

To My Partner, Astrophysicist, Explorer of Worlds, On Her Birthday, 24/7, Amid Trouble

'When I do count the clock that tells the time'—
or check my phone, since it's twenty thirteen
and we exist in bits, I easily
forget what hangs between those outstretched hands
in space and motion. Numbers on a face
like furrows in a brow only suggest
the aching truth that lies within: we hurl
through vast and dreaded nothing, teetering
between oblivions. Outside this safe
anonymous sphere, our home in flesh and blood,
lies all we cannot fathom. Here in dreams
we order it, make sensible its havoc,
and for a fleeting second feel like kings
amidst the teeming throng. So when you peer
into forever, past the gaps in things,
and pioneer new homes, new clutching worlds,
you mirror into me. 'It well may be
that in some difficult hour,' naked, scared,
I will not need the scientist—only Sarah,
her beating heart, her pulse, her hands, her calm,
like interstellar forces holding me
together. Maybe not. But maybe so.
I can't predict the future, only bet
on what I see, two paths of mine that fork
at this sweet instant: with you, or without.
And like some cosmic law forever etched
in history, or like the breathy hit
of simple moments, passing as our lives:
'To know exactly when and where I am'
I just need you. I just need you. Just you.

Like every person stumbling through the trial
of self, or self-deception, self-denial,
I fear the dark. I stretch my hand to you.
Reach out. Reach me—through eon, inch, or mile.