

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.