

Boxing Day, 1934

Night was still close as I set out
for Christmas matins. Everything dark and mysterious,
the air damp with rain. Kitchen windows cast one,
perhaps two thin patches of light
on what remained of a week's quiet snow.
Puddles gleamed under street lamps, road after road,
the shadow of my umbrella my companion the whole way.
A procession of fir trees may have followed.
It was too dark to know.

There is something holy about communion before the sun
shifts into morning. Something warm and ephemeral,
hidden in the Cathedral's dim corners.
Yesterday the scent of pine wreaths, the scarlet of berries,
the star-shapes of the altar poinsettias,
wove into the carols, into the bishop's soft litanies.

*We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar.*

In a single voice the whole congregation rose,
a single wave inspirited with joy.

When we came out the dawn came also.
Wet and grey. The street lamps were off;
I walked home alone, my umbrella weighted with rain.
Most curtains were still drawn,
tired by the bustle of Christmas Eve shopping.

*Westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

This evening, after straightening the four red candles
my dear sisters placed in my window two nights before,
I relit them, though they were almost burned down.