

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

