

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/2

Llyn Clague
Modern Physics

They thought they'd finally found the Higgs boson,
the "God" particle, with almost mystical properties,
crashing around the Hadron Collider at CERN –
happiness! Hope to explain this godless universe's mysteries.

Not quite. Higgs plays second base for the Bosox.
Streaking around third on a sharp single to left,
he stumbles, recovers, collides with the catcher who blocks
home plate – oh God! Despair! The faithful, yet again, bereft.

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Sisyphus

I roll the boulder up the slope,
starting at first light,
shoulder below the equator
of the great gray rock,
boots slipping, scrabbling, grabbing
at steep, uncertain earth,
I push up – up toward the sun.

My pace, as I climb, slows.
Morning slides toward, and past,
noon, into late-day hours.
Halfway, less, sometimes more,
the angle higher, air hotter,
leaving marks on the scarp,
we – my stone and I – stop.

At dawn I start up again
from below. As if with will –
watchful, sly, treacherous –
the boulder tilts, slips, slides,
trying to break free and,
with runaway momentum,
careen down the mountain.

I have never reached the top,
looked out into the next valley
and the valleys and vistas beyond.
But day in, day out, I push up,
rolling the boulder up hill,
up gully, gorge, crevice –
up, toward the immense sun.

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Measured in a Child's Light Years

When I was a child
I had powerful yearnings to belong.
I thought that somehow,
I didn't know exactly how,
when I grew up – became an adult,
became like *them*, who ruled the world –
I would find ...

I don't know which word to use.
I didn't know then, I don't now,
but it was a large, amorphous, warm thing,
akin to companionship.
To being *with*, instead of apart.
Or, worse, against.

Funny what you bring
down into your soul
from your outsized parents,
from those heights of long ago
to your beginning being.

They seemed a unison
when I was very small;
later, I saw how separate they were;
and how far away I was.

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Belonging

Every writer, every artist, hell, most people
live in pain.

I am a member of the largest community on the planet.

But when I am in pain,
I am as alone as a star
in a universe hurtling away from itself.

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The Nightcap

Four couples and a divorcée
of long standing standing
around the front door ending
a winter Sunday soirée
Monday morning looming

Looming after the repast
for recent-weds recently returned
short honeymoon late marriage
for both ending empty nights
wondering whether ever

Shrugging into coats, finding
purses gloves not forgetting
the dish that dished dessert
coffee and cognac ending
the long evening of exuberant

Talk stories one-liners laughter
morning after looming after
every man and woman bar
the divorcée an artist of long
standing admitted sadly

How sad really endlessly
sad hating all day every
weekday hating just hating
eight a.m. to six at night
work or bore-dumb boss

Their jobs, sadly good-paying jobs.