

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/3

Carol Smallwood

Chance

Chance passed my window one June
of milkweed puff design:

it hovered, fell as in a swoon.

Chance passed my window one June
unexpected as an forgotten tune

to disappear in a straight line.

Chance passed my window one June
of milkweed puff design.

I did not wait to see it land
or if wind carried it away--
it could've gotten stuck in sand.

I did not wait to see it land
where it took its last stand
better it remain a slight of hand.

I did not wait to see it land
or if wind carried it away.

Later in the day I tried to see
to chase away a coward's fear:
to stare and then to leer.

Later in the day I tried to see
fighting the desire to flee--
to look and leave a sneer.

Later in the day I tried to see
to chase away a coward's fear.

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At McDonald's

Hot decaf, steady flow of ice, folded napkins, flat placemats, beige floors,
a well-lighted numbered menu above a counter that seldom changes--
with the Beatles playing, customers passing, you make the place yours.

Hot decaf, steady flow of ice, folded napkins, new placemats, beige floors,
and large windows to check the slant of light, the weather out of doors.

There is never worry about the unexpected or hassle of exchanges;

Hot decaf, steady flow of ice, folded napkins, new placemats, beige floors,
a well-lighted numbered menu above a counter that seldom changes.

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The Last Doll

She's the last doll I got for Christmas, the only one with long hair
and she sits with two other survivors grouped in conversation
in a pink dress with three shiny buttons without compare.

She has puffed sleeves, white shoes and stockings to wear
and a new place within the group in steady rotation;
she's the last doll I got for Christmas, the only one with long hair.

The doll has no name as she seemed so rare
with braided long hair that deserved much admiration
in a pink dress with three shiny buttons without compare.

Sitting with the others she rules over them with flare,
her arms extended as if receiving ovations;
she's the last doll I got for Christmas, the only one with long hair.

Still looking new, she has needed no repair
and sits very erect as fitting her station
in a pink dress with three shiny buttons without compare.

But of the survivors, she's the one I could spare
because she's not been held as long for validation;
she's the last doll I got for Christmas, the only one with long hair
in a pink dress with three shiny buttons without compare.

The Second MRI

was on the same narrow table with
mere sweet, mere sweet
jack hammer drilling sound
above where my breasts once were

After leaving I still heard,
“Don’t Move, Just Breath,”
unsure if the drilling
was inside me or the mobile unit
that went to Ionia,
St. John’s, and Carson City

Walking to my car, I sensed more
clearly the earth’s molten center—
the thin, thin layer we walk upon

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Something New

It was on a new placemat today, blueberry banana nut oatmeal in a bowl:
a new-comer at McDonald's photographed mostly in blue--
a new dish featured as healthy, nutritious, good for you on the whole.

The other side of the placemat in black and white had Nutrition Facts to scroll
well worth a look of calories, cholesterol long overdue.

It was on a new placemat today, blueberry banana nut oatmeal in a bowl:

It is also good to read about fats: total, saturated, trans—a worthy goal
but when you come right down to eating right, it's hard to do;
a new dish featured as healthy, nutritious, good for you on the whole.

Trying to eat well on the go does take its toll
but there's so many that do, it isn't all that new.

It was on a new placemat today, blueberry banana nut oatmeal in a bowl:

It's fun to think of people seeing the new placemat pole to pole
in so many places and that you're not just one of a few;
a new dish featured as healthy, nutritious, good for you on the whole.

Finding something good for senior citizens is a worthy goal
especially the new and not that hard to chew.

It was on a new placemat today, blueberry banana nut oatmeal in a bowl:
a new dish featured as healthy, nutritious, good for you on the whole.