

WHY?

Why have I wandered the ~~road~~^{asphalt} of midnight and not known why?
 Not guilt, or joy, or expectation, or even how,
 When clouds, tattered and distance screamed its rage,
 Or when the fog closed in, the strict
 Re-arrangement of stars communicated
 To the attent corpuscles hurrying heartward, and from.

Why did I stand with no motion beneath
 The spilt-ink ~~darkness~~ of spruces and try to hear,
 In the soundlessness of falling snow
 The heart beat I know as the only self
 I know that I know, while History
 Trails its meaning like old cobwebs
 Caught in a cellar broom.

Why should I ^e Clamber the cliff gone bone-white in moonlight?
 Just to feel blood dry like crust on my hands, or watch
 The moon ^{go} westering to the next range,
 The next, and beyond
 To wash the continent, like spume?
 Why should I sit till the bear's sex-hoot from the valley,
 Or the gluttoned owl makes utterance?

Why should I wander dark dunes till rollers
 Boom in from Chinaward, stagger and break
 On the beach in white anger, while high to the right
 The North Star holds steady enough to be Truth.

Yes, why all the years and places and nights, have I
 Wandered and not knowⁿ the question I carried,
 And carry? Yes, sometimes, even by dawn,
 I have seen ~~I saw~~ the first farmer
 Set steel share to earth, or met,
 Snow-shoed, the trapper set out on his dawn-round,
 Or even, long back, on a street car
 Bound city-ward, watched some old workman,
 Lean over his lunch-box, and yawn.

Robert Penn Warren.

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