

Delicate Maneuvers

by [Sarah Gordon](#) in the [August 2024](#) issue

On the internet old couples
are dancing in hazardous moves,
back and forth, around each other,
to pop music, loud.
You don't really want to watch.

**

You carefully pull away the fingers
of the child who's grasped your leg
in longing for something
not yours to give

**

You read that every year
hundreds of millions of birds die
from flying into glass, breaking
into neighborhood homes.
You don't really want to know.

**

Soon you will raise your small,
trembling hand to say
you have the answer
or think you do

**

Yet you avoid the eyes of the stranger
walking toward you on the path
as though you're blinded
by headlights

**

That sideways breath on a cat's ear.
Your breath.
You don't really want such power.