

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

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Saturday Chores

In the cool darkness of early autumn morning
they strike the fence post over and over until
it slices through the soil past the worms, sleeping
cicada, settles just above the rock formation on
this, one of many Cheltenham hills that line this part
of Philadelphia. The hills rise and fall to the valleys
of creeks and small brooks, many never notice.

Leaves drip from trees, transparent skins of rust
yellow, orange, tan. Yet here on these tree lined
streets there is none more beautiful or hated
than the Sycamore. From its useless fruit, to
summer shedding, autumn's final drop of leaves
are all tolerated for the majesty of the high tree
tops mingling in the middle of the street.

Rake skims leaves from atop grass, between mums
and pansies to the gutter where they are pushed
into thick paper bags, stashed along the curb line.
Popping of nail gun echoes as the last panel of fence
is attached to posts.

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Day Tripping

Ascending and descending from foothills to valleys, from valleys to mountains, to a place Jesus wasn't born. On a bridge without an exit to the street without wreaths, to a colorless building with hallways lined in tin, boxes with numbers along corridors dull with spiral compacted bulbs into the darkness of the proof.

Leaves scurry under dank sky into swells of golden mounds that rise and fall in the exhausted wind. Reverse angles line the street under the bell tower where the lamb is said to live. Under this shadow, it stands lined with books, candles, pockets of sweets and deli meats.

She stands like a bohemian solider, apron strung around frumpy dress, oily hair clings to face and when asked a simple question she twitches, eyes shift side to side, feet never move and after several minutes of useless information she simply says there are no poets in this place.

We focus on our departure, pull from the reverse angle onto the trafficless street, drive by the ancient stone homes past the houses with vacant eyed windows through turns and twists of roadway until we reach the peak and begin the descent to the place where we began.