

## Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

*Simon Perchik*

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Lost and without a wall you are unsure  
what stays dark, what will move  
once a flashlight is waved in front

and the plane in the picture begins to flicker  
taking hold one hand all these years  
dead, smothered under the frame

half dry wood, half morning  
and though there's no sky yet  
you are flying again

wobbled by winds no one sees anymore  
making room in the fleece-lined glove  
that can't tell where your fingers are.

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For the last time this overpass  
reaching out and the invisible horse  
half spray, half these cobblestones

that follow you around each corner  
--four legs and still you stumble  
carried up by the uncut flowers

you hold on to though this on and on  
is already aimless, falling from rooftops  
as rain and on your shoulders more feathers

--you are flying the way this street  
loosens from its stones the weightlessness  
that covers every grave and overflows

lifts the sky across --midair  
you sift for runoff and from below  
the unwanted shadows cling to you

--all these thorns :step by step  
each splash fastens on just one foot  
though you dig without any dirt or shovel.

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You fold this tablecloth, again, again  
lifting her dress though your fingers  
are hidden and turning colder so no one

touches your hand already frozen  
fallen off between her tireless breasts  
that still dance, offer you no other way

--you have to fold! smaller and smaller  
the way each stone over and over  
breaking in half to forget

by sealing this leak in the Earth  
in this wobbly table and in her plate  
a fork half braids, a knife

between the kitchen and the bedroom  
as if she saw in your face her lips  
melted down for yours

--you have to fold, make the table  
disappear so you don't remember  
the soothing lace, the smothered wood

--you have to trade! and this tiny spoon  
that wanted to be a flower  
picked for her cheeks and flowing again

folding again, over and over  
till nothing's left in the open  
not the walls, not the arms, not the breathing.

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Her shadow takes you by the hand  
though darkness once laid in the wound  
soaks through, festers  
while the sea comes and goes  
looking for more water  
carries away the dead  
mistaken for waves  
for these cars whose lower beams  
are honed on the curve coming in  
for the kill, row by row  
closer and closer, pass after pass  
all night circling in pairs

--it's your shadow now  
looking in your eyes, is sure  
you are too far from morning  
can't make it back  
though the headlights overheat  
chased off by the poisonous froth  
from your mouth --it's your shadow  
that helps you yell  
the way an invisible anchor  
is lowered and at twelve each night  
splashes across the dry grass  
half seaweed half on its side  
calling up one mouthful at a time  
to hold the sea fast and your hand.

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You constantly need watering  
--from pity and these leaves  
thumping the ground your heart

remembers the sound for  
though there's no dry twig  
to pull apart where the wind

still forks, unaware  
it changed direction  
to close your eyes

--you are watered by leaves  
clinging to the grass  
that fell from this same tree

and never dries  
--all that happens  
is their shadows taking root

heated the way a bird  
is sure each egg  
has its fire inside, will fly

with the bone in its breast  
pulling the Earth apart  
while you hold between your hands

a small stone already dead  
brought down from a great height  
and left to open.