

Wilderness House Literary Review 13/1

Stephen Mead
Somniloquy

Sleep talk, memory-deep,
Mom is not happy
about being photographed
in her cotton blue housework shirt,
cuffs rolled above the wrists
for her paraffin hands,
one with a sponge, sudsy enough,
against the red of the picnic table,
freshly-stained or fading to grains,
the original wood, its damp hint
of moss

calling to the distant green
of that tree line, its Spruce-busy brush
rising to a sky, enough see-through blue
or robin's egg, with picture postcard clouds
lowering white over
the chalk-gray gravel drive

rounding the perfect triangle lawn,
its apex-tip, and the Catalpa's ancient
good girth, its hodgepodge of softness here,
roughness there, parts of bark, rivulet-cracking
for ants at their business bringing a grip
of limbs up and up to the spade-shaped leaves,
their lime hue felt-soft, amid a sea of bean pods,
the miniature ruffles of blossoms
and amber locust shells.

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One iridescent with wings
is breaking through still,
a rainbow at birth

resembling nothing plague-like.

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Curtained

Paintings,
the gold robes which veil approach
of both image & viewer
framed by life's protective shrine of
durable frailty waiting to meet
each other's story like

a train whistle on wind,
the steam, the chuff & clank
bearing cinema messages, voyages
as fate, where engines are

needle eyes & tracks part
the landscape same as hands

pulling back these beckoning
cloth rivers, these travelogues

behind drapes.

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Bricks, Light

Warm yourself here.
Press hands to orange, topaz, rust red...

Blood is booming to the bloom of this
light, these squares mortar seals
the roughness of
in dust & in
crumbling, the promise of flame,
a place to touch clay, pigment,
the cold itself thermal & shaped
maybe for a window,

the sky clouding its blue puffs
against such space for squirrel play &
the flight of birds...

Each flock passes to emptiness &
the stones stand, the rectangles
resume order, the grace of this radiance
your head rests against, huddled

in the frozen, each eye
itself, closed, compressed, soul-yellow
stirring...

as though around a barrel:

How you move us
there against the bricks
where you do not stir at all.