

Wilderness Sarchild

The Price Of Living In A House In The Woods

The rodents are having their way:

In the spring it was my car.
I was driving along having a conversation
with my dog when something jumped
on my head. I slammed the brakes,
leaped out, opened all the doors,
watched a squirrel sprint into the woods.
To make sure there was nothing else lurking
I opened the trunk, lifted the cover
to the spare tire, saw a nest of leaf debris.
I picked it up to throw out and a baby critter
was hidden in the pile, as afraid of me
as I was of her.

In the summer I was woken every night
by scratching under the floorboards,
disturbing as the ticking of a loud clock
or the scratching of a chalk board.
That, more than my husband's snoring,
sent me to sleep in another room
night after night.

Now autumn is upon us,
time to clean out the dark
unoccupied-by-human spaces.
Yesterday it was the shed
where we keep old files:
past business clients,
tax returns from 1993,
accumulated papers from before
the trend of paperless billing.
Nests everywhere. Rodent urine
turning the papers brown and soggy.

I know we're destroying their homes
just before the winter cold sends them in
to begin building again.
It's a dance we do: the rodent
rock n roll. They rock, we roll.
We roll, they rock. This all out war
between us to claim a home as our own.

Wilderness Sarchild is an award winning poet and playwright. She is the author of a full length poetry collection, *Old Women Talking*, published by Passager Books, and the co-author of *Wrinkles, the Musical*, a play about women and aging. She has been featured as Poet of the Week on Poetry Superhighway, Poet of the Month at the Brewster Ladies Library, and can be heard reading her poetry on WCAI Poetry Sunday. Her poems have been published in numerous anthologies and literary journals, including being a featured poet in the Fall 2020 issue of *Muddy River Poetry Review*.