

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/2

Pam Rosenblatt

Through the viewfinder

The photographer sits on the radiator, looks out the window with
Camera in hand, eyes through the viewfinder –

A dog gently put his paw into his owner's open palm;
A wild flower bloom through the snow;
A red rose dangle from its vine that hugs a garage's wall;
A bird fly out of a nest snuggled in a house's gutter;
A squirrel frolic inside an open trash barrel...

Do these images of the dog's paw, the wild flower, the red rose,
The bird, and the squirrel really matter? Maybe the photographer
Should have focused on:

The ambulance that has raced down the street...
The lifelong friend who has developed a terminal disease ...
The family's dog who has cancer and only six months to live ...
The neighborhood couple who just had their first child...
The tennis star who recently won the local city tennis tournament...

But, today, these images weren't the ones that intrigued her.

Today, there's wonderment in nature:
In the dog's paw, the wild flower,
The red rose, the bird, and the squirrel.

The photographer presses the camera's start button from on to off,
Places the black cap over the lens, puts it back in its case.

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Why is the word two so special?

This simple, three-letter word Two
Makes things happen! What I mean to say,

Is that two are better than zero or one.
Why? Well, it's easier to discuss things

When you have two people versus no person
Or one person. With no person, there's

A constant silence. With one person, there can be
A constant bantering about – just one person

Discussing matters alone. That one person either
Always wins or always loses - that is if there's only

One voice heard in this person's thoughts!
So two are better than zero or one: two pennies,

Two nickels, two dimes, two quarters—
Each set is more valuable than just one of each.

Two birds, two squirrels, two cats, two dogs – together,
Each pair can be friends, can have offspring. Alone,

These animals can't bear children. Once again, two are
Better than zero or one. Once again, when you have

Two people, you have possibilities: friendship, love,
Family. With one person you are empty, alone, alienated.

That one person has to take on more responsibilities
Than when there are two or more people to help out

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That one person. The world is a big place, with millions of
People, animals, and other living things like trees, flowers,

Bushes, etc. Without all of these various live things
Coinciding in one way or another with one another,

Without at least two living beings interacting,
The planet would be a very lonely place.

And that's why the simple-but-complex
Word two is so special!

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Gimme a little hug, Mommy

I love you, Mommy, though I itch a lot
From fleas I got on our walk today.
I love you mommy, though my eyes hurt today
From the glaucoma blisters that popped, caused ulcers.

I love you, Mommy, for the eye drops
So my eyes improve and the pills so my coughing stops.
I love you mommy, though I can't see too well
And I have trouble walking the walk I used to love so much.

I love you, Mommy, for all the trips
To the vets offices and hospitals,
To the different groomers.

I love them so much. But I wonder
Why am I going through this all, Mommy?
I know you love me, too. But I am curious...

Why have people loved me in the funny way
That they have. Not you or Grandpa or Grandma.
But people that you have never met before –
Or haven't seen for years? It's strange; they're strange...

It's a nice life we lead, you and I.
We sing, we play games, we do treats.
Why we even watch TV together!

I listen to you speak to me and know
You don't know if I (or any dog)
Can actually understand you – or
Any human being.

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But we dogs are mammals like you humans.
We have a brain, eyes, ears, nose, throat, and
Even can bark like some people you and I know.

Why, Mommy, do dogs and people have to grow old?
Why can't we stay young? Why do we, do I, have
To go through all of this, Mommy?

I understand a lot of things, Mommy. And there are a lot
Of things that I don't understand. But all I want right now
Is a treat, some spring water, and a hug good night.

I'm tired and hope to see you tomorrow, Mommy.
Good night...