

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/2

Dorinda Hale

COMPANION PIECE

He looks at her boxer's crouch,
the report from her eyes of a gift,
and feels them as wooden rumors
with designs upon the truth.

But there she goes dead ahead into speaking
nevertheless, of his hands, how they gnarl
around secrets in his knees.

Of her hands as they spot pearly
the exact place on the page
where something laughs and leaves the room.

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RATIONALE

Because of the way you feed, needing flagons for cups
and spoons big as amphitheaters, I can't set your table.

With a throat for sucking juice from mangoes
a singer hosannas above the chorus. The sound fastens me.

As you loosen, how is it possible for me to ratify
your toppling wordstack and respond to all your rests?

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CHOOSING A SITE FOR A LEAN-TO: CELEBRATION OF A MARRIAGE

Because the underbrush held "sign"
we knew that wild things
thrived in tangle, but the thicket
took our feet like mistakes,
and when roots held we jumped free
or fell.

If they tore from earth
we grunted, and jungled through.

Sometimes — hunched or crawling,
faces to the growth — we stalked
ourselves through a beard
of vegetation we couldn't name
to a clearing where blackberry bushes
disguised rotting logpiles
as walkways, and we'd suddenly
drop off shredded wood
into an airy twig-mash,
sham ground.

Sundown could make our return
a swagger in the dark:
we learned
by getting caught once
to enter the woods with time enough
to test our spot
to lie on the moss
and measure the tilt of response.