



UNDER MILK WOOD

It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black,
the cobblestreets silent and the hunched, courters'-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.

And you alone can hear the invisible starfall, the darkest-before-dawn minutely dewgrazed stir of the black, dab-filled sea where the Arethusa, the Curlew and the Skylark, Zanzibar, Rhiannon, the Rover, the Cormorant, and the Star of Wales tilt and ride.

Listen. It is night moving in the streets, the processional salt slow musical wind in Coronation Street and Cockle Row, it is the grass growing on Llareggub Hill, dewfall, starfall, the sleep of birds in Milk Wood.

Dylan Thomas

From the opening of Under Milk Wood,

A Play for Voices

We can still laugh with the dead, but to laugh with living writers is, on the whole a serious undertaking. And if anybody listening is reserving the writing of his comic book for a rainy day, then what does he think this is?" Dylan Thomas, 'A Dearth of Comic Writers'