

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

Michael Ugulini

The Farm at Maple Grove

- For my grandfather, father, uncle

A promised land – Niagara's rich soil;
first seeds hunkering down, absorbing
minerals, moisture, remembering the work
of men taking risks – steeped in hope.

Hope buried, awaiting a resurrection
to a transformed life - under the sun.
Breaking forth and striving, fulfilling a purpose.
Crops for sustaining life – for healing.

The strong syrup of Concord grapes contained.
The blood of sweet cherries awaiting their sacrifice;
Red Delicious apples under green canopies;
the tender hairs of peaches on the branch.

Dear grandfather, bed-ridden and listening
to the daily tales of toil on the land;
father and uncle, cousins and helpers, tending
- and then the final harvest to markets and tables.

The turn and return of growing seasons;
the simple beauty of winter acres at rest;
the prayers; the searching the skies for spring rains;
the comfort of knowing a good fight has been fought.

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Modern Architecture

A geometric slant astounding eyes,
framed by a clear, vivacious blue-eyed sky.
Concrete forms and glass and steel combine
to form this stalwart sculpture on the hill.
It casts its shade upon the quiet lawn,
spread out before it like a counterpoint
of green against the grey. Day in and out
it stands, as if retreating from the past.

Here, no intricate gargoyles carved in stone,
no chiseled woodwork cracking in the sun,
or spewing spouts all spitting out the rain
upon the workers whisking by in shifts.
Endless windows reflect the horizon,
as if to see beginnings, and the end,
of all that was, or will soon come to be –
modern forms now becoming history.

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Helsinki, 1986

This city, our gateway to the Soviet Bear,
on the cusp of the opening up of things;
soon the flight to Leningrad in the Spring.
But now Helsinki by the bay – ice clear.

The Finnish women, fashionably dressed and proud,
depart from modern offices at five,
and walk the downtown core that comes alive.
This historic city's falling snow its shroud.

The Old Center neo-classical tour;
the spartan, sparkling hostel down the way;
the freeze-dried air crackling through the day;
the Brambleberry at night - a fine liqueur.

I stop, shake my boots, and say a prayer
inside the Temppeliaukio Kirkko -
The Rock Church – where I was told to go,
to un-scroll my soul in Finland – laying it bare.