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## Marvel

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## Marvel

They lick our hearts  
with a beat, treacherous—

Clocks—  
they even wind up  
like a thermometer—

as if for the heart—

like a metronome  
with its seductive little notches  
and its sleepy head.

But the face—  
it winds down.

These ticks and beats—  
they march us ahead.

The knob—  
it winds back—

while its face  
told us we were alive.

In its glass, a distorted eye  
blinks affectionately—

it ticks coquettishly—

with an invisible eyelid  
draping like a quilt  
over a corpse ten seconds old.

What is it about a city?

A city at mid-moon  
dims one light at a time.

Windows become stars  
one at a time.

They count down the hour  
until the sun rises again.

What is it about syncopation—  
and mistakes?

They make circles 'round us.

They skip 'round  
the hands of the clock—

twirling about  
between the pitch  
and tick  
of a song  
in the soul.

It is I, twelve floors up.

I am now.

And if I jump,  
it should be—

if it is that I am deaf  
to the resounding mistakes

and watch the clock  
add up my time.

I might as well jump.

The clock—  
it licks our hearts—

with a treacherous song  
as it ends,

and the heart races on.

So then it should be  
that we leap—

make off with time.

It should be  
that we have the courage

to leap and make the moment;

make time with the cadence  
of a clock ringing behind.

Sing this song—  
swing and do—

the ledge is there  
for the sleepy heads  
who wait.

What can be a clock?

What can measure  
a moment

in this night  
of receding hours?

City at mid-moon  
with lights and grit,  
soiled black to my sides—  
I swing, I spit.

The leaping by  
and resounding mistakes.  
The courage to leap—  
and make the mistakes.

In a sky rise—

twelve floors up.

I, the Vanguard in the sky;

immobile and free, We

twinkling  
among the shards  
of stars  
in windows  
we cannot fathom  
for each;

feeling the same light  
upon each of our backs;

the feeling of Now,  
a night of receding hours.

by Melissa Patterson