

Country and Town

Martin Robertson

From woods and valleys now the gathered night
spreads to the open, darkening field and hill.
To stars and window-panes withdraws the light.
Hunched to the chill
hushed birds on boughs crouch, deep in grass the hare.
Twigs cracking, one dog's bark,
momently pierce but not disturb or tear
the silence of the dark.

The town is fevered; but as night wears on,
blood cooler, quieted the pulse's roar,
it drowns. Now among the smoke and stone
the deadly poor
settle themselves on steps, by hunger and
no hope reduced to peace.
The prostitutes along the pavement stand
abstracted, still, like trees.