

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

David P. Miller

Left hand

It hurts to write.

Left hand pushes the letters forward.

Right hand would draw them after
with grace and clarity

But right hand has to stop
and think
each stroke.

Left hand doesn't pause to consider.

He forces the letters ahead

claims the territory

conquers the page

advances west to east

(as Pilgrim forefathers tamed the inhospitable California shore

laid the railroads

confined the Indians

sent out wagon trains

at last to claim Massachusetts

while Heaven smiled

far above the fabled Atlantic).

The right hand would view the places it's been

in contemplative retrospection

leaving traces as it withdraws

up the hill backwards.

But can't, it lacks technique.

The Onward Christian Soldiers left hand

tightens, cramps again.

Left hand must often release the pen

spread itself wide

shake out the pain

so as to set to the work afresh.

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But though it hurts to write, write it will by God
its belligerent markings a private language
damn near illegible.

And look at this cardboard covered souvenir pen
Its casing split just now
where squeezed for dear life
By the left hand

Vernal Swarm

each leaf seen knife-edged
every instant another leaf
unforgiving proliferation
multiplying just beyond
peripheral view
where I am rooted in a place
that is no absolute
but hypervision
factorial vision

this edge disturbance that feels like sight
but is only tug at phantom optic nerves
no place is in relation
there is no reference point
what happens only happens
at the blind spot
thickened felt unseen
dream gaze locked in a vernal swarm
shimmered sunlit veined
varietally green skinned
no zoom out no pan away no refocus

and the cicadas crickets
antiphonal insect myriads
grasshopper calling answered
with scrape-scrape
 rasp-rasp
twinning isolate sounds
carapace cries shift relation
while my gaze is locked
paired voicings wrapped then
by crickets' pierced pulse
these next engulfed by

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looped locust whine
then another layer
single calls of teeeeeeeeeee
teeeeeeeeeee
at intervals extended
or vanished

as leaves saturate
further saturate
at the blind spot

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March

Pine tree
near stripped
of branches
all on
one side –

ghosting
its
vanished
neighbor

Subway car door
two panes
of glass:
blue/grey
clear/amber –

everything slides past
left-right
cool-warm

The father
the child
night silhouettes
in the
parking lot

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Between rain curtains
window dust fills
horizon hills
profile –
disappears
into muffled sky

Pull chain
swings from
ceiling lamp

pendulum
ticks exactly
on the
second

With nothing to hear
hearing myself think