

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/4

*Doug Bolling*  
**Castle Door**

The key is essential.  
Darkness helps  
with suspense.

I ponder the mystery  
of things  
taken away  
unknown.

But this door here  
like an unopened book.  
Our feet wet from the  
crucial moat.

It could have been love.  
It could have been death.  
Friend, make up your  
own list.

I know only what  
a key decides  
hinges willing  
the hand steady  
enough,

so ghostly this world  
our words for it  
our stories  
that cling  
that stumble.

**Ocular Meltdown**

The eyes of us twin geometries  
planted on the oblong of head  
taking in the scene,  
measuring horizons  
by their distance  
from the nose,  
the heart.

What if some storm ravaged night  
you wake suddenly in a roil  
of heat and sweat  
your limbs stiff as weather  
whipped branches on  
dead trees  
your vision blank as winter ice  
seeing nothing  
knowing nothing.

What if destiny had granted us no  
sight in the long climb  
out of mud,  
only touch by which  
to shape a world  
and claim it as  
our own.

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Would we the blind have invented love  
and killed for it  
lived for it  
more or less.

Would we have figured out the moon  
and groped our way there  
like some angry Polyphemus  
bored with hurling stones  
or a Gloucester  
intent on doom.

I remember my aunt whose eyes  
left her at age ninety,  
how she made stories  
from her newfound darkness,  
how she laughed long into night  
telling us to sleep and dream,  
find light where there  
is none.

**Leavings**

The fleetingness in it all  
an unstable thing you said  
a dissonance in the molecular.

Was it an ending. The seismic  
waves the contours below  
where the demons live.

When we visited the mountains  
to gather fossil remains  
the talus and scree.

I remember the sea gulls  
in their roundings their divings  
thinking they wanted our eyes.

Somewhere distantly the heaviness  
of cities, their labyrinthine grids  
as though a controlling, a shaping.

The soul you said. How is it  
a shadow that weighs nothing  
but bears enormous weight.

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### Becoming

The day we met on the bridge.  
The river clean and full of sun.  
We sat in silence listening  
for its music.

So much we needed to let go.

The swarmings of words begun in a  
distance claiming to be near.  
The killings that tore the heart  
like a disease.  
All distractions that wore us  
like a hair shirt.

We wanted to become one with the  
river, its wisdom that flows  
from the mystery.

How it lives within itself  
asking for nothing,  
always pointing  
ahead.

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### Once There

The nighttime through which  
we traveled.

Arcs of light in the distance  
like the beginning of a novel.

Your eyes that spoke the margins  
of an ecstasy.

How you shared words from the  
invisible place that might be soul.

We swam in the sleeping lake  
our bodies like countries  
making peace.

For once there in the terrain  
of youth we saw and took

and called out to a future  
to begin.