

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

Michael Albright
Gathering Together

A spurt of sudden
 January warmth
reveals dead rows
of tractor-trodden stalks
 spilling downhill
from edge of the grass
hugging the contours
in parallel lines
 redundant
yet resplendent
not for what they are
but for the golden sweetness
they once held
 tassels teasing
on the breeze

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

The Narrow Path

A field of pure
the footprints sway
the narrow path
they move both ways

The trees are hung
the branches fast
they swallow up
the narrow path

Bundled in black
the little man
the narrow path
is all he can

The narrow path
cannot be claimed
all storms must now
be feared, and named.

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

Nobody Home

A light
in a window
near a tree
by the lake.

The fish...

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The Morning After

Pale pink liquid
in the bottom
of a glass,
left behind
by cranberry juice
and melted ice,
the vodka
having vanished
into the searing cool
suddenness
of October sun.

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

Rainstorms and Stranding Behavior

*It may be doubted whether there are many other animals
which have played so important a part in the history of the world,
as have these lowly organized creatures,*

- C. Darwin

the sky, the grass, the soil, the earth

The horrors unseen below are tangible,
just like the beginning of blue velvet.
Who knew so many of them were living there?

the rain, the fear, the flood, the flee

Up and away from the persistent wash,
nosing through the dirt, mad tunnelers;
they can't think, but they know they will drown.

the push, the reach, the crawl, the climb

Heading blindly into a world they cannot see,
running from the cold, wet knowledge of a death
into the brutal unforeseen certainty of another.

the ease, the clear, the sun, the sky

Spread out by thousands across the plain,
they are stranded, frying on the hot asphalt.
Ah, but the birds! First the laughter, then the feast.