It Was the Wind

H. C. Palmer

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Leaving the oval field at the far gate,
the riders waved to the hoots of the crowd.
We looked down into the fading afterimage
as clowns and bellowing steers absorbed the scene.
There were other scenes, and midway,
a brief rustle of kids and critters.
Always the crowd, the lights, the stars above,
figures and forms innumerable and unnamed.
We left the arena, hoping to see the hills alone.
Others stood outside in the lot, silent,
dreaming on the stars, the night that gives nothing
but what we ask: faint stars on which to dream,
a voice of unimpoverished desire at our interior.
You threw your hands upon my downcast face
and gave me back my own lost look.
The parched grass spread tracers of light at our feet.


Winter whiteout rattled her windows, slipped beneath
doors and frosted wooden floors, smothered fence posts and a side of the barn. Cattle, even the dogs, frozen in drifts.

Spring twister stripped shingles, ripped clapboards and launched the barn like an ark into Wabaunsee County. Hail shredded the cornfield and her garden.

All summer southwind bent the landscape. An empty sky sucked everything dry. The windmill, frantic for water, pumped air and the Dust Bowl overflowed with waves of dirt.

In fall, the wind made her think to stay as cool gusts scattered black walnuts. She relished picking the nutmeats, but scrubbed at husking-stained hands into winter again—and first snow melt.