

Illumination

... the zona pellucida is necessary for the transit of cleavage stages through the oviduct in normal pregnancy.

—Bronson and McLaren, *J Reprod Fertil*

Bright as a slit lamp on the eye,
light flashed past the edge of a shade
stirred by a puff of wind
fell on the anesthetized mouse
under my microscope.

I saw my error, unseen before,
a detail of murine anatomy missed
in penciled instructions from a Polish scientist—
how to transfer eggs from one mouse to another.

The shade resumed its place,
lab returned to incandescent light.
I sat back, laughed, wondered at the mystery
of a passing whiff of air,

random light cast upon a mouse,
and murmured fervent thanks
for this moment of illumination.

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