December 1993

Night Sailing

Peter Harris

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq

Recommended Citation

Colby Quarterly, Volume 29, no.4, December 1993, p.326

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Quarterly by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.
Night Sailing

Most twilights, the wind dies. 
But through some nights, it keeps 
pouring and I’ve felt it 
carry my wife and me in our sloop, 
like seeds on a leaf. Perhaps tonight. 
I call friends, who hesitate. 
“Sailing? At night?”

Yesterday, in downtown rain, we saw his face, 
pallid, not for the first time, her eyes, 
iiodine. We suspected; that’s why 
the call. I can imagine her fingers 
twisting in the spiral cord before 
the choke-hold of dailiness relents 
and she says, “Why not?” and he says, “Let’s go.”

Before moon-up, we rig sails, 
then weave upwind easily 
past glowing beads in cottage windows, 
past rock-wharved islands, heading 
where lakeshore withdraws into obsidian 
evergreens, lightened only by revenant birch 
until the moon gains buoyancy, greatens, land-blooded at first 
then clarifying as it rises to chaperone us 
almost to Quaker Point, where a single cloud 
gives the sign to turn home. 

Ashore, 
in the meadow of made hay, we’re 
radiated by a moon grown strong enough 
to cast us on the ground. We linger 
at the shore, afraid. He’s the first 
to slowly back away and climb 
toward the moon above the hill. 
We follow urgently until, again, we move 
all four abreast. Turning once to fathom 
where we’ve been, we see our shadows 
stretched downhill, strafed with stubble, 
almost blending with the green.

PETER HARRIS