

The Wasps

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Source: *The North American Review*, FALL 2022, Vol. 307, No. 3 (FALL 2022), p. 77

Published by: University of Northern Iowa

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/27210497>

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JOHN MOESSNER

Moving

...what makes anything poignant is that it's going to end
—Michelle Boisseau

Zeno's paradox says you never actually arrive,
never make it to the hands-on-knees moment
where you unshoulder all that kept you moving
through the sour and sweat of task after task,
each a half-length beyond. I'm packing boxes
of pens and ramekins and books and lightbulbs,
like Sisyphus on the mountain planting a heel
into a well-worn groove the shape of his foot.
I imagine after some time, three weeks, 100 years,
he would have wished he believed in Zeno's trick,
would have preferred the constant grunt and goal
of one singular task never grasped to the eternal
cliff after each achievement. I can't remember
how many times I swept the wood floors
with the blue-bristled broom, how many stoops
to catch the piles with the black dustpan.
Our universe is expanding. Some say it will one day
contract, gravity the brush that moves in concentric
circles around the room to drag balls of dirt and dust
to the center, or like the collapsing of plates
and bowls into a box, only to expand again
into cupboards and cabinets of a new home.
Each house lulls me into the safety of permanence,
the full settle of a body on a mattress. Still,
I find myself cleaning baseboards and ordering a truck.
Once, I mopped myself into a corner, losing track
of my exit, dividing the room by halves until
I was squared into the last dry unpolished patch.
Hours could have passed, or minutes under water,
but I feel I lived a lifetime there, my soles running
with the woodgrain, my breath rising into its own
echo. I watched wet nebulae disappear on the floor
until it looked just like it did when we moved in.

JASON TANDON

The Wasps

Eleven years they have returned
to nest in the hollow doors
of our gray plastic storage shed.
Just now I saw one enter
on this warm May morning
and remembered
how I used to kill them
with cans of chemical spray.
It took years
before I learned
to stand still,
let them zip around my ears

till they flew off
for an hour or so
as if I were
a prospective buyer
touring an open house.

NICOLE V BASTA

a word so close to soil

lattice-topped pies
when the money was good
beauty despite circumstance
there is a beginning and an end to all things
myth and perennials not included
day lillies on the east planted decades ago
by the farmer's mother with a name i know
to translate to *soul* from another language
a word so close to soil, to the fabric beneath
that allows the trees to share: water, nutrients
maybe a laugh— the woman in the lily beds
a lifetime ago pruning with anna
a name that most often translates
to *grace*