

Night dweller

by [James Crews](#) in the [February 27, 2019](#) issue

Fear tries to keep you small,  
presses you under its wide thumb

so you never want to leave the house,  
make the phone call, pray for help.

But sometimes you pry yourself loose,  
slip out into the winter night

and pass through a shimmering black tunnel—  
no moon, no stars, no flashlight—

where anything might happen, and does.  
You fall to your knees and listen

to the scuffing noise of leftover leaves  
on the beech trees, calling with each rustle:

Be more like us. Dwell naked  
in the night without running away.

Hear what secret languages you learn  
by staying. See what sweeping thoughts  
perch in each of your available branches.