

Andrew Luft

Half Light

My sister, 14 and blooming,
floats in her dimension

scientists name a young
planet, before grasping how

in the belly of some woman
she will never meet or talk to.

refusing to detach. The girl
tiptoes, eyes closed, across

a god like a stone sketched
by fiery tongues, shining and

one day the stone will cool
enough for her to hold it

of unrest. We've named it
sleep-walking, the same way

the thing moves. The same
way a young girl defines life

Is that not some kind of love? Traces of
breath tug with the insistence of gravity,

glittered waste, dances light into
a sleepy house. Sketches pictures of

shining as temperatures rise. She wears
each callus like a prize. Someone tells her

without holding her breath, when she has
known every type of pain.

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Baby-killer

—the name stumbles out
from behind her young teeth,
rests there

in the space between us, a void
that rarely gets filled.

It needles through our family like wire,
threads inside my sternum,
under my father's nose, curls around my mother's throat—

baby-killer

The title enters my liberal grandmother,

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humming with the grace of God,
cherishing the final moment of light,

the way a world looks before it slips
into the belly of a black hole.

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I see flickers beneath her dream-
filled eyelids, know she's in there
somewhere, awaiting transmission:

What's it like

out there? Do you keep time

in light? Does everything weigh

a little bit less?

I hold her hand the next time
she grows older during a single sentence.
She refuses to stare out our tinted car window
as a family watches from the shoulder
while our car passes
so close to their life, their hunger
for a destination.

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I believe in trails of maria, moon craters mistaken for seas, that stain
the stretch of carpet from her bed to her window, glowing like a promise

made by a mother. Is there a better place for magic to exist? If I see
light, I'll pause before I knock, in case she is whispering to the stars

from her knees or maybe trying to learn a new song on the ukulele
I gave her last Christmas. I'll pause, keep her there a moment

longer as she claims a far-off planet as her own, hanging her words
like wet laundry, while silence becomes filled by plucks and hums.

