

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/4

Marybeth McNamara
Admission

It was never true--
the celluloid radiating,
painting every surface
blue, the theater
turned unearthly
with underwater light.

The scaled flanks
and tender bellies
of mute desires drift by, cobalt
and electrified, my vision
crowded by fin
and jetsam, everything
we had to cast off the side-

how could we think
the faces of the actors, god-sized
through the projector
would turn a technicolor gaze
toward us, toward us
in particular?

My own dream forgot
my face in the dark, naked
and anonymous
in the raw blaze of house lights
coming on.

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Cuckoo Bird's Daughter

Nibbling at the edges
of my cousins' dinner plates
my whole life--

your rayon slip shadowing
the table. Your silhouette,
undressed, rippling
in the floor-length mirror,
is always embarrassing.
You're going out
or coming in, maybe both.
I may not see you again
for a week, your smoke-veils
unraveling in the dank air
of Aunt Sheila's basement.

I don't fit-- I eat and sleep
at the wrong hours,
I disrupt a household's order,
simply by being here.
I'm never sure
if it's you or me
who's being asked to leave.
Either way,
eventually,

we will have to leave.

Your days and nights are spent
on bars and men, a land still foreign-
for now, I soak up the traces
of nicotine in Uncle Richard's
converted den, chewing on
the crumbs of your image

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in my own reflection, wondering
if one day I will
grow into your likeness-
hips, breasts, lips

hungry for both tenderness
and separation-- a vagrant
mimicking love
for a place to rest.