

## Night Lines

*Dixie Partridge*

It was the high Uintas,  
evening of our first day-hike  
with grandchildren . . . their lives until then  
seeming distant, clustered and glowing  
as the far Pleiades to our gazing.

In the darkening, away from city lights,  
Orion's bright belt embedded itself  
in the peak of Mt. Nebo, conch-shell galaxies  
wheeling the high-altitude sky.

States away now, I've walked out  
from a quiet house into the present darkness.  
Sensed through soles of my feet:  
a network of roots . . . trees we planted  
decades ago curving yard's edge  
with the faint scent of pale summer phlox  
clustered like hazed moons under dogwoods.

Just evenings back, weren't there  
young voices lasting each summer dusk . . .  
their hidings, their countings:  
*red light green light . . . run sheep run;*  
a sound of crickets enlarging  
night's deep lavender,  
its slowed, expanding kingdoms?

Inside, with the switch of a desk lamp,  
a sudden gloss of faces  
beams from table top and walls:  
the photo sheen of family  
evolving . . . a faint and distant longevity  
in the smiles of all our ages.