

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

Moriah Erickson

Iron Range Jumping

Our shoulders, the color of my first
horse's wide ass, heave as we run,
your hand in mine.

Our stained-red
soles carry us, eager passengers on the train
to escape,
through dusty underbrush
to the outcrop of Vermillion granite.

No pay dirt for us, no mining,
no rumble of the taconite trains keeping us awake,
no mesotheliomas, no heartbreak of broken
get-out dreams.

We jump and as quick as stars emerge
on summer nights
this becomes our private
experience, the meeting of skin
and water and
all the things that should be right
in our world
but aren't.

We are swallowed into the cold, the hungry darkness
who does not want to let go.

It pulls us down and down, tentacles grasping
at our summer skin, and the certain death
that awaits us
if we don't do SOMETHING seems so eminent.

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Lungs scream, closed eyes bulge beneath
the pressure, but neither of us kick.

We wait to see
if its really our time.

The sink slows, slows, stops, and then reverses, you before me,
and we rise, speed building.

The mother has not called us to the bottom yet
and as you rise, I begin
to follow, same as always.

We break the surface, smooth as stones
for skipping, shake our heads sending
drops of sunlight flying
into orbit,
only to meet with the water and become one again.

We suck warm air
in, and hands still clasped together,
manacles of solidarity, and wonder where exactly
our tears will meet.