

## Wilderness House Literary Review 11/3

### Ibbetson Street #39

Review by Mary Buchinger

August 2016

Boats on the front and boats on the back (photography by Dianne Robitaille and painting by Bridget Galway, respectively), this summer issue of Ibbetson sails with poetry, opening with Kathleen Spivack's poem, "The Café," set in a dim French establishment where women

"[clutch] small glasses of absinthe,/reproaches, and the waste of possibility" and Jennifer Barber's poem "Visiting Jerusalem" asking "How long/have I been the enemy?/What god am I counting on?" and ending with Joyce Wilson's "The Envy of the Gods: "We...acted out in scenes/To trick the gods observing from afar/That they might praise what we had undertaken:/A quiet life, hardworking and soft-spoken."

This issue contains all the hallmarks of Ibbetson that I have come to depend on—new work from long favorites like Marge Piercy, Denise Provost, Molly Mattfield Bennett, Philip Burnham, Richard J. Fein, Robert K. Johnson, Barbara Claire Kasselman, Ted Kooser, and X.J. Kennedy, as well as a first-ever publication—"Where Your Phone Rang"—"Home was where the creaking of the trees outside/played see-saw with your breath,/where the book bounced/off your chest and slipped to the floor,/and the whiskey cabinet's door yawned wide"—by Tim Kinsella, an American Sign Language interpreter from eastern Mass.

One particular delight of #39 is a "A Poem for Fred Marchant" by David Blair beside "On a Poem from David Blair" by Fred Marchant—"small cat/ boogers in the dark/runnels of wet nose" in Blair's poem translates into a cat purring "through its soft, slightly crusted/nose, the air carrying to its mind/the sparrow" in Marchant's. Opening the pages of this journal is like boarding a harbor cruise with friends and neighbors. There's talk of travel, of Remembered Places (William Harney), of childhood and merry-go-rounds (Alfred Nicol), remonstrations: "unplug yourself girl" (Susan Nisenbaum Becker, "O Woman Get Off the Rock"), a fine description of "James Wright's Hammock" (Tom Laughlin) "where the dream drifts toward dawn" and T. Michael Sullivan's meditative prayer for the sacred and the lost "refugees/of our greed and waste...dimming the kingfisher's fire/ and the dragonflies' flame...Before the dearest freshness/deep down things disappear,/dona nobis ah! " (spem means "hope"). If you haven't already cracked the spine of #39, the sailing season is winding down, get to it!

\*\*\* Mary Buchinger is the Co-President of the New England Poetry Club.

\*\*\* The Ibbetson Street Press was founded by Doug Holder, Dianne Robitaille and Richard Wilhelm in 1998.

