

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/4

Jeremy Freedman
Festination

The muses of New Orleans
have aligned in an
unreasonably controlled
manner. Using his slide rule
as walking stick,
the false Einsteinian, odd Estonian,
former Litvak,
vertigo validated by the click
of steps freezing and starting,
freezing and starting,
difficulty in initiation,
unseasonably short shuffling steps
leading down the ramp
below sea level,
sealed evil, toward certain
enchantment or pizzazz
or an end anyway.

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Entering City Hall Station

I felt I was falling
in a faint
cosseted by the train's
thick air
my body led my brain

If I fall
I will not leave the train
falling is a trick like
standing under
an endless wall of rain

Foundation Myth

Pity the poor trawler
desolate, dragged and listing,
bearing the stolen body of
the evangelist
boxed and covered with
unclean flesh and cabbage,
carrying greatness
and downfall,
both ineludible.

Thuribles and candles
protect the body;
the trawler will not sink now
but it will sink.

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Ravenna

Changed trains in Ferrara
to see fifth century
Byzantine movies

En route to
the magical petrified city
My expectations had diminished
your disappointing purple tights
ridiculous hats
silver lamé jacket

But in Ravenna
more real Empress Theodosia consort
to my predecessor Justinian
and courtiers wearing
the Venetian corno
every edge blurred outside the tomb
where I looked for an open restaurant

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The Defenestration of Affection

I'll say something
something cruel to you
something that will cause tears
make you cry

twist your Christian right arm
until you cry Jesus,
Christ stop it!

I know it hurts
hurts you more than me
but to me, merely mechanical
and necessary

flinging my feeling,
this crude excrescence,
out the window

like the Holy Roman regents
into the dung heap
below

Silver Mountain

The silver sits in its
case in its drawer
disturbed only by
the familiar music
of traveling vandals
who cannot contain
the impulse to anger
unless restrained by x-rays
and, finally, embarrassment.

The mountains are filled with
silver. This is where
we go to die?
Only the travelers
disturb our peace.

Tradition fails at
super happy family fun club.
Avuncular laments
count for nothing.
Silver runs in the blood.