

Wilderness House Literary Review 9/1

Michael Salgado
CICADAS

Cicadas softly speak through
my memories. The drifting of
suburban youth, restful on the
border of waking and sleep.
Humming of pool filters in
backyards, sirens occasional in
distances from my streetlight lit room.
Parents' nightly arguments slip upstairs
through walls. The glance of headlights across
my ceiling, night cars cruising away with
secret people. Cicadas softly peeping.

Summer sunset bedtime at Grandma Frieda's on
Ravena Street. Broke open sofa bed in
spare room, little brother lies near.
Pop-pop Joe's bowling trophies on
shelves. Rest from a day spent collecting
cicada husks from the red and sugar maples.
Trains slide through the ravine at the end
of the backyard toward Hellertown coke works
releasing screeching banshees. Engine far ahead comes
to a halt, a hundred car on car concussions rumble down
the gulch. Cicadas softly clicking.

Staying up late visiting at Uncle Joe's in
Albany, NY. Fire place, black leather couch,
peculiar nudes on walls, a giant ceramic hippo sits in
the corner, his mouth open wide. Roommates elusive but
smiling always. Up creaking wooden steps to
bathroom. Cast iron bath tub with clawed feet rests on
tile floor. Musty smelling guest bedroom, street breeze wisping
curtains. Sirens sound steadily. In the green overgrowth between
row homes, a lone cicada echoing.

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Jingles below the window hissing,
rumbling with another neighborhood tabby.
Cicada's song interrupted during
nights reading with mother. Brother and I nestling near.
Fearing the screen window looking into black
wouldn't hold out the clashing cats.
But mother, always there. Cicadas softly chirping.

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HAMAMELIS VIRGINIANA

All foliage gone, a beauty still
remains.

Witch-hazel's old arms reach out
flowering.

Together with fruit from last year
now mature.

Capsules split explosively scattering
seeds.

Winterbloom's ribbons unthread in
the chill.

Yellow crinkly spider hands stretch out to
cold, quiet woods.

Smooth, gray bark branches forked, a witch's
dowsing rod.

Prominent below tall oaks and maples when all life
is dormant.

Bare year-end forest holds you tight as you
unravel.

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BLUEBERRY BUSHES

Oh tranquil blueberry bushes
You crowd the lake's rim and swim in reflections
You reach tall and take root deep in watery dimensions

Oh fruitful blueberry bushes
I've nestled close to gather your sweet bounty
I've been as gentle as a hovering bumble bee

Oh bare blueberry bushes
It is January, and I am without love
January, and your buds sit peaceful as doves

Oh strong blueberry bushes
Snow lines your branches, flexing without a break
Loneliness rests heavy as the ice capping the lake

Oh promising blueberry bushes
I'll see you full in the summer sun
I'll fondle, grasp and pull but you'll never come undone

Oh beautiful blueberry bushes
I'll share you with every lover
From now till I end, forever