

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/3

Charlie Brice

The Same Old Questions

What happens after the shrapnel
cuts through the gray matter,
severs the thread of life,

or when the bacteria finally
hail victory, win the corporeal
war, or those cells that divide

faster than formula ones at
Monte Carlo crowd all
the health out of a body?

"We'll all see God, but
not with our eyes," wrote
Jim Harrison. What do our

not-eyes look like? Where
are they located? What about
the right hand of God? What's

Their left hand doing? Where
is it? How many hands does
God have? When will we settle

into the crimson lap of the Great
Grandfather pictured alongside
all those gospel stories?

No one ever returns from Lethe
to leave an answer, and if the
end simply folds into nothingness,

sucks the blaze of existence into itself,

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/3

a black hole of Thanatos, no one will
have a mouth to say, I told you so.

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/3

The Big Questions

Judy had to pee so badly her eyes were watering. We had no time to take an exit, find a gas station, and get back on the highway to catch our plane in Seattle.

The road was behaving badly. Dust squalls snaked across the freeway like snow squalls, only brown. Traffic out of Seattle was bumper to bumper, but we thought of nothing other

than Judy's throbbing bladder. Ten spasmodic minutes later we pulled into the rental return at Sea Tac. A trembling man rushed to carry our bags. "We just had a major earthquake,"

he shrieked. "Where's the bathroom?" Judy asked. The man pointed a shaky finger toward the terminal. Inside, the floors were covered with water and pieces of Chihuly's glass sculptures. Police sloshed through

the muck with walkie-talkies while one man, wide-eyed, mouth morphed into a Munch scream, walked up a down escalator like a deranged gerbil. Judy launched herself towards the Ladies Room and found that the earthquake

gods had mostly spared Sea Tac's bathroom plumbing. And it came to pass that all the big questions: Why is there something rather than nothing? What is the nature of reality? How do we know what we know?

What is the meaning of life? and, most importantly, What is the essence of relief? were answered in the less leaky, but infinitely soothing, sanctuary of that lucky Ladies Room in Sea Tac.