses
awkward conversations played on blues guitars
exorcist rites sent as emails to inboxes in hell
relationships
even evil ones
are cyclical
wars and hurricanes
fire and sex
can make a mighty mess
but winters still on its way

a warm rain falls and the resulting green
is an absinthian flood that expands and dazzles
the parks of this city with such intimacy
that I cannot help but feel fertile
in this, my less than glorious nudity

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

outside I see the old rot and the new buds
houses built from carcasses and compost
populated by wealthy begonias watching television shows where weeds
get strangled and pulled from their
rocky homes,
those zombies always asking for money and brains, and the vampires
who suck the life out of my words and leave them looking like criminal
intent
reinvigorate me as well
I pull their bodies from the bathtub
and lie amongst them on this bed
in between the pages of my book
and the malice of the corpses
my naked body cocoons itself
cuddling with the grey flesh I am reborn
in a placenta of ink and blood I awake screaming into the world
and when I step forth to meet their kin
the other demons who sell coffee, play ball in the neighborhood
fangs, claws, horns puncture me
ripping and pulling out trophies from my throat
as I fall down on the five feet of concrete my pride had claimed
they laugh like children
who laugh like fiends

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

The discarded

What was once defiant
is submissive
the animal you sheltered
now roams free
A life you had transcended is yours again,
Do not make it wait to long for you at home

Paintings found in dumpsters
hang exalted
these models gain weight, vanish
from the page
The dinner you cooked grows cold in your absence,
Do not make it wait to long for you at home

Draughts of lies that nourished
trickle away
the arguments we cooked up
stain our clothes
Your child Falsehood is no longer pulling straight A's,
Do not make him wait to long for you at home

Lay my coarse heart in your
suggestion box
only to speak of, comfort,
but not see
The object of your desire is lying in your bed,
Do not make it wait to long for you at home

Furry problems in pens
scratching away
reptilian commitments
lie in piss
These cages howl and hiss and fight and breed,
Do not make them wait to long for you at home

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

You dance in clubs with men
who drink heavy
will they take your blame for you
as a shot?

There are barrels of bitter mistakes you have made,
Do not make them wait to long for you at home

Your tears mysterious
what is their source?
The faucet that roars my name
for some help?
That showerhead has been left on all day and night,
Do not make it wait to long for you at home

A reunion planned for
the discarded
old jeans, stained sofa, bad gifts
from the past
All of us are eager to see you and I would advise:
Do not make us wait to long for you at home

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

Free agent

your love
came with pre-conditions
a contract of a thousand pages
filled with laws and bylaws
and certain sections written in a one point font
while others land deals of healthy encouragement
I feel like an indentured servant
being dragged down a country road
I have no loyalty, no obligations
for I know when the betrayal must start
with my weakness, my honesty
I will make a sister of you, and we will confide
as siblings should, you will tell me of the girl
with the bathtub wrists, and I will speak the babble
that can only come from a corrosive heart
my sin is trusting people
as much as I trust the divine
our agreement will be ended for this unholy violation
angels will shudder
under the boughs of trees
rain will sweep the earth
and rinse you away from me
a couple pieces of junk
set adrift on a concrete hill
I do not write this for pity, respect
I write this so that my words will float across your mind
so that you can touch a part of me
and so I can swim through the leagues of you
I will touch you in Boise my hands cupping your breasts as my words lick
your eyes
I rise above you panting, and then dropping into poets ink
your lips are drenched in blue, that little ear between your legs too
you will shiver, I will blanket you with big words
“surreptitiously” will wrap your sneaky soul

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

and afterwards you will look at me
our images reflected, with just enough distance
for long ropes of water to stretch taut and connect us
so as not to get tangled in all the looseness of friendly liberties
and we will stay like that naked
loving across that barrier that keeps our love intact

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

Despair, materializing

damn, I must be lonely
for your breast has arisen in my pot of coffee
I suck its black nipple coffee bean
surprised by the taste of a delicious mocha
I open up my refrigerator and see your head speaking Latin
well, I think it is Latin
I don't speak Latin so I can't really say, but whatever language you are
speaking
you're obviously upset
as I do the dishes you belch from the drain, while the soapy water swirls
down
along with the coffee grinds
the kind of burp where steak and potatoes are violinists
and beer plays the trumpet in a symphony of gastro-intestinal rage
I remember the death of you
that dreaming innocent despair of you
I remember your love for her
how you chased her across the world
I go to the bathroom and hear my television being shattered
when I come out I see two hands and two feet
that have broken through the screen
shattered black pieces spread out on the floor
your feet are swinging like a kids sitting in a chair too high
your hands are drumming speedily on the top of the box
those tiny wrists so enticing, I want them wrapped around my waist
as we sing the popular radio hits forever present on our tongues
my door creaks as your neck and back protrude
long and slender it bulges, down to the beginning of your ass
a wooden spine, a curvature of splinters
shoulders that beg kisses fashioned from oak
I go back to the fridge cause I want to speak with your head
I need to tell you to leave me alone
but it just answers me in that Latin
your eyes can't even glance at my face

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

now I see your blood, the refrigerator is wet with it
your head is speaking frantically, I reach out to pull it from the shelf
but a darkness engulfs me, there is shouting in the hall
your head is not here at least I cannot find it in this blackness
I never had you and the pieces that visit
are as indifferent to me as the heights of your soul