

CHARLOTTE PENCE

## The Weight of the Sun

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I like the 4 a.m. feedings best, tilting  
the rocking chair back and forth  
with my toes, observing how the invisible

lines of our dark yard rest against  
the lines of other yards—of other lives.  
Before the sun rises, this small wedge

of the world momentarily in agreement:  
everyone on this block wishing for sleep,  
for peace, for the coming day to be better

than the last. I like thinking how the grass  
growing a thousandth of an inch every  
fifteen minutes is celebrating something

as I celebrate solving small mysteries  
like learning a red fox is the one who  
flattens the path through the lawn.

Mainly I like pretending I am the only one  
awake, the only one seeing the world  
at this instant. The navy sky, thick as blood,

is my blood, as the fracture of stars, bright  
as raw bone, is my bone. I like being  
reminded that we all began in dark and stars,

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that the carbon, nitrogen and oxygen  
in our bodies was created 4.5 billion  
years ago in another generation of stars,

that somehow if we could weigh the sun,  
all rising 418 nonillion pounds of it,  
we'd see that strength is never needed

to begin the day. No, it's something else.  
Behind every square of light flipped on,  
someone is standing or slouching,

stretching or sighing, covering  
or uncovering her face. Someone  
is thinking, *Today, I will I will I will...*

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