

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/3

*Michael Estabrook*

### **Vanity**

In the park pushing my granddaughter  
on the swings, guiding her  
across the monkeybars  
up the ladders and down the slides  
the only man in the place surrounded  
by trophy wives and buxomy blonde European nannies  
but none of them not one of them notices me  
with my new weight-trained body  
thick shoulders and arms broad chest and back  
pushing lifting climbing pulling (and flexing)  
toiling in the afternoon sun  
and I can't comprehend why  
I'm not getting a single look  
or even a simple shallow furtive smile  
from any of these beauties then  
I get home glance in the mirror  
at my 65 year old body and understand why.

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### Profile

For our flight across the country  
my wife booked our seats  
not together but across the aisle from one another  
“I hate the middle seat” she exclaimed.

I would never  
have tolerated this in the old days  
but the old guy next to her  
has a scraggly mustache  
and big dopey black earphones attached  
to his huge bug head.

Then I notice  
my wife’s nose seems more prominent than normal  
in this profile view I have of her  
from across the aisle  
although don’t get me wrong  
she is still very attractive, pretty even  
a handsome woman  
as my brother Kerry would say.

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### Farsightedness

Forgot my eyeglasses again  
that guy looks like Cary Grant  
or Uncle Johnny before he got sick  
with Lou Gehrig's disease  
rhubarb pies? nobody eats rhubarb pies  
I fooled Todd once he thought  
I was playing amazing harmonica  
it was so silly too many beers was all  
almost forgot to feed the fucking fish again  
the bus took forever going up Madison  
Alan was getting antsy and angry  
I didn't mind it was fun looking at the people  
why didn't Alan look at them too?  
George and I would walk Hartz Lane  
all the way to 2 Guys From Harrison  
drive-in movies were great weren't they  
one time we snuck Pat and Larry in in the trunk  
I was jealous when she'd dance with Dick  
he had such long arms and couldn't stop staring  
Doc Johnson took us up once in his airplane  
Pat got sick such a drab day for photographs  
like channeling ghosts the doc said  
Johnny was so crazy about Lois he had photos  
of her taped to the dash of his new GTO  
Kerry Todd Michael Billy Linda Grammy would say  
trying to land on the correct name  
in the Staten Island Zoo the sun bear  
paced back and forth in perpetuum  
flamingos a 2-headed turtle and otters  
keep your hands off her she's my girl  
and he did of course he did I was a weightlifter  
hyperopia is the medical term for farsightedness  
whereby distant objects  
are seen clearly close objects are not