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## Children's Dreams

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# Children's Dreams

Mary Dengler

Children's dreams come rushing  
in the windows  
with the air that pushes lacy curtains toward the bed.  
They circle round the room and fix themselves  
upon the walls in darkened orbs or moving, light  
upon the drooping sheet  
to force delight or terror on the stricken head.

One night I heard adults discussing in the rooms  
below the stair  
the things they should have talked about  
with me—that Mother spoiled her children and  
should find an out  
from years of marriage to my worthless dad.

Their words, authoritatively spoken in such grand-parental tone, had  
clamored up the stairwell like an angry mob.  
I didn't know I'd traveled into sleep  
beyond the window's threatening darkness  
and my stifled sob and lights  
below the stair.

Two men in circus tights,  
descending by a trapeze from the sky  
into my room,  
each took me by an arm and caught me into space  
while wrapping me in phosphorescent cloth  
to make me sparkle like a star.  
We sped through galaxy and cloud,  
they acting as my wings.

Circling earth, a dizzy but protected moth,  
I felt like Faustus on his maiden ride with Mephistopheles  
and sensed I'd lost my soul  
along with all the other problems  
of the erring human race, like voices that patrol  
with callous, adult views of things.

In coming back to earth  
my trapeze partners gave me  
one last fling,  
propelling me through houses 'cross the land.

Athena-like, protected by my shroud of sparkling cloth,  
I hurled myself through windows without pain,

then, flying close to ceilings,  
toured each house protected by my height  
from frightened threats of warring inmates  
exiting again.

I hovered over wooden panels, carpets, curtains, art,  
real fruit in baskets, glowing bulbs in lamps,  
the dogs inert, still waiting by the doors,  
voices ancestral in the form of kitsch,  
or gilded frame on shining family altar, wall, piano top.

Amid these furnishings of hope,  
the frightened inmates caught off-guard  
were forced to sounds I'd heard at night behind the doors,  
to all the rumored tales of fighting spouses  
warring young, of plotting,  
arms uplifted in a rage,  
of weeping, yelping, staring at the closet floors.

My flying coming to an end, I found my sparkling cloth  
unfolding down bright clouds to Grandma's house.  
My bedroom quiet in the waiting dark confirmed  
the end of travel to familiar lands,  
the start of night.  
I woke to catch the trace of phosphorescence  
lingering on empowered hands.