

Night

I would like to know
who sleeps in this city: little girls
curled up on half a bed like shrimp
on lettuce; grandpas snoring in white-
faded-to-gray v-neck undershirts
and boxers worn thin as rose petals;
cats on their backs stretched full-length
like open accordions. Who else?
The wind stirs chimes and rustles up
odd clanging sounds, dinner bell,
a toast, music-room triangle.
Who hears? Doctors, janitors,
slight teenage boys with scrawny
legs and freckles, lipsticked women
in lingerie...I picture
the darkened houses around
me, filled with people trying
to sleep in the late night.
I've studied, said my prayers,
written pages of unedited thought
but I'm not ready
for this stack of cotton,
rayon, and flannel that
make up my bedclothes.
I hunger for the wind-chiming
night, its blackness a smooth
petal against my cheek,
immersed in its music,

dwindling and growing like
a chest rising and falling
with air, reclined on a mattress.
Closing my eyes, I'm there,
riding the night gracefully,
pressing its sides
gently between my legs,
holding my arms out languidly, for balance.