

What Remains

Anita Tanner

Day rolls over,
pulling at the covers of dusk.
Lights come on in sequence
and before they go off
dogs find their voices,
children lean toward supper
hardly aware of the steam
of mashed potatoes,
the color of carrots and peas.
Fingers flip locks into safe,
boxed places where darkness
descending means little or nothing.

Is it slow closure
that renders dusk senseless
and immaterial
except for what remains of the day—
automatic preparations:
placing of feet, hands, heads
in the proper attitude of sleep?
Who, what will inform us
that this nightfall
may be the final dusk
from which sleepers will awaken?

It's a poverty everyone carries
in a dark pouch
folded between the plastic
and the cash—an alienation
and loneliness
that forces hindsight,
only to say what's gone before,
how this or that enthralled us,
how we endured
such and such annoyances.