



we are erasing the stars.  
they have special terminology for this:  
*glare, skyglow, light trespass.*  
when i was a little girl, i remember waiting for a  
midnight train in DC...  
standing on the platform in the drizzle  
and asking my parents: "why is the sky pink?"  
as i got older i stopped thinking of it as pink  
and started to call it the noncolor:  
pinkish, gray, purple, bruised, unreal skyglow  
the opposite of all color.

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listen  
i want to tell you, as an old woman  
i want to tell you, as a little girl  
and as a warrior  
and as a lover  
whatever happens, don't get scared.

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make our own weird musical instruments  
out of leftover unidentifiable junk  
tell long winding stories on rainy days and  
put on plays for nobody but ourselves.  
there'll be  
an abundance of ruins to explore  
and a dazzlement of stars.

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soaring above America i reflect that  
where i'm from, we don't have grids of light,  
but curlicues of it  
little winding spirals that decorate the blackened land.  
there are no dark spaces anymore.  
i don't know whether to be more afraid of this  
invasion of light,  
or my strange intuition that during my lifetime,  
all the lights will go out  
and all the noise will fall silent.

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we are erasing the stars and i am of two minds on this.  
firstly. when the lights go out  
a lot of people are going to die. it will be cold  
and i might have to eat porridge and flatbread every day  
just like most of this planet's inhabitants  
and there will probably be dust.  
and no showers, and bugs and disease and no antibiotics  
to stave them off... ok, i admit: i can't really conceive  
of what it will be like when the lights go out.  
i have had glimmers though, and an uneasy feeling  
permeates all of them.

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there will be a riot of greenery  
a rusting of machinery  
we'll go swimming every day  
with fishes tickling at our toes  
lie upon the sandy beaches  
and watch languid river flows.  
we'll learn to tell the weather by the clouds  
learn to identify animals by their sounds...

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we just have to listen for the beat...  
laughter will be our best strongest ally  
and we can use the empty fountains for flowerbeds  
wild unperfumed hair flowing from our heads  
and after a few weeks, we won't even realize that we  
smell.

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on the other hand, i miss the stars.  
the flickering television is no substitute  
for the communal campfire.  
i miss the people who i might  
circle around campfires with,  
and i miss holding hands together in prayer...  
i miss sleeping upon the Earth herself, in all her  
hardness and softness and dirtiness;  
i miss feeling real genuine joy when Ra rises  
in all his strength above the eastern horizon.

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there's a lot i don't know.  
i don't know how long it will be before  
this whole neon structure  
collapses under its own weight, and i don't know how  
the beams of the tower will give way. i don't know how  
to prepare for it. and i don't know that we have to wait  
for it to fall before creating something different...

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there is hope, because underneath the neon confusion,  
we can still hear the beat (of Her heart) and we are still  
moved to dance.  
(i heard that a return to the Paleolithic is not necessarily  
a return *of* the Paleolithic.)

(would the Real come back if the lights went out? like  
when the movie's over... or when the curtain falls, and  
the applause subsides, and the reality comes back on...)

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