

Downtown Lights During the Holidays
Matthew Johnson

Carefully, as if asking for a large favor,
Facility and maintenance staffers
Grab their ladders to cast strings and cords over their heads,
Like whalers trying to harpoon the great mammal.

If possible,
The crew would grab their biggest, wobbliest ladder
To pluck the stars and break down the moon,
As city officials wouldn't want their tinsel-town décor to be rivaled.

Matthew Johnson earned his MA in English from UNC-Greensboro. A Northern Transplant, he has worked as a sports journalist for Fansided, USA Today College, and The Daily Star (Oneonta, NY). His poetry has appeared in *Maudlin House*, *The Roanoke Review*, *The Maryland Literary Review*, *The Sport Literate*, *The New Southern Fugitives*, *The Twin Bill*, and elsewhere. He's a Best of the Net Nominee (2017) and has published one book, *Shadow Folk and Soul Songs* (Kelsay Books). @Matt_Johnson_D