

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/4

Joanne DeSimone Reynolds
Passing By Windows At Saks Fifth Avenue

. . . drifting . . . a whiff

of ammonia . . . my mind

combs itself: mother

at the kitchen sink, pinkish

rat-tailed comb, gold-framed mirror

nearby, tilted . . . panes

rubbed and lustered: a mode

of mind, potent

chemical flow . . . slippery

image: her hands

deft at her head, slick-black-wet

the comb's pale teeth

parting, parting . . .

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An Ark

From the edge of your bed I watch the dog.
Poor poodle, off his food, wearing out a circuit.

You've brought out the blue suitcase:
great gaping mouth.

Paris, Hong Kong or Timbuktu, Mother?
The postcard always comes too late.

You pack your silks of pastel hues
between white tissue paper:

flavorless parfait
the dog leaps into.

You command him under the bedside table.

Nothing now but a furred coil,
only the eye-glint moves.

You prop open the side pockets:
two-by-two, your high-heeled shoes.

Room enough, the click-latch locks it.

The gleam of your pillbox hat from behind,
the swing of you,

one hand free.

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The moon is not my mother—

come once again to find me
owl-eyed in the bed sheets
in the shifty hours

come with such a thin smile
I'm not sure
she's happy to be here

reminding me that the dark
is nothing
but a time to play hide and seek

that the nightlight's only trying
to comfort me
when she can't be here

that shadows don't remember
their silly names
in the morning

and that sleep and death and sleep and death
are the same

and you won't even know when it happens.