

Rope

In the dream, there's still
a rope between us.

I know it by its warp;
the careful rope you used
to bind me at the breaking points
of my body – wrists
and ankles, fastened tight,
as if to keep me to myself;

rope you fixed
to anchor us to cliffs
in case your footholds gave
or I reached to pull against
a sloping door of rock
and opened it. Rope

that knew so much
of waiting; the floorboards
cold against my spine,
or outside, listening for the call
to climb – the slack brought in
the route set out before me.

Tonight, I'm bound to you again.
We've got so high, the city's turned
to patchwork. The rope's around
my waist, the other end
around your neck so tight
you'd barely know where flesh

begins. I grip the frame,
my knuckles white. I hold my breath
on every spur of rock.
You are running for the drop,
you're gathering speed,
you're sprinting for the break.

It will be years before
I feel the catch, and wake.

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