

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/2

Bruce McRae

The Will Of The People

Don't play with fire, Mrs. River O'Blood.
Mister Mind, don't toy with the sky's dominion.
Find a damp dark spot to sow your garden.
Build your new house under a mossy stone.
It's beneath the earth we make our finest temples.

Sister Fingers, please, don't tamper with the light.
Stop breaking your million-and-a-half promises.
Our little mouse-ears are burning, our thoughts dulled.
The bugs inform us we are not immortal.

To the unborn I leave this iron begging bowl.
I give my bones the seasons of high water.
It's a hard lesson I bestow upon my betters,
that to arrive denotes a sense of departure.
O mystical raindrop, I'm already there.

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Trial By Fire

My girl is a fallen angel,
her voice like a ball gown being unzipped,
her eyes dust devils in the spiraling distance.
A mouth that's a rose, with thorns and all.
And legs: as if a path into heaven.

Fellas, I admit it, I'm wild about her,
my little summer breeze,
my sweet-assed petunia,
my darling love-rocket.

Which is why I'm intensely jealous.
I wouldn't want to lose a drop of her blood.
I'm loathe to have to beat her with love's stick.
I'd really hate myself
if anything awful were to happen.

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Trip

A one-way ticket into eternity.
The sound of feet shuffling
and clothes being removed,
X more shopping days
until the inevitable sad ending,
the last candle on the last cake
absolutely snuffed out, our game
called on account of darkness.

Eternity, somewhere over there, I think,
a quiet neighbourhood at dusk,
perpetual evening nibbling curtains,
blurring our faces and hands.
A searchlight sweeping the perimeter.
Silence wedded to dread.

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Unrest

The cows are plotting against the butcher.
The sheep, dressed in the drag of wolves'
clothing, are talking among themselves,
treason and treachery likely bedfellows,
that break in the fence a welcome divide
between 'how it is' and 'how it's going to be'.

In the farmhouse, someone is whistling,
the gentleman-farmer whittling on the porch,
sharpening his half-wit, honing an axe blade,
a nostril trumpeting into his 'farmer's handkerchief',
the barnyard strewn with hayseed and bone.

And these the chickens eye suspiciously,
heads nodding 'yes', but their hearts saying 'no'.
But what? The poor clucks too dumb to remember.