

## Patricia L. Hamilton

### Missing Out

I lay in a snarl of sheets,  
window open to the twilight  
cooling by slow degrees.

Next door, the neighbor's  
Rain Bird sprinkler whirred,  
tik-tik-tik-tik shhhhhhhhr.

Quarantined since morning,  
I sat up to look out the window.  
Nothing to see but the fence.

The scent of wet grass mingled  
with the metallic smell  
of the screen against my nose.

I flopped back down, dejected,  
my siblings long dispatched  
to the fairgrounds without me.

I had only a dim notion  
of Fourth of July fireworks  
but knew I was missing out

on something momentous.  
I thrashed, grievance growing.  
A gate creaked.

Mr. Ricketts dragged  
his trash barrel to the street  
as a car swished by.

Shadows swarmed the room,  
settling and deepening.  
Still I couldn't sleep.

Distant sounds magnified  
until I could hear the din  
of the fairgrounds crowd,

and a volley of booms  
erupted like enemy fire  
from a fleet of gunboats,

I a small captive  
in the prison ship of my bed,  
afloat in the dark, alone.

**Patricia L. Hamilton**, a professor of English in Jackson, TN, is the author of one collection, *The Distance to Nightfall* (Main Street Rag, 2014). She won the Rash Award in Poetry in 2015 and 2017 and has received three Pushcart nominations.