

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/3

Diane Sahms-Guarnieri
Sunset

I think of Kandinsky, "a circle the most peaceful sign,"
as the sun casts itself through a circular window
peaceful as ease, painting an amber circle
onto my bedroom wall like modern art.

And though the sun is old, it has no wrinkles
no textures this surrogate spot. Not vibrant
as a neon sign. Softer, lighter, a fading ember
warm mixture from a palette of pastels.

Considering the size of the sun, comparatively
this would be more a particle, dust of color
peasant light, speck of pollen a bee carries
inside the basket on its delicate leg, mixing it

with more and more pollen, turning it into
thick liquid, honey-comb gold, the way
the world's turning has changed the appearance
of this circle on my wall into disappearance,

yet outside my window at horizon's edge
the color wheel turns, so do the hues, that is,
vibrant bleedings of reds, oranges, yellows
stratified clouds' pinks and purples

across sky's vast backdrop of blues. Our sun
like a gold medallion slips into heaven's vault.
To think of our sun, a star, and how it will die
someday as all things eventually die.

Earth spins its inhabitants into darkness.
Everything has its own way of entering into night.

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Kindness of Strangers

My face in a trashcan like a sweating goldfish
wet eyes staring out from a polluted bowl
or as a dehydrated zombie pleading for mercy
from wisdom of medicine, doctors, nurses, specialists.

Then came the strangers who'd wake me
in the middle of the nights: Martian
cuffed squeezers, thermometer readers, and
Vampirish needle biters taking fresh tubes.

Ringed at the wrist, a plastic bracelet
with my typed name above a bar code
a myriad of young nurses scanned every time
they give me my narcotic, Dilaudid, intravenously for pain.

I'd fall away quickly, to sleep in a land of passageways
where images speedily flowed juxtaposed through me
in a dreamy sequencing like speeding
on a flying train derailed of any tracks.

It was there in the middle
of waking mayhem and sleeping euphoria
that nurses as strangers
followed doctors orders with a kind of

alien oddity, core eyes of compassion,
whose names I will never remember
only their many hand-healing gestures
of kindness.

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Gardener

All the fluttering nights' long, I, a moonlit moth
circled his hot incandescence, charismatic brightness
and during hidden days his summer strong hands
pushed seeds into soil, ripped out roots of twisted vines
pruned dead branches, tending to me and my garden
equally, and,
all the while, passion whirred in air around us
as petunias grew louder , soprano sunflowers sang
heliotrope gospel, small globed rhododendrons'
mapped thankfulness, marigolds banged bongos
azaleas rooted time, intertwined,
up to the night when
moth powdered promises rested gently
his touch lingering like fingerprints on glass.

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of burgundy roses

Twelve buds as flaming arrows
hit the bull's eye within me.

Water's cascade fills the vase
that he purchased

at our favorite Thrift store
last red maple autumn

and in each unnoticed hour
of each passing day

petals spiral outward
a dozen hearts open

scarlet Can Can skirts lifting
petticoats ruffle my affection.

I smile, until they retire
until I have to gather this corps

together into a band
dry them into memory

on an old graffiti wall inside of me
that he has re-papered with

circles, circles, circles
of burgundy roses.