

### **Moving In**

The furniture was left behind  
by the last roommate, who took it  
from the one before him.  
The bed now leaves its own notches  
on the backs of everyone  
who's slept in it alone.  
No one lingers in the living room.  
The pictures of old roommates  
no one bothered to throw out  
warp on the refrigerator  
to follow you from the kitchen  
to their former favorite resting spot.  
To cut them up would only  
increase their numbers,  
make a hive of forgotten faces.  
Wind can catcall through the holes in your door  
made by the girl who tried to install  
security measures against Al Qaeda,  
the FBI, her former employer,  
and finally her roommates when none of them came.  
At night, stolen youth taps the roof above you,  
a malnourished animal left behind  
by the expelled priest who spent  
whole evenings up there, calling  
his high school students, bragging  
how the collar he never surrendered  
could get him in anywhere.  
If all goes as it has so far, you'll lie awake  
with a need to hold anything.  
That's what made the other girl  
bring in the internet, the bright, useless  
tables, inviting gentleman callers,  
her hand in their pockets, hopeful  
to find a breathing tube  
to escape even the thought of drowning.  
On the other hand, you might move on  
much faster than we ever could.

--- Chad Parenteau

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## For Lynne, On Mistaking The Date of Our First Meeting Anniversary

I must have tried to give more purpose  
to the night of July Fourth,  
when people can look up  
and know that no rocket  
has chosen them for collateral.  
They stare without even the need  
for an ultravision, photo-flash view  
and somehow are reminded of bravery.

Tonight, on the roof,  
many spectacles before us,  
I could play Vulcan,  
turn your flickering hair  
quickly in my fingers  
to make a fiery whirl  
the harbor dwellers would squint at  
to prove to themselves they saw it.

Instead, I want to reach up,  
defy laws of space and sight,  
and pick a fleeting hot bouquet  
that, though dripping in light,  
will not overwhelm your strands.

But these spectacle satellites  
we see and do not see,  
they are not ours, no matter what alphabet  
has been etched on them,  
their allegiance only to flair or impact.  
I want to will myself  
into tearless granite,  
to protect you from a heated lash  
in an embrace I can't feel.

Only, to wish for explosions  
is to wish for escape,  
to deny that I look in your eyes  
and divine none of the future  
beyond the first step downstairs.

--- Chad Parenteau