

Emily Dickinson's Diminishment

The full moon snags the picket fence.
Stones shine; a cat slinks through grass,
neck collared with garlands of light.
Within branches of an elm tree, blackness
has locked the heart of a finch in its claw
for sleep. Now she confines herself
to the house, hears the hall clock ticking
and scolds time for stitching ambivalent
love into her with an extra-fine needle.
Rumors of her social unwillingness
wag in the breeze like summer-green
sycamore tongues. Chaste as the cherry table
against the wall, she leans upon a sill,
moonlight smoothing her chestnut hair and creamy
complexion. Between two front windows,
a cluster of leaf shadows quiver
on her desk, suggest dark poems
she will transcribe later to scraps
of paper, envelopes, or blank sides of recipes.
Within her small space of eccentric brightness,
she studies the moon's syllables,
innuendoes of perpetual white
written on the backs of her hands.

R. Nikolas Macioci