

Wilderness House Literary Review 15/2

Cameron Morse

Floes

Let me come
watch you butcher cows.

Breed rabbits. Teach me
what it's like to grow up on a farm

in a family of breeders. I am yours.
I hear the caws

of knowing what happens
during the night, but cannot locate

the crow. Stir as I might
in a gutted pillowful of feathers,

there is no gore in my grass,
only empty supposition. I haven't

really believed in God since I aged out
of the aging neighborhood

of my birth. I outgrew the wind
and became the water,

the floes in the bird bath. Feathering
ice in orchard shadow,

I record your movements.
If only you would cup my hands

around your breath and blow.

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Far Other

A swirl of light, ignited cloud
by cloud, floats by
in the channel of Arctic
breeze. Downstream
from mayhem, I follow the flow
of ethereal body parts
below the brim of the eaves.

The pieces proceed singly, wads
singly bitten, chunks singly
chewed. Light electrocutes the fuzzy
filament of the blind cord
I can see my son strangled by
sometimes and raise
to the slider lock, the Venetian slats.

Closer, closer to me than the bird
beat of my own heart, crab
apples bobble army green stalks,
the topmost blades a shade
the color chart on my phone describes
as scarlet. *Far other,*
says Augustine, *the Light Unchangeable.*
How far indeed that is to me,
one beat away, one up
down beat, from infinite repose.

Pistachio Shells

A stand of green
onion with its dog
penis blossoms, pistachio
shells commingled
with catkins and helicopter
pods. Late afternoon sun
a spider in the web
of the patio umbrella.
A squirrel trots at the corners
and edges. My body
becomes a burden to me,
my knotted shoulders,
my mangled arm. My wife
critiques my posture
and I agree it could be better.
I could be a handsomer
man. I could be upright,
align my spine with the doorframe
like when I fancied myself
a singer, learning how a singer
breathes. O to be a funeral
assistant and for once in my life drive
a hearse, lower the lid
of a casket, arrange flowers
for the dead.

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Red Spider Tick

One of the bird houses in the wisteria
arbor rocks in the stillness
between breezes. Flowerpots in black
wire stands drip above the patio.

There's something in the way a red
spider tick charges over the blue cylinder
of my pen that makes me softly,
ever so softly lay down my ballpoint

on the patio table grate, and something
in the way the tick's crushed anyway,
its movements permanently and irrevocably
arrested, its red inscrutable body too tiny

to focus a lens or generate a detailed
description, that makes me wish
I could tell the difference between blue ink
of my pen and the blood of a red spider tick.

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Swinging

The anemic oak
surges with late morning

breezes, pallid clumps
of windfall

below the gigantic
sawhorse of the swing set.

Between its timber legs,
grass grows tall and bellies

with miniature sheaths,
whitecaps bowing below

the weight of their own bodies.
In his blue infant swing,

Theo seems content
to swing forever. Every time

I attempt to unlatch him,
he begins to whine, ballcap

askance on his forehead.
When it drops where

my sisters and I ran ruts,
I snatch the hat

before the swing hits.
Return it to his forehead.