

After a Late Night, Waiting

Dixie Partridge

Again, that rim before sleep:
I tried to pause there—listened
to the mantle clock, the distant
sprung rhythm of a dog barking,
and a faint electrical hum
no one else in my family can hear.
An aura of dizzy strings
from a symphony recording
came back to repeat and repeat.

And even as I began to vanish
into these faint sounds
my last sense pulled with me
the perceivable things until
when I crossed into dream they rose up
hounds of light in chameleon shapes
to teach me.

What I have missed survives
my waking, revising past fears
and faces into visions, darkness
to a warp of light.
Some days to decipher the levels of the nights
is what keeps me.
Almost I enter the code
during the aching phrases of Mozart;
with sheerest shadows that approach
like an act of will against the light;
in moments time seems reversed

and I scour language to consider
 how those lost hours and fears,
those diminishing sounds,
 are trying to tell us
what we are not; that we can't
 quite know all that our mounding need
has convinced us we must;
 how what has already passed
even in dream
 collects—polish or rust—
on the future.