

# Fortuity

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*Jennifer Hill*

*Young Writers' Contest Winner 1990*

Light pours through morning-glasses  
Wet rings on coffee tables  
Lipstick-red crescents on the rims of white porcelain cups  
Stale cigarette smoke lingers in the folds of curtains.

Outside,  
Dogs lie by the early streets  
in slumber thick as mud,  
patent-shiny noses nuzzled near the damp pavement,  
licked by tongues of dawn.  
Wet leaves cling to the buckled sidewalk  
like leeches or sticky worms  
trampled by an invasion  
of school-bound slickers and clanging lunch pails.  
Ambitious cars streak silvery by,  
ignorant of the indolent mutts and clamorous children.

And in the squatting rows  
of placid, red-faced houses  
behind the half-shut lids of yellowed shades,  
clearing blue-flowered china  
and smoothing white-sheeted beds  
with prune-puckered hands,  
the meticulous wives,  
gray-faced and red-eyed,  
mole-haired,  
bleary as watery breakfast eggs.

But I am young like the day.

# Full Moon on Dog Street

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Dog Street slides sideways by the lolling river,  
licking at its asphalt banks with greedy tongues.  
Wet black silks of pavement shimmer with metallic sheen;  
Abandoned buildings cower like frightened trees;  
Ragged windowpanes cry with gaping mouths.

The night overtakes the city slowly.  
Like an enormous man cloaked in black  
he rises from bent knees,  
encircling in his shrouded arms its serrated edges,  
inky cape falling in generous folds.  
Head bowed, lips pursed,  
his funneled breath blows the heavy fog,  
rolling on oily currents,  
tumbling over graveled concrete.  
And his face, pale and watery,  
grave as a corpse, solemn as a communion wafer,  
suspended in the bat-winged spread  
staring down on Dog Street.

Starless,  
But for the gaseous neon streetlights  
staring at their sisters in dark, glassy pools.  
And another, propped against a pole,  
glaring reproachfully at the moon,  
resentful as a wayward son.  
His face, rigid in the lunar light,  
glows luminous white,  
like an electric ghost.