

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/3

Alan Haider

One Vote For Change

I hide deep inside of myself
Every chance I take someone cuts another piece of me off
I want to come out
I'd love to see the sun
But I seem to wear a target for everyone else's gun
Everyday I scratch another mark in the wall
I couldn't count the marks if I tried
And the wall is well past full
I fit my lines in sideways, between other tics
But the wall has sprung a leak
And I have nothing to cover the pricks
The liquid is rising fast and my only retreat is back
Outside where they stab me
Prod and poke
Look at the joke
A fire once burned inside
But now there's nothing to stoke
I lay down upon the floor
But I cannot die of these wounds
The mice badger my loins
And eat my eyes with their spoons
I hope the tide is coming
I hope that the change will come soon

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Breakfast With My Mother

Two ice teas, the waitress knows before we order

My eggs just the whites, my bagel plain, un-toasted

My mother's choices vary, but oatmeal is never with the
brown sugar or raisins

Her eggs she orders scrambled, her toast is always wheat

We discuss morning news which I do not watch, and chart
the interactions with her coworkers

For my part in the conversation, I make little mention of
the days chores, and stifled discussion of truncated
aspirations

When we've finished eating, she always takes the check

Sometimes I'm allowed to leave the tip

Then we get up and leave, and I stagger through my day

A person lost in thoughts, until we meet again

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Piñata

A wire frame
draped in paper-mache
becomes a hollow symbol
of years passed,
stuffed with candy
for the children
to break open
in a savage ritual.