DANIEL SCOTT TYSDAL

The Older You Get the Less You Float in Dreams Across the Ceiling to Watch Your Family Before They Sleep

As a child, you dreamed away your blankets; emerging from sleep not in visible approach

but as an observer unlit by shape across the ceiling, spying secretly your family in the living room they returned to after putting you to bed.

The way I hold you is not a home, but you are a home for the way

I hold you; and the older you get the less and less I believe in the day you will watch me watching you die:

the watching in a way on both sides withering as one withdraws from witnessing the other one

withdraw—so that what remains undreamed will never again release heel prints into ceiling-paint dust, or

inflect with urgency the forfeited grounds of unseen propulsion. At five years of age, I cried patterns against

the stomach within which you refracted from fluids my life

(for the streamed breathing of what impels,

you no longer in dreams discerning beneath lift the room bodies make for going). And my cry

burrowed as claws burrow—your momentum crippled like wonder beneath

why's tensile fist-

as I leaned against you learning I had lost the most important role in my elementary school's

play. The lines in rehearsal too quietly expired on my lips

for the audience not yet gathered

to hear.