

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/2

Diane Webster

WISE WORDS

I scratched my arm on a piece of wire fence
that kept big stuff floating down the ditch
from entering the pipe and clogging up the works.
I heard Mom tell me to run to the house,
wash with soap and water
and spread antibacterial ointment
all along the oozing red line of pain.
So I did.
And so I told my doctor when I started
antibiotics for the infection itching under my skin.
When I heard my dad growl,
“You should spit on it and forget about it.”

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FOWL SPECIES

Spotting a different species
of orange water fowl
sleeping on reservoir's surface
until binoculars reveal
a re-patriated rubber ducky
as a diving grebe ripples
it farther along.

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PEACE APART

The white cat...the gray cat
click together like two magnets
attracting like to like
or a yin/yang circle
complete within itself.
But in one instant
harmony yowls into turmoil,
and the two-toned basketball
of cats bounces across the yard
in indefensible moves
until the rattle from the chain-link fence
severs the halves
bristling sideways away
on tip-toe readiness
until one sees the distance enough
and the yin, and the yang agree peace
reigns best when separate.

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IMPRESSIONS

In the grassy median of the parking lot
she stretches belly down on a blanket
to read like a surfer peering
for the next monstrous wave to ride.
Her long dress hikes up above her knees
to bask in Colorado sunshine
until she rises, and the dress descends.
She shakes the blanket
as if ridding herself of anxieties
and flips her long hair
dismissing anything left behind.
Her body's impression
lessens in the lawn
like a snow angel filling with snow.

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OLD LADY SHOPS

The old lady scrapes her shoes
across parking lot pavement
and enters the store's automatic doors
waiting five minutes before she got there
when air conditioning blast
teeter totters her balance
before she handcuffs a basket.
Her white legs
bleached bones
of a long-dead animal
scattered by scavengers
navigate aisles while hands
catch and release
cans and boxes.
She oversees checkout totals
and exits with a billowing shove
from automatic doors
agape at her departure.