

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/3

Clinton Van Inman
INVITED

It was no accident my coming here
For they must had known long before
I wandered to their farmhouse near
That soon I'd knock upon their door
During the darkest season of the year.

Call it more than a good neighbor's sense
In snow to leave a porch lamp lighted
Or post the sign upon the picket fence
For those in need are all invited
Even if it were mere coincidence.

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PROTOCOL

Just two of you I need to lend a hand,
First to measure the rope from base to base
Then here along the wall and here to where
The rope is tied around the ceiling post.
Careful there, because all must be exact.
The tale is always in the tape you know,
Just an inch or so, an inch here or there
Even one and it would be a different story.
But we can rule that out because here
Is the can he must have stood upon.
He was often seen here from time to time,
Once it seems to look for work I'm told,
And must have known the garage to be a quiet
Place, but still it doesn't do a business good
For this sort of thing—everything is as it should
All looks typical enough, all is in order.
One last entry and my work here is done.
Thank you for your help now cut him down.

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ONE LAST LEAF

The way one last leaf
Upon a winter's branch
Held by will alone
If not by chance

Had reminded me
of the coming cold
Branches will break too
Before I grow old.

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FIRE FLIES

They glitter and glow like stars
The fire flies we chase in summer sky.
When we catch them in our hand
There is much we cannot understand.
What power made them glow and why
The ones we catch and place in jars
Will not shine as if they somehow refuse
Until we open the jars and turn them loose.
But just like us whether a fly or kid
No light shines under glass or lid.

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ECLIPSE

Through cracks in old cabin wood
The sun's eclipse ran across my floor
Like a garland of little golden smiles
Across the table and up the wall
As if they meant to give me call.
Perhaps the sun was all the while
Trying to show me something more
Than any store bought telescope could?

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THE GREATEST HIT

Mixed with tobacco juice
And red summer clay
It came from the edge
Of the cornfield
The clout that soured
Past the unplowed field
Smashed into the red barn
Scattering the cawing crows.