Within the blackness of my daughter’s quiet room,

the glow of a light clipped to the pages of the book she holds

envelops her in an island of light.

The golden glow cascades over the pages of the old paperback,

deepening the red of her pajama top,

and flows up to her face before fading into darkness above her brow.

Her face looks older in this light, her eyes so serious-seeming,

Downcast lashes read the last few lines at the bottom of the page.

Her small hands hold the book open,

thumbs careful not to obscure the words,

right index finger poised to turn the page soon.

Within the blackness of my daughter’s quiet room,

the glow of a light clipped to the pages of the book she holds

envelops her in an island of light.

The golden glow cascades over the pages of the old paperback,

deepening the red of her pajama top,

and flows up to her face before fading into darkness above her brow.

Her face looks older in this light, her eyes so serious-seeming,

Eyes downcast, her lashes nearly touching her cheeks,

she read the last few lines at the bottom of the page.

Her small hands hold the book open,

thumbs careful not to obscure the words,

right index finger poised to turn the page.

This is the beginning of love, I know.

I know the tug that, emerging now, will always pull her back.

I know this is the dawn of her journey

into the worlds these words will open.

In this nascent moment, I quietly rejoice.

I quietly rejoice.