

Magic

The kerosene lantern's light,
as though aware of its plight,
flickers center stage
on the kitchen table.
Mom takes her second cup as Dad
pulls up his chrome-legged chair.

"The REA is coming through the county."
"Now we have to decide."
"Electricity will not be cheap. Five dollars a month!"
"We've gotten along just fine without it."
"It killed Mr. Vermeer in Rock Valley."
"Uncle Nick and Aunt Minnie decided to get it."
"A refrigerator would be nice, especially in the summer."
"Could we get a radio too?"
"If we say yes, they will install a yard light for free."

Two months later, I will stand
in their dark closet,
pulling the chain.
Again.
Again.

Arlin Buyert
April 2013