Dear You-in-the-Dark:

I want to tell you stories of my childhood, make it seem as if someone else carried the lantern. There was the summer of the garden party—when my father filled the lawn with air and light, gathered us together like pins on cork, thrust a lit torch into my wet hands, told me to scurry across the grass like a primrose, shimmy to the center, be the pinion of light. I was constellation’s center—he was making stars on the earth—stars!—I pulled back the curtain. I’ve looked so many times. That night sky like a blanket pulled across the front of my gown.

—Mary Shelley Wollstonecraft