

EMILY STRAUSS

Sleeping at the Barn

I slept on the farmyard dirt by accident
and a dream splashed across the road
and fields in the already-warm dawn
up to the dark beams of the old barn
where swallows nest in communal noises.

I lie on the hard earth and watch them fly
through the gaps in the roof to hunt insects
and sip from the muddy irrigation ditches.
My vision disappears now as if sinking
into last night's shadows under the electric

wires where bats swooped in the hunt.
I attend the scattered silence of bird calls
without resisting the new-gathering heat,
notice the spaces as the bottom falls out
of my former lives. I sleep again with the sun

pushing through my eyelids making white-hot
stars—the opposite of the stippled patterns
under the valley oaks as the light filters through
their dusty leaves forming a daytime Milky Way,
a different road than the one I arrived on.



ABOUT EMILY STRAUSS

Poems by Emily Strauss have recently appeared in *Dark Matter*, *Pudding Magazine*, *Catamaran Literary Reader*, and *Subprimal Poetry Art*, as well as in the anthology *Of Sun and Sand* (Kind of a Hurricane Press). She received an MA in English from San Francisco State University and is a semi-retired college professor living in Sunnyvale, California.

