

Sestina

1

A dream within a dream—& soft laughter
In the next room (far away) & many
Rising up and falling down; many small
Faces garrulous on the wall & the wall
Which I face, at four inches, and inch up.
And my death which came to me last night.

2

No, not yet not yet the death which last night
Came to me (I pretend) & the laughter
In the next room and in this room, climbing up
Small scales in my head—I, given many,
Given forty, forty many years to wall
Myself up in my head; to be small.

3

The fever moves upon my face & the small
Faces move & the fever moves—tonight
Nothing else moves & the clock on the wall
Lying still and still the languid laughter
From this room and the next room & many
Voices here—& I still waiting up.

4

Say that I am endless and will end up
At the end with all and everything (no small
End by all means) —which means nothing many
Have not known before: that at the end the night
Always known is known always. And laughter
Is no help—but wailing suits the wall.

5

Rain falls here & falling rain where the wall
Stands here (where I fall here) is cleaning up
Small complaints & faces here. —And laughter
Falling quickly here & all lost here & small
Lost voices (and my voice) are lost at night
When all is lost, even the many.

6

Yet the many, O so many, many
voices and faces are at every wall
Wailing & no use & so I know night
(Every night) is inevitable, & give up
My request, attending now all the small
Ends and objects & the soft laughter.

Fever & rain! Many faces! —Up
On the wall I keep my watch and small
Voices call: the night, and soft laughter.