

*'Not in Vain Do We Watch the Setting  
and Rising of the Stars'*

I am Maria Mitchell  
watching my daughter's comet tail  
streak across the sky.

I stand firmly in the dark  
on my nineteenth century planet  
searching for  
a telescopic glimpse  
of her glimmering petticoats.

My darling comet  
streaks on  
into the riddles of the future.  
I stand on rooftops  
peering upward.

Telescopes, corsets, button hooks.  
These are the tools  
of my days.  
Her unfathomable technologies  
are yet to come.  
Beyond comprehension.  
Undecipherable tongues which  
she'll speak fluently.

She will pause on earth to stand  
at my headstone  
and marvel at all  
I could not have imagined.

'Oh, how she would have loved...'  
she'll say,  
gathering up her fiery skirts  
and orbiting off into the celestial dark.

Racing to make the numinous known.