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Fire Escape

Alexa Winik

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FIRE ESCAPE

Wrought-iron jet,
lovelorn parasite to the 1940's brick:
you enthralled me

one evening, when
I passed you by Ouellette and Dominion
and glimpsed
two shadows: a man and woman,

melded recumbent against
your crumble-down wall
with its naked slabs and sun-drained bar sign.

I spied how the shadows shared
secrets, mouths pressed,
from your highest platform

as if
(so suspended)
their close heads brushed the city's
cyclorama sky.

Their shadows have since
vaporized, like ghost
or baby's breath garlanding

your rust-freckled
railing. But now
I always notice you at night.

In the day
you camouflage—corroded eyesore—
wiry, extended blackfly.
But you are for night,

the dusky bellows,
when the camphoric
halo of street lights

shape-shift you
to a meandering
opaline staircase;
Jacob's ladder.

And as I lonesome wallow below
your platforms lacking destination,
it strikes me,

how we yearn for empty stairs that lead to
empty sky so we may climb
just high enough

to cement our
handprints in
upward sheets of stars.