

# Writing in the Dark

*by* Chalon Emmons

light seeps yellow up from the ground where we have built our  
domiciles  
and stains the sky  
    our planet shimmers like water, like a bird bathing in water  
    and  
when we walk it may be that we leave a trail of inky footprints,  
shadows sewn around the edges of our heels, if we would keep still,  
which fade again  
to brightness  
    I squeeze my eyelids shut but the afterglow,  
red and veiny yellow, remembers what I've seen,  
and what I saw before that, and what I've yet to see  
    some astronomers  
wonder  
how to dim the whole stretched-out desert,  
I drove across it night after night, along Speedway toward the city's  
fringe,  
or out to the airport, or for the oceanic thought of LA  
like I was driving the earth, dragging a continent and its hills  
through a fierce dark, the silver bit between my teeth  
    and to adorn my hair I chose every kind of light  
wavering pool-green orbs and streetlamps and luminarias and  
motion-  
triggered floods and tiki torches and little dancing  
cigarette lighter flames and pixelated billboards and traffic  
signals and key fob laserbeams and candles and power strip  
switches and camera flashes  
    the astronomers wish  
    because  
for some things  
to be visible  
it must be absolutely dark

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and quiet,  
still  
the sky moves, it is as busy as all our instruments of timekeeping  
and navigation

