

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

*John Grey*

### THE MYSTERIES UNSOLVED

Ceiling stains wish they were blood.  
We'd all prefer a mystery, even a murder,  
to a leaky roof.  
The usual tradesmen are up there,  
not the cops, not the wise detective.  
And they're patching when they should be solving.

Above my bed, there's discoloration  
that longs to be evidence.  
A corpse in the attic,  
now that would be something.  
I'd fall asleep wondering who did it.  
A tramp, a relative, a madman escaped  
from a nearby asylum.  
Not rain, not dreary rain.  
Weather and dry-rot just don't make good suspects.

Soon enough, some repainting  
and the room will be as new.  
There may still be mysteries  
but there won't be a clue to save its life.  
As if the incurious life is really worth saving.

ON ANIMAL PLANET

Another dead rabbit  
on the conveyer belt  
and another family outside  
demanding ashes.

Meanwhile, overnight,  
the taxidermist converts  
beloved cat  
to artifact.

The owl is at the window again,  
auguring death  
or merely drawn by the light.  
Ifs the one bird whose eyes  
front its face,  
that can stare in through the glass,  
wear down the thread  
between man and beast.

The scruffy dog can barely keep  
up with the boys.  
Ifs their age,  
that's the problem.  
Across the field,  
over the railway tracks,  
the inequities of time  
are never more pronounced.  
Children yearn to rise up.  
The mutt wants to fall down,  
await the kicks  
it knows are coming.

SLEEPLESS IN PROVIDENCE

Hard to believe that,  
three in the morning,  
you're in your deepest sleep,  
curled up, out of reality, into riddles,  
and I am listening to my heart-beat,  
somewhere in the blankets,  
drwnming up blood from one place  
and sending it where it's most needed.

You're a flutter of breath  
and an invisible dream.  
I'm the mechanics of the body  
and, thank God, they're in working order.  
You could be shipboard for all I know,  
or, beside a dead pilot,  
guiding a plane into land.  
And what have I to do  
but hear the way I am produced,  
a mundane theatrical piece  
with valves and veins directing,  
bone for scaffolding,  
skin for scenery,  
and an audience of myself alone.

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No moon, the first hint of rain.  
What do you care?  
You can go where it's sunny.  
I have to deal with genetics and pulse,  
blood and bile,  
uric acid and nerve ends.  
From there, it's such a small step  
to arguments and futility,  
boredom and disappointment.  
And then clouds break  
and it really comes down.  
You are adrift in subconscious.  
I am conscious and really coming down.