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Crossings

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Crossings · Rebecca Liv Wee

Streetlamps in March, headlights turned
on the realization in '64 that

apparently altruistic traits in species
could be versions of light on water. Motion

passing through New York City, its wounded
impaired for the rest of their lives. Long-reaching

steps from one to the next. Each of us
on a toehold, on curious rocks

in streams with our new blood
spent. Think of Verrazano bridge. The longest

suspension bridge in the world opened
to traffic. A voice saying *Careful. Don't fall in.*

So there's caution.
Light. Always arms being held straight up

in the air. Harry Harlow showing how monkeys
reared in isolation suffer

great emotional impairment. We cross
on pebbles worn flat, try to stand

in the midst and above the rushing.
Like glittering ragged snow. The same

plasmid that carries resistance to penicillin
in staphylococci

permits the bacteria that possess the plasmid
to survive a mercury-based variety

of normally toxic metals. Venus and Saturn
cross streams with their arms up. Artemis

falling in brilliance. A raindrop, a tin flame,
headlights on ice. We learn the mathematics

of Mendelian heredity (peas in the monastery
garden), but don't yet understand impairment.

How a great earthquake shook Alaska, how
the International Year of the Quiet Sun begins.