

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

*Joshua Martin*

**In the morning, you'll be gone;**

I mean, you'll be here physically-  
    (remember matter is neither  
created nor destroyed- especially on  
work days)-but it won't be the you  
    of mischievous pillow talk,  
the after-five persona that comes home  
with just the right amount of hair still  
    bunned and bound, hands just  
rough enough to play music if rubbed  
together.

    Your morning voice is an instrument  
of volatility, a repertoire of silent screams  
    quite unlike your nighttime  
aloe-soothed elocution. I hear them both  
    as I lean in to kiss your cheek,  
as you hurry to pack your briefcase,  
as we both await the 9-5 kidnapper's  
    raps at the door,  
bringing you to work  
    because we've all been  
duped into believing  
    freedom is in the ticktock  
of a punchclock  
    and not in the delayed reaction  
to a new day when there's  
    still time for two coffees,  
nibbles at the neck,  
and the poem  
    that I composed last night  
while watching you ready yourself  
    for your cage.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

### The story of how we found the giant squid

or Architeuthis (if you prefer  
a Greek tongue) is not  
as epic as it probably should  
have been: there were no writhing  
tentacles directed  
towards the neckbones  
of frightened fishermen,  
no screaming beaks, an  
intact steel ship (the  
mess hall still serving a late,  
casual breakfast), alive and beeping.  
You would have thought  
an encounter with something as Homeric  
as the Giant Squid of lore  
would have occasioned at least  
an oar to its massive  
protuberant eye, or, in a  
less romantic episode,  
a series of small depth charges  
designed to greet the cephalopod  
with a handshake of modern  
Greek fire. You might have thought  
it would arise from the glacial  
depths like a slippery portent  
to affirm its name: *Archi-* Greek  
for “chief,” *teuthis* likewise for  
squid, the name in a forgotten mythic  
epoch of a great Greek general  
leading a vaulted phalanx.  
Who would have thought the  
hardtack sailors yarn would  
climax in the hackneyed sea  
of the colonizer’s narrative: the

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

submersible tethered like  
the outstretched tentacle  
of civilization, the squid,  
once elusive and free, teeming  
with hidden song,  
now silent and conquered.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

### Spring Chill '07

Hardly anyone was ready for it: the late spring chill that proceeded the Conquistador Spring (Indian Summer being already taken) like a bitter Awe to complement the humid Shock of March.

Remember the neon ecosystem graphs from Elementary school? The plastic laminate, the smooth curvature of the food chain, who eats who, a sum of energy transfers and losses, arrows

contorted to point to half smiling fauna: the cricket, then rabbit, the fox. And on the flora side of things: the deciduous tree, the black gum, the redbud. Processes of life and death codified and rationalized.

In south Texas the insects have fallen and thus there are insectivorous birds that must die for want of 10 million locusts. This we understand. Even the bird watcher who wakes to find his backyard covered with black sparrows,

floating and listing in his pool like little ebony sand barges, must substitute his binoculars for a shovel.

Where on the graph are the illustrations

of the hardy swallows that will survive this guillotine of cold by flying close to roadways, eyes zoning the cracked pavement for pockets of insects kept warm by automobiles?

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

Who nourishes whom in this situation? Or better yet,  
is the ecosystem graph pasted onto your child's  
4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom wall a colorful obituary  
for the South Carolina fallen sumac,

or the Virginia Creeper  
that won't make the slow journey this season  
up the north wall of a decrepit church  
to show the world its beauty?