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Gene Kelly

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Gene Kelly

Nicole Lawrie

It's 1:09 AM and I'm here alone with
A Kahlúa—a white Russian—
Vodka and milk.

I drew some lines in a notebook—one on each page—
But when I flipped them it all went backwards instead.
I think my hands are set on rewind, or everything is.
Lately I've been feeling like I've been standing around
Outside of myself, saying *Speak up, Look up,*
Fuck up.

Yesterday I got brave, and I strapped on
High heels, stood on my desk and started singing,
And I was louder than the fax machine, and louder
Than the printer, and louder than the phone, and a
Million red voicemail lights blinked behind me like
Hollywood, Broadway, and Gene looked up
From advertising schedules and program copies
And said,
"Enchanting.
What?"

I leaned over the cubicle and complained
And told him how I've been moving backwards
For five years, how when I leap forward and look
Behind myself,
It's the present that recedes.

Tonight he let me trace the outline of his arms, hands
Stuffed into pockets. I think I've been crying
Over his cuffed khakis and white socks,
His strong jaw and dancer muscles,
Because he's pointing his body to
The left, looking left, and even though he hangs
Like that, I know that sixty years ago he landed right,
Where he wasn't looking.

And I tried to dance,
But all I could do was pull blankets over my eyes
And roll over
And face the wall.