

Wilderness House Literary Review 9/3

Carolyn Gregory

WOMAN READING ON A PORCH

The open porch observes the street
on a summer afternoon,
old maples draping one corner
with dense green leaves.

At the southeast side,
a red couch props the wood rails.
A woman sprawls in an elegant blue gown,
book in her lap open to the lyrics
of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Tilting back into a golden Afghan,
her imagination soars with the windy colors
and smells of soulful poems,
praising rose-moles and chestnut-falls
allowing that nature is never spent,
owing to the dauphin and king
of all living things.

Her heart grows welcome
in her breast,
her whorled ear cleansed
by the phoebes singing,
bells of the milk truck passing
through umber shadows.

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TWO VIEWS OF THE SABBATH

Walking freely through green meadows,
cattails spin in a chorus scored by wind,
the ancient cork tree shaggy and twisted
around its roots
where a family takes photos.

In another nation,
night begins recorded by infrared sensors,
tunnels for escape sealed by bombs,
hospital taken out by lethal rockets,
the bones of new mothers
and children left behind,
nameless before burial.

The breeze picks up in the meadow
where all the shades of green
move kaleidoscopic over clover.
Summer walkers comfortable
in straw hats push strollers
with happy children,
respectful of the hundred year old tree.

In the night world,
cosmic flares shatter ancient walls,
down jetliners into pits
of fire and bullets,
no time for second thoughts
or plans to rescue the children
marked for death, now turned into smoke.

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THREE CHORUSES

The late chorus of crickets led me
past the square and rotaries,
past Formaggio's shining purple glass.

Not losing my way
among the trains and traffic lights,
I followed candles lighting windows
under dark night sky.

In his home, new African masks
hung on the walls, hair shocked
and wizened on apple-colored wood

while his living room became a parlor
full of country trios
and Ben Webster's steady rhythm.

The crickets hummed loudly in the dark.
We sat down and watched a film
of young women planting a harvest,
step by step with their feet

between the rows,
an ocean of song rising like heat
flowing through them.