Karen Neuberg – Three Poems

Ursids: Winter Solstice Meteor Shower

> *catch a falling star*
> —sung by Perry Como, lyrics by Paul Vance / Lee Pockriss

To catch one or more involves
laying on the grass
& getting chilled from cold
eyes darting, scanning
across deep-night skies,

until—*quick!* and *over there!*
as one at a time or in pairs, may be
startling in consecutive action—

different than those spotted accidentally
while parked, summer nights, with a date
on *lover's overlook* or some such name
where catching the shooting star meant
lucky in love—

this meteor shower means rising at 3 AM
and stepping out into frigidness
with determined resolve
and just when I'm about to give up
(I so want to give up)

there, and *there*, and *there!*
flashes shooting across dark, bright
reward for my patience.

Forward

The way forward is a tunnel.
The space is filled with barriers.
Plus, it's cold. Plus, there is a fury
surrounding the tunnel and it's causing
the walls to crack. Debris has begun to ooze in
and the passage is inundated by seeps
and puddles forming and growing as I crawl
the way forward. Surely the way I'm going
is forward. Surely my efforts will lead me
out of this narrow journey
I find myself unwillingly taking.

Later, they will ask if I was afraid.
Not really, I'll say.
But that will be a lie.

Procrastination

I should just get to it,
circumvent the waiting around
for it to happen, as though it will come
on tip toes in soft slippers carrying
every childhood birthday cake
and my first set of wheels and the easy
whee of roller skating down an incline.
Instead, I should just leap in, hear again
the yell I heard the first time I jumped
off the high-diving board and realized
the cry came from deep within myself.

Karen Neuberg lives in Brooklyn, NY. She is the author of the full-length collection *Pursuit* (Kelsay Press, 2019) and the chapbook *the elephants are asking* (Glass Lyre Press, 2018). Her poems and collages have appeared in *805, Epigraph Magazine, Glassworks, Verse Daily* and elsewhere.