

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/3

Max Ridge
Death Busks

death busks
the court's square.

to put it efficiently:
you live by the sword by which you die

and I was asking:
by what sword did I live?

granted there were snags
but not snags you couldn't fix

over the twelve
pink label seltzers I bought

while you were calling home.
I did not intercede in the train crew's cab,

did not walk between the cars, and I left
the doors closed.

Yet there was a pause upon reflection.
In a manner of speaking I burned

a thousand dollars.
I threw away my bed.

the language of worry is numbers.
years and parts per million.

I was speaking numbers hard
I was rational and proud of my numbers

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in the manner of a bowdlerized and manly Cassandra.
I came around, but not

before I threw away your sweater too.

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Media Types

produce merch instead of literature: no notes
on concision, no intentional mistakes,
and the complexity is for fools.
In contrast I was sired on a stone floor
so I don't do art ever,
or if I do I make art, it ducks
between looking and leering,
and I do look around colorfully on occasion in the
broad spawnwater between Dagg's Peak and Brimlow. A man
walked by pressing his mother: "give me nothing,"
so assertively did he speak the words "give me nothing!"
that I obliged and my mind went back
to speaking into my palm and gossiping the Bible.

Factories

Factories from Michigan wished they could go back to Buicks, bucks on the dollar, driving on the balls of the feet, the feet from Michigan—Michigander, I think is the demonym—and I meant the car's feet. One leg at a time, two legs at a time, one leg every two times, the doors song "love me two times." Commanding! like a big man's presence. Americans are big and ugly. I've been to Michigan in speeches, been to the Michigan of speeches, which lives in the mind of every gas station piston wrapper who snorts Waterloos from Benjamin Moore. I've never been to Michigan but there are double digit rats in the back of my car. I wake them up with (1) acceleration, (2) bass. En route to LAX we roll over in Michigan.