

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/1

Michael Ugulini
at 11 pm

a lone clerk sweeps
loser lottery tickets off the sidewalk
in front of the poster-plastered
convenience store

a city night-worker orders
pre-cooked/baked sandwich components
expertly assembled into an orderly
product by Sue – who's poured
Styrofoam™ coffee for 30 yrs.

a teenage boy – as thin as a
shoestring French fry –
studies algebra at his girlfriend's home
trying to understand the formula
that made her so beautiful

an elderly gentleman in apt. 17
watches a 50's B&W detective movie
determined to tackle tomorrow
with the vigor and discipline of the lead P.I.

after 11 pm, the lone clerk swoops down the street
the city worker orders subordinates to work
the teenage boy studies her verifiable smile
the elderly man watches the digital clock
display in perfect time

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Upon a Crying Face

This Sleeping Beauty settled for a rest
(a hundred years before she sees the light)
remaining kings will do their very best
to fight amongst themselves with all their might.

And while she sleeps, the ponderous march of time
will still hold sway, and lead that biting way
of words best left unsaid. It is sublime
to learn to turn a cheek when it's your say.

And when she wakes will all be set in place;
all sickness gone; all ploughshares in the field;
a gentle touch upon a crying face;
all swords set down, and crops in record yields.

This Sleeping Beauty has so much to learn.
She'll see what was - and light a match to burn.

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Villa

From this hilltop, I see a white-blue
horizon, heron diving, children striving
below on beach ball beaches; the sun flaunting
itself like a beer commercial blonde.

The hot air sticks to skin like sidewalk bubblegum
on soles of shoes...Holiday...I see what
I want to see; hear only sounds filtered
by my very precise Dolby® mind.

Sudanese children do not hack and dry
heave here; AIDS in Africa is a newspaper
term. There are no newspapers here; the news
is intercepted at checkpoints - only the comics
get past security.

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This is Where We Are

Latitudes and Longitudes
of endless debates;
questions asked -
answers ignored.
The essence is in
the discussions;
the putting forth
of ideas,
not resolutions
via solutions.

Living in fog land,
fine mists that rise
in the early morning sun
eventually physically
dissolve,
but the spiritual
mist remains.

On Water Street,
a young woman
in a deep orange dress
asks me if I know
the home of Mr. Helms.
I tell her
Mr. Helms died -
dropped dead
watching CNN
last week.

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She touches my hand
says, 'So, this is where we are.'
then turns away sniffing
and walks back
down the street.

I watch her for a while,
graceful in her
orange dress,
slipping down to
the horizon -
like a final
setting
sun.

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Joy at the Beach Diner

It's hot outside
but cool here in my booth,
Diner air as crisp as
Coke® on ice.

My server sets a plate
before me now,
her smile a mirror
image of this day.

A simple burger,
perfectly portioned fries,
brand name ketchup,
mustard - the beach outside,
the sun... a paraglider
drifting by.

Her nametag flashes "Joy",
she's the Diner girl,
maybe 21 -
and not much more.

The elderly men
float in,
tease her
- shyly stare at the floor.
She becomes what each
wants her to be.
She's serving dreams
along this Gulf Coast shore