

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

*Gene Twaronite*

### **The Handshake**

In the market we meet,  
soldiers of civility.

I see his arm rise,  
fingers unfolded.

We clasp and engage,  
hiding behind  
our small talk.

Worlds apart, we  
might just as well  
squeeze rocks.

So much to ask  
of a handshake  
but it's all we have.

For one more moment  
we press and touch  
the thin skin  
that binds us.

Then silently  
we step back  
from the other in  
ever widening circles  
to fortified trenches  
we left behind.

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### The Dilettante

He flourishes colors  
around his palette  
and paints the frame  
but not the canvas.

She sniffs the wine,  
and savors the vintage  
without ever knowing  
the pleasure of dregs.

He strums his chords  
in perfect rhythm  
but does not feel  
the heat of their beat.

She enters stage  
left, Scene One,  
and draws the curtain  
before the play's begun.

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### In Praise Of False Things

For those who seek the true, conformity to all things real  
is the only path to pursue.

But the false has moments too when the quest for verity fails and truth is  
seen anew.

Between the false bottom and the true there may lie more  
than we can fathom.

And in our falsehood we may find ourselves at last  
truly understood.

If I must bet my soul on the one true religion, I'll keep a  
false one in the hole.

If given to false modesty rather than humility,  
perhaps it more becomes me.

If I never follow false trails, how will I ever know  
what a true one entails?

And if no hope is mine and true hope never was,  
then false hope is fine.