

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/4

*dan jacoby*  
**lick creek**

lick creek is solitary  
until it enters hodes creek  
now just running  
with the recent rain  
over clay and sand washed  
from frederick olds' 1839 homestead  
high up in otter township  
down from bear point east of reader  
last brown bear shot there  
crosses the hard road between  
chesterfield and palmyra cuts

raccoon tracks in humpback sandbar  
in the sun dappled flow  
moves with moon calmness  
deer frozen drinking in stillness  
watering below bates' farm  
heavy grey wolf prints  
maybe running some farmer's fox hound  
listening whispers being cradled  
caught in the snag of a drift

search the deep timber  
places of my youth  
stout vines propelled  
over waiting creek pools  
ending in splintering cries at  
splash down in deep dreaming water  
for shadows of campsites  
smoky fires and smell of wild flowers

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suspended in memory  
reinforced by a bullfrog chorus  
and coyotes marking the hour  
left these deep macoupin woods  
leaving only my footprints  
with the dog's, the wolf's and deer  
which the flow of lick creek  
will soon lay low

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### migration

mid october  
just before cold front  
butterfly weather for duck hunters  
southwest wind turns decoys, eddying  
days with dad here, al also  
talk always of past hunts  
both gone now  
I sit alone  
dogs vigilant behind blind  
northwest the rumble of thunder

late fall fly's buzz about  
their last days  
smell of wood and coal fires  
drift across the bottom  
carrying with it memories  
over a hundred years of tradition  
before otter and beaver came  
crushed willow and maple leaves  
snap a symphony to the timber ghosts

out of love, tradition  
shotgun propped in corner  
listening to crows calling  
remind of distant mortality  
hearing failing but in tune  
for sound of rushing wings  
echoes of ancient callers  
sound off the hills  
volley among the trees

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ripples and whirls  
in dark muddy creek water  
mark the passage of generations  
eagles sweep the sky searching  
for carp rising to the surface  
tears come, spot the page  
mourning their passing  
thankful for the generosity  
this never fading gift

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### southside hardware

came to fix the pump  
check the furnace  
change in line filters  
in the old farm house  
down in hedges creek bottom  
greenfield boys come unannounced  
because she forgets to call  
at door of dugout basement  
just under the threshold  
small massasauga rattler  
trying to get out of a cold fall rain  
woman in her nineties  
brushes snake away with her cane  
little one she says  
gingerly armed with flashlights  
down they go eyes searching at their feet  
not for leaks but for momma