

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/2

C.M. Rivers
Affair

The waitress at the diner
serves up her finest around midnight.
I could be a freelance killer for all she knows –
a chance she'll have to take.

Rumor has it,
she was cast from the mountain
into a meadow close to the source,
fireflies in her hair.

But what, pray tell, is the source?
In this case
it's that medicinal light,
glitter of gloaming,
on its descent through the atmosphere,
transcending all other spheres.

They say the summer evening
threw itself over her
like a blanket pulled from an oven,
moist heat creeping about its borders.
She rose up and followed something into the forest,
something magnificent.
Feathers descend, meringue fibers, snow doilies.

Yet all I know is what happened
after we found each other.
Even the moon blistered.

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What Your Apartment Said

What can we know of each other's lives?
Sometimes little, sometimes much.
Still, the windows are not talking
and the dried lavender sits quietly.

What makes an elevated moment?
To unplug from the machine.
To unexpectedly become your own master.
To know the apple in the bowl is fine how it is.

In one direction pass fingers of light-
in the other, a rainshadow.
In all directions, the breath and the life-
in all directions, nothing.

Colored silks of morning fall on brick and metal,
drape themselves over glass and wood.
These winter trees are glad to see it,
and I am glad to see it.
My two entwined giraffes,
their slender necks full of secrets,
are glad to see it.

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Heroic

When the wheel of circumstance turns again,
when your brain is back inside its breast
and your heart is in its head,
stroll past the temple, don't worry.
You left the chests of gold behind,
you didn't splice your Oneness.
You were fluid in your thinking,
now the beggars have invited you to their table.
Don't be so hard on yourself.
You were fluid with your money,
for money comes and goes.
You were careful with time,
for time passes.
You chose.
Who cares what they say?

We're all so eager to strive,
leap, let go, hold on, be still,
shout, sing, float, rhyme,
be noticed, go unnoticed.
We jump at the chance
to thrust out like rapiers
our views, our narratives,
approving of anyone who pays attention.
We adore our thoughts, love love love them.
It's so easy to mistake circumstance for choice.

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Only sacrifice remembers that chaos is master,
striking at random,
electrifying us,
compelling us to examine the ground
beneath the stone we stand on.
Who has strength enough to leave stars alone
and not reach for them?
And in not reaching,
go further than you could have otherwise gone.