

# Daredevil

by [Shari Wagner](#) in the [September 23, 2008](#) issue

Sunday afternoons, she rolled off her stockings  
to cross beams girding my grandfather's barn.  
She was fifteen and longed for something in the dark  
leafy boughs she couldn't quite reach. Balancing  
on a hand-hewn rafter was nothing more  
than stepping out on a limb and the humid hour  
held its breath, the twittering sparrows fell silent.  
Dust shivered suspended as she passed through  
shafts of light austere as a coronation. This  
was before she coiled her braids under a covering  
and took her place in a kitchen with its slick checkered  
floor and the tick of a clock she had to rewind.  
For one immortal summer, girders hung  
taut as strings her steady feet could strum.