

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/3

*Diane Giardi*  
**The Incident**

The Portsmouth bridge worker  
knew the pace of his bridge  
as it opened and shut to let the tall boats through.  
Yet...  
this morning he eyed the gap like a stream from his youth,  
daring him the leap from rock to rock.  
He smiled a long smile,  
stretching as wide as the concrete slabs open before him.  
Ignoring the screams of warning from fellow workers,  
he felt light and buoyant.  
The ocean below reflected black against his boots.  
In seconds the bridge came together  
holding his muscular waist, before the snap  
when the sections rejoined and separated the worker  
into two perfect halves;  
The boy  
floating above, past all clouds,  
the man  
descending deep into the sea's vault.  
Eighteen coworkers, vocal chords spent,  
temples beating,  
packed up tools,  
triple-weighted in their fists.  
The handful of therapists called to console  
found deaf ears at the town pub.  
The only enlightenment sought  
was the glow of fluorescent lights  
through a once again clear mug.  
Fluorescent lights through a heavy glass mug.

**Revelations**

Things unfold and reveal.

The spider safe in the tent's mesh lining,  
missing sock in the still warm pillowcase,  
napkin love note in the book's torn jacket.

What we come upon,

enter into,

feather charm in a wooden box,  
stranger's hair in a familiar bed,  
musings, seizings, welcome surprises  
and anticipated dreads.

A cold father turns nurturing, bathing his ailing wife until death.

The girl who feared fires, parachutes into hot California forests.

Love seasons.

Friendships deepen or darken and plummet.

Life simmers and transforms.

The reduced remains are much more potent.

A ninety-year old woman choreographs a dance.

The accountant writes poetry before dawn  
and the young girl consoling her family, writes her memorial.

The riches within us take form,

unfold and reveal,

slowly or instantly,

expected or surprising.

Time tells truths

as we listen deep.

**Cranial Crickets**

Used to be the party of my words sunk  
to the soles of my feet.  
I moved as if with little backpacks  
strapped to my ankles.  
Now these words race up my spine,  
deep muscle soothe  
and play on the tips of my hips and shoulders.  
They sing-little cranial crickets.  
Each syllable an anticoagulant,  
moving my blood thin and fast.  
I stretch adjectives,  
lift nouns on muscle curves  
and let verbs rest in fluid pockets of space.  
As host I carry these parcels,  
essential nutrients, alive within my tissues.  
Each letter adding to the total  
of my daily needs.  
Balance.  
Soul sustenance at last.

**The Journey**

We are like pears in a crate  
with bruises, speckles and soft spots.

Some have crushed stems  
and protruding lumps,  
others a shiny surface  
and long elegant curves.

A few still proudly hold  
the perfectly symmetrical leaf,  
upright and crisp  
with a warm blush of rose.

The ones whose surface has opened and split  
will have a shorter trip,  
partially dissolved by destination  
and simply tossed, somewhere.

The goal is to make it,  
be held in an appreciative hand,  
pulp devoured and juices savored  
by the one who loves core and all  
and spits but three seeds out  
on a clean, white napkin.