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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.