WHEN I WAKE TO A BEDROOM FILLED WITH BLUE LIGHTS

I open my eyes to a room sharp with the dog’s bark and blue with the flashing announcement that once again in the world something’s not right.

What calls four cruisers to block off Beaver Street, the small town side street so quiet, so late? Someone’s been stopped. Some fugitive? Drunk or drugged? Or merely skidded off-track the way last winter I fell and broke my wrist on the path to my own garage—the kind of trip-up that takes one instant of not watching to change your life. Exactly the way out of a sound sleep, this strobe-light blue pulls me into the middle of someone else’s predicament so that I know again for sure that even the deadbolt on the door and the weight of two comforters can’t shut out the danger.

And because I have to find out what’s going on, to make sure the cops have the lid on, I get my uncle’s World War I binoculars and go stand in the bathtub, ridiculous in my Grandma Moses gown, hair sticking up, because the window over it has the best view, but I can’t make out why a small car is slanted across the street, why three guys in jeans are standing around while a couple of cops run up and down, or why the houses across the way, the whole neighborhood, appears and disappears in the strobes. And there are no guns drawn, no blood, no shouts, no one trying to escape, so that finally I decide it’s nothing after all.
and go back to broken sleep, where the room continues to pulse with blue for hours, and I dream—a ten-gallon aquarium—and I am a peacock-tailed guppy, swimming back and forth through water’s blue maze.