

Daredevil

by [Shari Wagner](#) in the [September 23, 2008](#) issue

Sunday afternoons, she rolled off her stockings
to cross beams girding my grandfather's barn.
She was fifteen and longed for something in the dark
leafy boughs she couldn't quite reach. Balancing
on a hand-hewn rafter was nothing more
than stepping out on a limb and the humid hour
held its breath, the twittering sparrows fell silent.
Dust shivered suspended as she passed through
shafts of light austere as a coronation. This
was before she coiled her braids under a covering
and took her place in a kitchen with its slick checkered
floor and the tick of a clock she had to rewind.
For one immortal summer, girders hung
taut as strings her steady feet could strum.