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Night Walking

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Night Walking

by John Van Rys

*downpour
pour down pour down
pour down night down pour
come! black rain!
pour down night and wash
eye-tiring light away!*

The small town's night is vacant
of the city's glare, rumble, and blare—
only an orange ribbon
of streetlight decorates
the night's thick, slick hair—
only water, water everywhere
pouring down and pounding
asphalt cement tree-leaves grassblades dust-to-mud
and my umbrella humming—
its ribs rain's vocal chords
its song nocturnal
come to my midnight mass!

The song rises like incense
into night's vault
the gothic roof of trees—darkness
tangible as stained glass light.
Now a breeze lifts
droplets beneath the umbrella's dome
and webs my face
while these old crow's feet flap
in the pillared darkness below—a pocket
of moisture spreading through soaked socks
once bright white now darkening.

The street flows up to meet these feet
and ahead its brink invites me—alone
alone on a river of orange.
Which way home? Day's work sleeps,
masked behind a muted, rectangular screen.
Working that evening at my desk
comforting books shedding light
upon me and screen glowing
with orange wisdom . . . the lights
blackened with some hand's flick
of a switch . . . a simple click
in my blacked out heart
and the hardware hummed on
and on and on. . . .

Well is all well
with my soul? or is it lights out,
blackness within and darkness
without? in HIM is there no darkness beyond
a shadow's doubt?

Pour down downpouring night
on a shadow. I will
brave the brink, test
the river's edge to my knees,
then strike out
into the current's embrace,
its eight arms to greet me, homeward
bound.

Keep a light on for me.