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LAUREN P. HAND

Streetlights leak haphazard halos onto our heads;
the night, on a hinge, sighs and creaks,
while shadows gather and recede like waves
as we wade in the deserted streets,
and the moon misbehaves.

This quiet town, made strange by the hour,
grows stranger each time the clock tower
yawns.

You and I chart a nocturnal geography
as the bats practice their choreography,
the crickets keeping time.

We reach the fire escape and begin to climb:

*This must be the opposite of evacuation,
as if the city were on fire
and only this un-burning house were safe.*

Wrist over wrist we move along the railing,
our hands like four ships sailing
beneath the pale light of the moon;
we scale the eaves until our knees
meet slate.

Suddenly, we find ourselves
so much nearer to the stars.
Eye to eye with the night sky,
we are close enough
to pluck the stars from their sockets
and put them in our pockets like found coins.

The traffic light, now miles below,
cannot tell us to stop or go,
and there is the church, and there is the steeple,
and there are the tiny, beautiful people.
We peer down into a diorama of our own lives,
so small it could fit in a shoebox.

Let's sing like birds on a telephone wire—
isn't it strange that birds on telephone wires sing?
They cannot feel the current beneath their feet;
they cannot hear the telephones ring.

You light a cigarette and I tell a joke,
and we sit in the stars and the song and the smoke.
If the air is cool
and the sky is clear,
my friend,
you can see everything from here.