

The View Down Here

By Bria Buttafuoco

There are no stars in New York, just the yellow light of gleaming windows
a hundred stories in the air and a man hunched at his desk,
perched on top of this concrete universe.

Below him--a milky-way filled with flashes of taxi lights
and police sirens, the dazzle of cigarettes flickering and dying
under high-heels, and my sister who crosses
one avenue to the next, caught in the incandescence
of Times Square; this dimension of fluorescent
electric glitter that swath her first winter coat.

She who is not among the stars or their
artificial brethren or the men like gargoyles
over stacks of paperwork, stationed accessible by
elevator, but in the grime, the hot-dog
scented breeze, the aborigine rats and alley-cat
garbage scavengers.

She who takes the subway to her communal apartment living
and loves New York for its supernatural lights and tall buildings--
She who lays at night, squashed between the wall
and her boyfriend on a twin mattress.

An open window lets in light from everything but
the far-away glimmer of an omnipotent planet.
The train, the howl of a lonely ambulance,
golden yellow from a street lamp, all
creep from fire-escape into the room--
Yet she watches, hoping for the tail of a comet.