PARTS

this is the part in the movie where the violins hum
this is the part where we see no one in the room
our eyes stumble over a chair as the light dims
the door must be about to open
this is where the answer is about to shed itself
like a light across the screen
we are at the center of the empty room we see
even the curtains are waiting
there is a voice about to emerge and ask
is anybody there?
and because we have tightened our throats so long
it will seem like years before we speak

Wendy Louise Parrish

THE ALARM

for Steve

A faulty burglar alarm goes off
and you, still coiled in sleep my friend,
rise to dial the manager.
Police arrive. And in the end
we all crawl back to bed. Four times—
then, on the fifth, I hear your screams:
my lawyer will call yours. Rocks
will smash the windows of your dreams.
Your anger sings. The singleness
you wanted most flees, to return
altered and in control. The alarm,
the damned alarm rings on and on.

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