

## Julia Carlson

### Stars At Night

Late at night awake  
So quiet I can hear my breath  
The neighbors came in  
Tromping and laughing up the stairs  
Young, single, tipsy with life  
We were once too  
Drunk, driving with a fever  
Leaving the car on the side of road  
Running for that hot August field.

I wonder where you are now  
Under what stars you sleep -  
Cetus devouring Andromeda  
Phoenix devoured by flames -  
Stars shining brighter because the sun  
Reflects off the sand and bounces back to them  
Brighter because these stars have no competition  
From city lights, cars on the interstate, airports.  
But I don't know any of this -

If your stars are bigger, smaller, brighter  
Or already dimmed and faded  
From the light of the rising dawn  
How deadly quiet it must be sleeping there  
Out in the wilderness with tanks and men and guns  
Waiting for a blast to knock you to Kingdom Come  
Or maybe you don't think of that at all  
Simply lay silent gazing up as the stars blink back  
Little beams of heaven calling you home.

**Julia Carlson** has been published in *Lyrical Somerville*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Istanbul Review*, *Bagel Bards Anthologies*, and was editor of *Bagel Bards Anthology V*. A social worker and a Cantabrigian, she is the author of two chapbooks, *The Turn of the Century* and *Drift*.