

EMERGENCY POWER: 5 A.M.

by John Stone

Electrons slow and stop,
clogging the wires.
For 60 seconds, blood is not red,
bone not white —
the hospital is dark
as the inside of a heart.

For this long minute
we have all gone blind.

Then the partial light
of diesels:

On the tenth floor
in emergency power
a baby is born in its own time.

And now a light
another
a row of lights.

I come back to my desk
that was always there,
flick on the overhead lights
that were out without even knowing it.

I go upstairs
to speak to the new-born:
he answers me with his babyest cry,
having just come out of his own darkness

having passed the test with us all
here in the bloom of the hospital
with new breath coming out of the walls
and every clock but his
ten minutes slow forever.

Dr. John Stone's poem "Emergency Power: 5 A.M." originally appeared in
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