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Brain Waves from an Alien's Radio

Shaina Monet

Vassar Miller Poetry Award Winner

On antenna systems, Feynman notes: "Ours is one of the simplest possible ones; we can make them much more complicated, and by changing the phases in the various antennas we can send the beams in various directions and send most of the power in the direction in which we wish to transmit, without ever moving the antenna!"

— *The Feynman Lectures on Physics*, Vol. 1, Chapter 29–4, Two dipole radiators

Not sleeping under this window,
me, as the trees outside peek through lantern light
and bamboo slats.

the blind's bunched strings illumine. sleeping troubles
me most at night, because I suspect

I have not met the right doctor yet the trouble
with thinking at night about the day I thought

I would never sleep again is how it felt,
how it feels still-life like now.
I am afraid and say so.

Because I cannot remember every body and every
thing I have known, and done,
nor what they have done to me

and mine, my mind is likely to twist one
thing into another— twine so sound sews in two

syllables the way I've imagined a knot— Tonight,
trouble sneaks in, asks me

what if

Ben didn't hang himself
from a tree? the blind's bunched strings

illumine. Because negation is a rope I can hang myself with,
I have trouble in my body. nights inside the refrain

of proper nouns, troubled sleep and me, as troubling
as Ben who's passed himself and passed past