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## A Woman Acquainted with the Night

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## *A Woman Acquainted with the Night*

My wife is not afraid of dark.  
She uses lights like handholds,  
climbing down caverns she accepts as found.  
She's as comfortable as blossoms

when the sun goes down.  
Forests we've camped in at night  
are forests, to her, clear-eyed,  
seeing no visions she can't

blink away. In sudden dark,  
she goes on mending clothes by feel  
while I sweat and rage  
to make the spare fuse fit.

When she was six a fat man  
digging a storm cellar  
shut her and a friend inside,  
stood on the black steel door

and stomped like thunder.  
Frozen, too frightened to reach  
for Becky screaming in her ears,  
she felt nothing could ever

be that dark again. In time  
the door clanged open and light  
baptized her with perhaps  
too deep a trust in saviors.

She lies down now in darkness  
with no human hand but mine  
to cling to, nothing but faith  
in the moment to let her sleep.

When storms short out  
the relay stations, she knows  
how far to reach to touch me,  
to make romance of failure,

knows how many steps  
to the candles so if our children  
wake and cry for light,  
there will be light.

*by Walter McDonald*

