

# Reading into Dusk

*Dixie Partridge*

*"The light can be a curtain as well as the darkness." –George Eliot*

On the wood porch I awake  
to no sound, but a sense of some change:  
light falls across an arm and  
I pull back into darkness.  
Lying there, only the paper birch  
visible in the yard, I watch  
our eighteen-year-old near the window.  
He doesn't see me: his eyes focus  
on something closer—reflection, perhaps. . .  
his hand goes up to tidy his hair.  
He looks flattened by light.

Distance becomes farther in that moment,  
and some verge of unwelcome knowledge  
intermits, like that separateness of being  
as when a child I passed the Olson house  
after dark—no coverings  
on any windows. Afraid to pause,  
to be seen seeing, I felt out-of-the-world  
on a course that couldn't veer home.

Silence enlarges the night yard.  
Glare from the windows turns exclusive,  
the medium of solitude gone blank,

inconsolable, that small space  
between myself and the boy in the kitchen  
anesthetic and painful at once,  
as if nothing will matter  
to the reach of a voice.