

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

*Meg Tuite*

### Orbital Echoes of Seasonal Disorder

#### Rainy month

I've been smacking flies like gum. The back of my desk must look like The Killing Fields. I wield my yellow flyswatter and whack at them while I stop doing whatever it is I'm not doing. I could just lean over and see how many violent slaughters there have been recently, but I don't. It's all in the wrist. I used to play tennis.

#### Warm month

I walk down Michigan Avenue in Chicago on one of those days when winter has swapped a day with spring. People are smiling and looking at people with coats off. I haven't bitten my cuticles all morning, but am pretty sure I'll start again as the day moves on. I watch the people watch each other. There's a sashay in every groin.

#### Blustery, hellish month

We're hanging on to a tow-rope to get into work. It's the John Hancock building and the architect wasn't a scholar at math. Some kind of vacuum has turned the last hundred feet into some kind of typhoon. Everyone is freezing. We laugh at the insanity of tugging our way into a job the majority of us despise. Someone yells through the well-dressed crowd clutching briefcases and handbags in one hand and the tow-rope in the other, "Are we fucking crazy?" I realize it's me. I let go of the rope. The wind yanks me, smacks me easily away from the monstrous building that looms a perpetual shadow. I agree and go home.

#### Hot month achieved by six hours: 42 minutes in airports

We've left the city for Mexico. I'm lying on a beach with hundreds of other people doing nothing. I watch a girl and her boyfriend argue. She studies herself in a hand mirror. He studies the other girls in bikinis. When she looks up from her mirror, he snaps his head back and smiles one of those long, white teeth I-love-you-with-every-part-of-my-being bullshit smirks. He kisses her and grabs the lotion. She turns over and he rubs the coconut stench of the islands all over her back. I watch the white puddles of liquid disappear into her skin while he eyes another girl stretched out on her beach chair. The girl smiles back. Her boyfriend turns to her and lowers his book. This could go on forever.

Month of humiliation: March

Everyone is happy. Their coats are off. Spring is only a couple windows of flowers and fat boots stuffed in the closet away. I am sure that something big is going to happen. This kind of hope stretches me from one migraine-day to the next. I am strutting along with my arms swinging. My head is up and I am looking at people. The sway to my shoulders relays a history of minimal eye-contact and malaise. I grin at some girl and she grins back.

A massive boulder of snow melts just enough to slide off the edge of a tall building and slam me to my knees. I am trapped inside the only mound of snow that can be seen for blocks. It is Michigan Avenue at lunch hour. There are many people on the street. They all fall to their knees in hysterics. I have become an episode from "Candid Camera." I wonder if there's a camera, but that show is as old as my shame. Some lady asks, "Are you okay," and then wails of laughter torrent out of her again. I have made everyone's week. They will be telling this story for days. Nobody remembers anything past that. I shake my head. My hair is spiked in icicles. I roll over on my back on to the packed snow. "What an ass," I think, "this could only happen to me." I start cracking up.

When I get back to the office everyone stares at me in horror. "What the hell?" They ask. "Where did you go for lunch?" There hasn't been much excitement in my life, might as well give them some. I sit in my chair and start to give them a blow by blow. I've got the room roaring in no time. I'll take it wherever I can get it.