

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/4

Kellie Cannon

THE ARCH OF WAR

He left.

He went.

He gone.

He goes.

He here.

He there.

He not there.

He somewhere.

He fight.

He support.

He cold.

He hot.

He cry.

He cry.

He shiver.

He sweat.

He dirty.

He clean.

He laugh.

He serious.

He move.

He move.

He call.

He write.

He wait.

He toss.

He wait.

He turn.

He sleep.

He stay.

He strong.

He weak.

He change.

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He change.

He change.

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PROFILE FALLS

The multiple forms of you
are evident in the falls. Intense
pushes of water flail over the edge,
rushing like vertical ocean waves.
Frozen ledges hang on the perimeters;
things often skirt to the edges.

The bottom is a crash,
harsh. Violent and careful,
cruel and soft. You soldier forward,
stand on the thick ice, jump
to show me it is safe.

I don't believe you.

Water changes quickly, passing
from one form to the next
with no warning.
The fall shows truth.
We can be everything at once,
nothing in the next moment.

If we come back again,
let's do so in July.
Particles will be equal, tricks
will be harder to see.
The unknown will be where
we can't perceive.

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THE RETURN

A man from early modern
Chinese history, early 1900s,

lends me a heart to sap
until all that is left is flesh and pulp.

He places it in my hands to help me understand
the human condition, the disease

that crosses boundaries we never knew to exist.
This failed noun is a stranger to me

like a human who walks into the wrong surprise bash.
Instead of leaving, the human does what humans do;

he lies. And me, with this drained organ, what do I do?
I hold the useless mass not knowing

how unprepared we are for its story to unravel
because like a diary, it remembers what we tell it.