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.

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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