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John Roche

“A Midnight’s Tale”

On the eve of his divorce hearing
a couple too many cordials taken
he climbed the wooden ladder
to the loft
where he found the orange tabby
safely ensconced in the papasan chair
and so began his descent
only to have the ladder give way
resulting in an Olympic quality back flip
and a nasty tumble into the potted palm

Having read
Ethan Frome in high school
his greatest fear, aside from having Orwell’s rat cage
strapped to his face
by Dick Cheney personally
was to be paralyzed and at the mercy of his ex-wife
now little chance of that, thankfully
but his new girlfriend is a nurse practitioner
specializing in paraplegia
and as he lies in the potted palm
a 50th birthday present to his ex
the split-second question pops
into his consciousness
Can I move my legs