

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

Max West

It's Worth It

Slippery dips through the swish of snow,
The sleds grating harder now
Down the steep-sloped course slowly being crushed to ice,
Winding around the back deck
From a little hilltop vista
Atop the yard, then clear
Around the house even
To the garage sometimes.

There my son plays,
Though I don't get to see him every day
And can't even remember the last time
I've seen either of us
Dressed for such weather.

He's all in blue, coat and hat
Looking at me to see
If I'm looking.
Clothes that won't fit in another year,
Seeming so much older, his struggling figure
Ascending the hill. Too much like me.

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I came all the way to the mountains
To see him for just this one day.
One day.
It's cold outside, damn colder
Than I'm used to
And I don't have any gloves
Or proper jacket, my thighs
Are shivering in my jeans
After the six-hour drive.
Climbing up the hill you sometimes slip
And the compacted snow
Hits hard against your knees.

"From up here, dad, come see me."
Ah hell, it's worth it.

Rebuilding the Universe

Contemplating the vague somethings
and nothings out there
with a longing for death
or the warm sheltering of some womb-
Sometimes I close my eyes and floating
dream of nothing
but a body of blackness
nestled inside itself, a skull spread apart by fingers
of the dark becoming earth,
reincarnated through flowers
that flow from holes in the turning existential wheel
like candy from a fifth dimensional piñata into space,
splayed light spraying
starry pinpoints
across the blackboard of possibility,
shadows becoming form in the woods
as an eye illuminates them-
With a bigger mind and more time
I could close eyes on the universe
and rebuild, part by part,
but as is I have a small stretch
and room enough only to handle
pieces, to fumble them within
the puzzle as I wander, feeling a wholeness
like the night peering back at me, eyeless among shapes-

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Recognize

I just wanted to say

I miss you

And of course

You're not here

To tell

But I hope

You feel it

Wherever you are

And

Looking up

Toward blue sky

For a moment

For no particular reason

Recognize

My face

In a cloud

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The Circle of Hunger

Our souls are hungry but we will not feed.
Every day we sleep atop a feast
Yet nibble instead upon phantom tidbits
Satisfying only one appetite,
The first
And most fleeting.

Every day the world is a garden of energy
As we are dying.

I myself starve for no reason at all
But my world's proper lack of color and then
When illumination arrives
Always in its startling waves
I gorge and consume
The way night eats day,
From every angle
Of the candle
Then blink
Once
Between drinks, long enough
To vomit every grain
Until exhaustedly, empty, distracted at last, I
Fast from the beginning,
Again.

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Trees of Water

Like random lines cast into the darkness, poetry
Is an act of hooking
Soft squirming bodies
To deep green shapes
Asleep in the sea

-An angling
On twin ends
Of the line-

Experience, passion and clarity
Make way
Yet never enter

Only that most elusive thread, the ethereal ring
Of the sphere of awareness
Passes through

Where bubbles from the wand
Are blown into contours by the wind, driftwood
Torsos spontaneously grow towards
An apparition of form
We die to sustain long enough
Then seal off, gently, the other end
Of its body

As leviathans arrive at the door
To discover
Their always existence

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In patterns
Of swells surging in the sea,
The fractal form unfound
In a cloud

Telling us all about
How to throw deep, well
Into that strange shore
Awaiting us,
Where the sand gets wiped from our bodies
And leaves nothing but trees of water.