

by Craig McVay

The Beautiful Prisoner Dreams of Andromeda

The galaxy Andromeda is the object farthest from earth visible to the naked eye. In myth, the girl Andromeda is saved from a sea-monster by the hero Perseus.

Dark in my cell, I dream razors fold
like winter into spring and rest like silver ponies in the grass.
I look above the lonely men in towers

and through February's midnight blur, I see
the impossible: The blue galaxy, two million light-
years away, spirals just for me
toward the Milky Way. Andromeda!

I step from the orange suit, and I become the girl
Andromeda, chained to the rock where roils the icy sea.

Naked, I push back against the sheer black rock
while the monster comes after me.
Wind and waves tangle my black hair,
and scream, we will strangle you!
And I cry for my invisible Perseus.
May he come carrying, like a lantern
only I can see, the head of Medusa.

But before he can fly over the sea
and marry me,
Men
turn on the floodlights,

which prowl through frozen razors
like white panthers in the yard.