

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/2

Chris Crittenden

All Knowing

a thought broke
fever to discover
riddles of openings:
places where graves
could be oases or doors.

knives of light
uncorked gnarled runes.
navigated karsts.

it was a railway plexus
where any tinge could twist.
whatever boxcar could be
whoever in the whenever
of the how.

options bred
as signposts crumbled.
decades wound up
in tresses of medusae,
slipping through a grate.

no clear cause
or bedrock culpability.
overviews kept leap-
frogging. wind-
beasts werewolfed at night,
and yet pampered the dawn.

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Bug's Life

light exposes our wrinkles
for what they are:
nooks gouged by skin mites

who cringe
on a razorback of knuckle
in a land of mountainous teats.

little Scyllas

fixated in their drama,
spurred by goals of sex and gut.
thoughtless

consumers

who chew corpse
and exploit the inert,
who earn space

and battle hurdles.
swill to wallow,
rituals of desire and dread.

they

champion their wants,
not knowing the want's why.
belittle what they crush, not sensing

the crushed pleas.

and when we look down,

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'they who tear flesh with numb mouths'
stare back,

precise as a mirror,

feasting at the trough
as if working tobacco.

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Capitol Shirt

a ribcage of policy
flatters the tie.
paunches of marble,
silkblood river red.

liberty
small on the cupola,
weathered in green copper,
too shrunk to see.

the blue
of the imported wool
opens without hands,
without ears,

no face.
a humanless

authority.
little skulls in the potbelly's
rotunda. pillars replace
the throat.

just one more
architectural carcass
of another patriarchal
turkey.

(inspired by "Capitol Shirt," 2012, Natasha Mayers, Oil on canvas)