

POETRY | SPRING 2016

## Three Months in a Wheelchair: An accounting

By Lynn Pattison

I established no school of unique women  
    who could save the world like Professor X,  
  
solved no murder witnessed from my window  
    like Jimmy Stewart. I did solve some mysteries:  
  
how to get underpants on whilst standing  
    on one foot, how to sleep with a leg encased  
  
in lead. I did not command a whaling ship  
    in a consuming search for a great white,  
  
though I can do a pretty good impression  
    of Ahab stumping across the deck.  
  
I was proud of reading a poem  
    at the Art Museum but that was before  
  
I learned that Sarah Bernhardt performed  
    across America's stages after an amputation.  
  
Didn't even use her wooden leg.  
    If I'd had the option of inhabiting an avatar  
  
on a distant planet I could have  
    had an active life. Even here, I might have  
  
finished a manuscript, reread The Iliad.  
    At least I could have organized files, polished  
  
the silver. I planned projects: closets  
    I could clean, calls to my children, but  
  
it turned out that's all I did, no day  
    exactly right for the activity. I forgot.  
  
The cast distracted me. I needed sleep.  
    Maybe my lameness represents a greater

underlying weakness as Richard III's body  
reflects a shortfall where strength of character

is concerned, or an easily damped down  
sense of self. Who knows? Months from now

you might find me quiet and shy,  
still in this chair, dusting my glass unicorn.

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**Lynn Pattison's poems have appeared in The Notre Dame Review, Rhino, Atlanta Review, Harpur Palate, Rattle, Smartish Pace and Poetry East, among others, and been anthologized in several venues. Nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize, she is the author of three collections: tesla's daughter (March St. Press); Walking Back the Cat (Bright Hill Press) and Light That Sounds Like Breaking (Mayapple Press).**

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