
POETRY | FALL 2014

Infectious

By Doug Hester

The last lightning bug of summer wanders across the Nashville skyline, blinking, seeking a mate to stave off the inevitable, the approach of autumn, the destiny of a lonely demise. The light pulses slowly, flickering within the wind, which caresses the leaves, crackling as they prepare to release.

Somewhere in that skyline, beyond the silhouetted leaves, a physician rounds. She bounces from room to room, examining, listening, explaining, prescribing, healing. My wife wades through the pathogens, who detain her again in the wards tonight.

The metal lattice of her deckchair absorbs the dusk light and grows cool in bright emptiness. The bug wavers above the glowing iron, but continues to blink, flashing into the darkness. Hopeful someone will see him. Hopeful it's not too late in the season. Hopeful the life he's burning as a message is received. He hovers near the corner of the house, and—in a gust—is gone. I soon follow, switching off the deck light and stepping into a quiet house as the glow fades.

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