

The Larger

By Joanie Mackowski

POETRY OUT LOUD 

I don't know how it happened, but I fell—
and I was immense, one dislocated arm
wedged between two buildings. I felt some ribs
had broken, perhaps a broken neck, too;
I couldn't speak. My dress caught bunched
about my thighs, and where my glasses shattered
there'd spread something like a seacoast, or maybe
it was a port. Where my hair tangled with power lines
I felt a hot puddle of blood.

I must have passed out,
but when I woke, a crew of about fifty
was building a winding stairway beside my breast
and buttressing a platform on my sternum.
I heard, as through cotton, the noise of hammers,
circular saws, laughter, and some radio
droning songs about love. Out the corner
of one eye (I could open one eye a bit) I saw
my pocketbook, its contents scattered, my lipstick's
toppled silo glinting out of reach.
And then, waving a tiny flashlight, a man
entered my ear. I felt his boots sloshing
the blood trickling there. He never came out.
So some went looking, with flares, dogs, dynamite
even: they burst my middle ear and found
my skull, its cavern crammed with dark matter
like a cross between a fungus and a cloud.
They never found his body, though. And they never
found or tried to find an explanation,
I think, for me; they didn't seem to need one.
Even now my legs subdue that dangerous
sea, the water bright enough to cut
the skin, where a lighthouse, perched on the tip
of my great toe, each eight seconds rolls
another flawless pearl across the waves.
It keeps most ships from wrecking against my feet.
On clear days, people stand beside the light;
they watch the waves' blue heads slip up and down
and scan for landmarks on the facing shore.