

## *Wilderness House Literary Review 2/4*

*R.L. Swihart*

### **Gnostic Portal #20**

1.

A turn-of-the-century accident in Kashgar overturns a watermelon cart and East meets West. The missionary smiled when he spit out the teeth.

2.

In 1917 R. Mutt found the portal then lost it. The Warriors didn't lift a finger. The later imitations are worthless.

3.

Or lost and found? Didn't Dada attempt to bridge the rift between us and Nobodaddy?

4.

On leap day 1948, aided by a chance hand and fantastic swirl, Portal #20 confounded the ashes of Adrian, Adrian's horse, Chekhov's mongoose, and two torn pages of a pushmi-pullyu.

5.

Perfect. On the other end an already lighter Schwitters, a real daddy's boy, was building another Merzblau.

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**Technicolor like the Wizard of Oz (but Inside Out)**

1.

On either side of the day a pyramid of dead-ripe tomatoes on the kitchen sill. In the morning blue-green confetti: Oolong swirling in a cup. The horse of a different color canters through at the end.

2.

In this Kansas the old artist—slumping on his chair in the forest and half-buried beneath his floppy beret—knows only Schoellershammer paper and shades of gray. With his permission we smudge the forest floor with our dirty feet. Crawl on all fours. Search for Sophie's mushrooms in his tangle of trees.

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### **An Hour at the Lagoon**

1.

Roadblocks are up on Park and 4<sup>th</sup> for the marathon. All morning R. watched the unknowing cars turn around at BRIDGEPORT and retreat. A few claps for the stragglers, a clearing, and R., A., K., N., and L. cross the street.

2.

L., a voracious pug, scrapes over the steps and onto the bridge. Unleashed she runs to the other side and races up and down the crescent of sand, a rasping music box alive in her throat.

3.

A. figures out the new camera and photographs the two girls. R. plays catch with the younger one. R.: *We don't see each other enough. Call in sick.* A.: *I can't.*

4.

They walk back in the dazzling light of an autumn afternoon. The pug hasn't lost her pull. The roadblocks are still up. An old man in a wheelchair is ringing a bell on the corner, shaking his fists with excitement, running, if only in his head.

5.

Heads I go this way, tails I go that. No, I'll stay right where I am.

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### **The Narrator is Lighter than Air**

1.  
N. has the inordinate need to bring Rilke and Machado together in the city of Ronda.
2.  
He nods to Machado and Machado rips himself away from what he loves the most. A beautiful Lament leads Rilke by the hand.
3.  
Arm in arm, ears full of whispers (Arunda... Leonor...), the two poets amble round the hilltop city. They keep returning to one of three bridges. Bask in the sun of a touristy square. Lunch near the Palacio de Mondragón.
4.  
As the birds of Ronda once again slip into dusk and knit the two halves of the city together, N. leaves Rilke and Machado near the Plaza de Toros, stops for a quick drink, and glides to the giddy edge of the Alameda del Tajo.
5.  
The two poets don't mind. They've forgotten he was ever there. With two pairs of eyes they find another white path wandering in the foothills. Admire the Guadalevín shining like a broken sword. Disappear through the old Arab arch.
6.  
Finished with me N. clips on his wings, sails over the gorge and out of sight.