

JULIE MCELHONE

Nigh Times:

eventide, isolationship, alignment, reckoning, approach

The prompt for this poem was an online collaborative writing event called Night and Refuge, hosted by Caroline Bergvall who, with four other poets, created a series of poems based on the Renga form, in consideration of Nautical Twilight, Dawn, and Dusk (GMT). The poets talked and wrote their way through the stages of the night. Observers were invited to participate with their own poems via twitter using the hashtag #nightandrefuge. My contribution, as an observer in isolation from Sydney, was the basis for the following.

eventide

Are you here in social time?
An ally in unseen things
Fire, release

Bright spark sharp tack
Turning gurdy pock-faced

Let's say your contours are
Sup p posed to make small talk
And they fail you

Much more than in alterity
A mindful cut-off

isolationship

Night words loll about my mind
Constellations of lust, of loss
Tide me over, send me off

Rocking and riffing—tiddling
Noon is half the earth away

To bear this touchless time
Rocked by things we must trust
As aspirated as we are

A sigh settles into a little "huh"
A strain as pretty as lilting air

Sounds stuck in my throat
This is no time for sounding
Anything but "Ahoy!"

alignment

Over the edge that never ends
There is no snapback of light
Unless mirrored

Be mine
I'll be yours

reckoning

There is a bracketing in shared spaces
Those things come in the night
To mess up your syntax: "together" "arrange"

I can't reduce the piles in my house
Made of sacred, no *scared*, objects that laugh darkly at me

To be sure again I live where they are not
At half the kitchen table, in the bathroom,
And in sleep with those I have lost

It is here only that I submit to lyric,
I will remember little of it tomorrow

We are all this darkness, you see.
Some keep their lights on
To make them forget. This is.

approach

I was born in the morning, about this time
down the road from where I live now
I hear ambulances at all hours.

I am too awake between
The double and the single bell.