

Night Above the Avenue · *W.S. Merwin*

The whole time that I have lived here  
at every moment somebody  
has been at the point of birth  
behind a window across the street  
and somebody behind a window  
across the street  
has been at the point of death  
they have lain there in pain and hope  
on and on  
and away from the windows the dark interiors  
of their bodies have been opened to lights  
and they have waited bleeding and have been frightened  
and happy  
unseen by each other we have been transformed  
and the traffic has flowed away from between them and me  
from north to south  
from southeast to northwest  
from northwest to southeast  
from east to southwest  
as the lights have changed  
day and night  
and I have sat up late  
at the kitchen window  
knowing the news  
watching the paired red lights  
recede from under the windows down the avenue  
toward the tunnel under the river  
and the white lights from the park rushing toward us  
through the sirens and the music  
and I have wakened in a wind of messages