In the Moonlight
By Alex Garrett

Midnight. Moonlight. The stars, along with the moon, glow a cold intensity that strikes the ground, pure, and unshielded by cloud.

She sits, book in hand, yet eyes closed, her body illuminated by the silver sliver of moonlight that beams through the open door. The rocking chair that she sits on has long since stopped rocking, the pages of her book long since turned, and her eyes long since opened. The world is still. The world is silent.

She stirs, her eyes fluttering open, and her body tensing in the chair. She tilts her head to check the clock, and cocks it in curiosity.

“Strange…” she murmurs to herself. She shifts her position slightly, and, as a result, the rocking chair creaks and groans in protest. “Strange… He should have been back hours ago.”

She smiles. “Oh, how I’ll tell him off when he arrives.” She begins to laugh, clearly amused by the thought, which, within seconds, turns into a racking cough. A frown breaks across her face and, to no-one in particular, she says, “Being old has denied me enough already”. “But now, even happiness is too much to ask?”

She leans back, exhausted, and with the familiar creaks of the rocking chair, closes her eyes. Within minutes she is fast asleep, and for a long time it remains this way. The silence and stillness ensues. The person she waits for does not return, indeed, not a shadow passes the yard that her door gives way to.

But then, a figure. It appears out of the shadowy blackness cast by the surrounding buildings with such fluidity, such confidence, that it could almost be an extension of the shadow itself. It steals across the yard – black flash – up to the open door, and to the sleeping woman. No sound is made by the figure, it is as if they have no material form.

She opens her eyes, but is not alarmed by the figure looming above, quite the opposite, she holds her hands out in welcome. The figure does not speak. Instead, he reaches a black arm out to her and holds it.

“I knew you would come tonight,” she whispers. “I felt it.”

And, with her words, her body begins to slacken, her eyes begin to droop, her life begins to fall away. Their hands remain clasped together, as the feeling runs out, the thought, the pain and the memory.

But not once does she feel scared, stepping into the unknown. She departs with him with trust, as though old friends. And with this final thought, her body halts, resting from the relentless work it has done, and lies still once more.