

It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless  
and bible-black, the cobblestreets silent and the hunched,  
courtiers'-and-rabbits' wood limping invisible down to the  
sloeblack, slow, black, crowblack, fishingboat-bobbing sea.  
The houses are blind as moles (though moles see fine  
to-night in the snouting, velvet dingles) or blind as Captain  
Cat there in the muffled middle by the pump and the town  
clock, the shops in mourning, the Welfare Hall in widows'  
weeds. And all the people of the lulled and dumbfound town  
are sleeping now.

Hush, the babies are sleeping, the farmers, the fishers,  
the tradesmen and pensioners, cobbler, schoolteacher,  
postman and publican, the undertaker and the fancy  
woman, drunkard, dressmaker, preacher, policeman, the  
webfoot cocklewomen and the tidy wives. Young girls lie  
bedded soft or glide in their dreams, with rings and

trousseaux, bridesmaided by glow-worms down the aisles  
of the organplaying wood. The boys are dreaming wicked  
or of the bucking ranches of the night and the jolly,  
rodgered sea. And the anthracite statues of the horses  
sleep in the fields, and the cows in the byres, and the dogs  
in the wetnosed yards; and the cats nap in the slant corners  
or lope sly, streaking and needling, on the one cloud of the  
roofs.

You can hear the dew falling, and the hushed town  
breathing.

Only your eyes are unclosed to see the black and folded  
town fast, and slow, asleep.