

## Wilderness House Literary Review 4/4

*Timothy Gager*  
**Brophy is in the Air**

Brophy has a way of stopping a room dead in its tracks. It's not only his looks, 'cuz he is my baby, but he does it by what he picks to say. He does this on purpose, for the effect his words have on people. Sometimes he doesn't realize what he does and sometimes people want to hit him for little or no reason. They really don't know him.

Take this for example. I joined a fancy book club. I don't know anybody, as I found the group on Craigslist. What I do know is that I've always wanted to be in a book club so I can say, "My book club is reading, or my book club says..." They've read such authors as Caroline Leavitt, Anne Tyler, Anita Diamont, Nicholas Evans, Alice Sebold, James Frey and Melissa P, plus they serve hot mineral drinks. Overall, it's not my cup of tea. The first night, Broph barges in right at the end, his check-book out, a pen in his hand, points to one of the woman and says, "I'll take that one." He pauses, pulls his cap off to scratch his head. "I must have the wrong place." The living room is void of air. "Baby, knock it off," I smile, and he smiles back. The ladies make a sound as if they are blowing up balloons. "Excuse my brothel behavior," is met by more dampened sentiment until I burst out laughing. I know that no honest brothel would take a check from just anyone.

We don't have much money, but the club on the corner, Dee-Dee's, has punk rock shows every Saturday night and it's cheap. It's a dark place, except for the back area that glows florescent. It feels like it should be smoky, but it's not. We drink lots of whiskey and Bro stands on a stool shaking his ass. It is a ridiculous dance. He is twenty feet from the door, a wall and a bouncer with thickening veins on his neck. "Get down!" he yells. Bro says it right back and dances with increased vigor. It is Brophy being simple, being misinterpreting, thinking that the bouncer wants him to "get funky". It is Brophy being Brophy. It is Brophy, being grabbed, lifted and thrown in one motion from the stool. It is Brophy, in the air, headfirst into the mel-lowed brown wall. Finally, Brophy strapped and wrapped in a blanket being taken away in an ambulance.

Bro does not wake up. We sit in The Carney Hospital in Dorchester; watch A & E, sometimes Bravo, and sometimes The Food Network. I don't want to leave, not even to have a smoke. We cannot be apart. People we know visit us. "He looks peaceful," they say. After fifteen minutes they shuffle their feet and leave. They leave donuts behind. I call his parents. They don't come. I put his cap on his head.

One day later his pinky moves. Brophy's doctor says, "It's a twitch. If and when he comes out of it he won't be the same. He may be disoriented or loopy. His head is like a train that is derailed. We have to wait and see." His words blur. I take it all with interest, as loopy is a bit subjective in my personal medical book. "We'll see," I say.

Every day something else suddenly moves. He reminds me of our dog having a bad dream, except no whimper. In two more days his eyes open, the laugh lines around his eyes crack. He says, "You're such a bitch for not passing me the ketchup," and "What is steak? Chopped ham?" I think he is exactly where he should be.

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