

# ***Light, interruptive: 20 microfictions about light***

*Isabella Streffen*

## *1. Striplight*

Strip lights to strip by, we blued light lines meet bronzed or burnished or pallid form, public or private, we reveal, we conceal, we coax.

## *2. Agalma*

Object A: a mysterious gem triggering love, the golden light of the golden hour, where the sky is gold and the ground all blue (in a book).

## *3. Limelight*

Here is your incandescent moment - a flare of oxyhydrogen and quicklime. My attention is not for the unwary, as burned ballerinas attest.

## *4. Magic Lantern*

With a concave mirror behind me, I spew forth devils, dead relatives and wild phantasmagorias. My apparitions are foreclosed by Authority.

## *5. Moonlight*

In a dimmed light the eye sees blue. When the full moon rises, the blue intensifies. Don't sleep out in that moonlight, it is blinding.

## *6. The reflection of the sun on leaves*

The brightest thing in the world, Virginia said, is sun reflected on leaves, flickering silver birch sun-mirrors on the banks of the Rhine.

## *7. A Light Year*

In the ten seconds that it takes you to read this, I will already be flickering two million miles away.

## *8. Bioluminescence*

Our aerial cousins emit yellow spectrum light. You see our sparkling phosphorescence at night sometimes, on the skin of disturbed water.

### *9. Lightning*

Favourite of aeromancers, I crackle between my cumulonimbus hosts and earth, heady with ozone, the threats of dead gods - the coup de foudre

### *10. Northern Lights*

Renewed each morning by the solar wind, hardly visible by day, startling sparks stain the sky - whistle to me, maybe I'll sweep you away.

### *11. Lighthouse*

For seventeen hundred years I blazed bright warning out of the mouth of the Nile: a five hundred feet headlamp, finally cracked like earth.

### *12. Footlight*

I dazzle you, protecting you from your watching lovers. I illuminate you from my hooded enclosure. Somewhere between, you transmogrify.

### *13. Followspot*

You can't shake me with dodges and weaves, you've spent too long begging for my attention. You hesitate but I am unblinking, and follow.

### *14. Ultraviolet*

In your hotel room for the inspection of unsanitary bedding. At the crime scene, for tracing evidence. You cannot see me after adolescence.

### *15. Interference pigment*

Corundum-structured crystals (lab grown) - metal oxide-coated to glitter sharply - run interference, inciting peacocks and kingfishers.

### *16. Twilight*

At Greenwich for forty eight minutes of twilight, of sweet heure bleue, power-hungry deities are abroad. Pinprick yellow home lights beckon.

### *17. Iridescent green lipstick*

In those dark interiors of gold powder and shell gleaming against lacquer, where cedar steam curls, your lips dressed in iridescent green.

### *18. Starlight*

Sirius, Canopus, Alpha Centauri, Arcturus, Vega, Capella, Procyon, Betelgeuse, Achernar, Hadar, Altair, Aldebaran: such stellar brightness.

### *19. The Rainbow*

I am the quicksilver promise of no second Flood. Always viewed from 42° of opposition, I lay bare your colour vision, and spirit away gold.

### *20. The Green Flash*

Ten minutes before sunset, in clear and stable air, the green flash will reveal the thoughts of others as though by magic. If you are tacit.