

## Wilderness House Literary Review 8/2

*Allison Grayhurst*  
**The Book**

Inside, spending all my coins, rejoicing  
on ephemeral longing, on a lustful inhale  
for physical redemption.

Hidden in the pages, I am hidden  
at four in the morning, bathing in perfection,  
lifting into heights that obscure drudgery.

Thoughts are shapes that float as shadows,  
hardly solid like butter left out of the fridge.

Cages unravelling and houses cleaned of cobwebs.  
Between soft book covers freedom kisses explicitly,  
candy-ices without embarrassment.

Hanging on hinges, on barely glanced-at walls,

I gather my vision in the grass, paint on the  
bones of another's life - beautiful bones and hallways  
of many feet walking and swishing bathrobes.

In the book I can face forward and never fear rejection,  
I can shower sensuously in warm rhythms,  
tied to the stirring light of early summer.

Love between these diary covers is not just canvass  
or thick hues that merge and make a middle, it is where I will  
at last know another's body as I know my own,  
be protected from the torrential pawing pierce  
of middle-age loneliness.

Inside the book, you are under me like a bed of lavender bushes,  
there are waves where once sunken skeletons rise like coral,  
polished pure of their violent history.

Drowning in the book, imagining ants collecting,  
synchronized on an apple core.

Bells in my head, footsteps rising, closer now,  
you know me well. Inside the book, you know me better.

We are two trees - branches and roots, an interwoven crocheted  
impressionistic portrait, staying through heavy storms.

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Inside the book, we are creatures of greater sympathy.  
You are like yarn, tied to my brush and hold,  
never in the liquid valley of a distant boat,  
or obvious as a prickly, rigid rope.  
I am mature, a woman with a ceiling to touch,  
fifty feet of surrounding stillness, unfettered  
from the expectations of my time and gender,  
radiant, more, whole.

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### The Flood

Glorious weather, wetting  
the decks and the smallest of worms.

We were made to split the light  
with voices singular and clean.

We were destined to wade in the  
night, free of logic, partakers  
of heart-wrenching dreams.

I name myself lost but loved  
and that is better than any key.

I count the madness in the cracks  
and know the world is ready to turn.

Funerals and baby births and  
a barn alive with birds, soon the  
clouds will come and the zodiac will  
burn.

God will be full of joy  
and each household will be looking in a  
new direction – close-to-the-bone,  
materially threadbare.

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### **This Place, running**

Altered by the taking flood,  
taking my wound to its midnight pressure,  
excavating the dormant lie I've traced across  
the pattern of my life.

This sinking red secret is like a madness  
that pins me to the world. It will go if I kill, if I trust  
there to be a doorway where a wall is standing.  
If I release the vault of hopes mangled  
then forsaken and bind myself to heaven,  
then this poison will drain from my veins, the  
insurmountable rock will be my waterslide  
and the crack on my shore will bring forth a  
different land of glorious senses.

I dig. The lid has shifted. The dry pond is moistening,  
soon to be a place of movement.

The world is what it is, never to know  
the waking heart of mercy.

But we are not thieves, nor are we to be the  
minstrels of poverty, torn apart in the oceans,  
clouded by the shows of unGodly charity  
and well-rehearsed praise.

We are to be the house, sacred to enter –  
the winternight's window left ajar.