

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/2

Jules Supervielle - translated by John J. Ronan
Homage to Life

It's great to have picked out
A home that is alive
And to lodge there the times
In a durable heart,
And to have seen your hands
Wrap around the whole world
Like grasping an apple
In a little garden,
To have loved mother earth,
And the moon and the sun,
Like best neighborhood friends
Unmatched by anyone,
And to have fully learned
A world you remember
Like a shining horseman
Astride his black charger,
To have given image
To these words: children, mate.
To have been like an edge
On the globe's drifting plates,
To have rowed to the soul

By small and gentle pulls
Not wanting her frightened
By roughly making land.
It's great to have known dark
Shade under foliage
And to have noticed age
Fade the frail body's parts,
To have joined with the pain
Of black blood in the veins
And gilded your silence
With radiant Patience,

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And of all those labels
That inhabit the head,
Choose the least beautiful
And throw them a small fete,
To sense vitality
Fleeting and scorned,
To have thoroughly bound
It in this poetry.

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Looks

If it were not for trees at my window,
Peering deeply into my very core,
There would have ceased to exist long ago
This heart sacrificed by right to life's fire.

In the long willow or solemn cypress,
Who know me and lament my worldliness,
My posthumous self stares back, not really
Understanding why I stay and stay...