

## Wilderness House Literary Review 12/2

*David P. Miller*

### **I Know, But What**

I know you are a box of unopened diapers.

But what am I? A lucky wolf's jungle gym?

I know you are jammed into crates in windowless buildings.

But what am I? A Big Tent bug theory?

I know you are a feral cat colony in Sarasota.

But what am I? A sunscreen pullback party?

I know you are a kitty-corner prairie dog colony.

But what am I? A temporary carrot stack?

I know you are a battered bird toy with ringworm.

But what am I? A train wreck with a runny nose?

My trailer boudoir behind chain link.

Your volcano's left-behind laundry list.

My eggless mayonnaise in a box of combs.

Your roadblock of severe yellow flags.

I know I am a lethargic West Nile eagle.

But what are you? A Fish and Wildlife wombat femur?

I know I am puppy-mill rubble.

But what are you? A black and white underwater bus?

I know I am a fun-loving fungal infection.

But what are you? A blinking bug relocater?

I know I am a bobcat hunt in the birdfeeder.

But what are you? A handmade dog meat blanket?

Volunteer bunny camps in the boa's backyard.

Graphic vegetarian retirement rockers.

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We know they are factory-farmed elephant gardens.

We know they are big burly canine commandos.

But what are we?

What are we?

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### **She Persisted**

*She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted.*  
— Mitch McConnell re: Elizabeth Warren

Sheepish sheriffs shellacked behind the shebeen  
by a she-wolf. Quashed by the banshee.

Perennial perps perturbed, their perks perforated  
permanently. Perspiring one-percenters,

with cirrhosis from neurosis, insist on stasis.  
Resist crisis, fortissisimo. Her genesis their nemesis.

Tedious Teds afflicted, outwaited and outwitted,  
averted and gyrated, blotted and garroted.

The shebang: Sheol sheetrocked, shed full of  
diapered clodhoppers perplexed to permafrost.  
Bossism in ellipsis, narcissist fantasists with halitosis  
are inaugurated, insulated, maladapted, malanointed.

Now the she-quel: trumpery's diagnosis is ululated.  
Washerwomen beboppers sistered, exhilarated.

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### Orange One Hour

The orange is black in the orange light.  
Her shadow falls through the door glass.  
Fingertips clasp the citrus over her head,  
arm thrust toward the streetlight for twenty minutes.

Slab of sodium vapor light  
across the dark gallery floor: one patch of slate  
on which the sphere silhouette rests.

He debones Bach's cello sarabande,  
limpid arced and falling phrases  
set inside silences. Dampened trombone  
murmurs in a corner of the room.

Inside, she kneels at the slate, facing  
the orange light. Pares narrow strips,  
the fruit's epidermis,  
lays them on the stone.

Waiting. Bach pitch chains arise,  
return to room quiet.  
One hundred twenty pin lights  
in eighty hues, over our heads  
in the gallery dusk.

She reddens the orange's gouged surface  
with lipstick. With her teeth  
she tears the thick of the rind,  
opens her mouth  
to deposit each piece on the slate.

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Each section of citrus to her mouth,  
from her mouth, reduced  
to a small gentle mass. Laid  
on the stone, yellow-gold  
in the sodium glow.

Waiting. Bach cello trombone,  
voiced and suspended.

She places an orange pin light  
in the pulp. Slate, shavings, rind,  
mass, and bulb.

She rises and moves to the door.  
We watch her outline against the glass  
through the sarabande's final pause.