

## **“New York at Night”**

*Lowell, Amy, 1874-1925*

A near horizon whose sharp jags  
    Cut brutally into a sky  
Of leaden heaviness, and crags  
Of houses lift their masonry  
    Ugly and foul, and chimneys lie  
And snort, outlined against the gray  
    Of lowhung cloud. I hear the sigh  
The goaded city gives, not day  
Nor night can ease her heart, her anguished labours stay.

Below, straight streets, monotonous,  
    From north and south, from east and west,  
Stretch glittering; and luminous  
    Above, one tower tops the rest  
    And holds aloft man's constant quest:  
Time! Joyless emblem of the greed  
    Of millions, robber of the best  
Which earth can give, the vulgar creed  
Has seared upon the night its flaming ruthless screed.

O Night! Whose soothing presence brings  
    The quiet shining of the stars.  
O Night! Whose cloak of darkness clings  
    So intimately close that scars  
    Are hid from our own eyes. Beggars  
By day, our wealth is having night  
    To burn our souls before altars  
Dim and tree-shadowed, where the light  
Is shed from a young moon, mysteriously bright.

Where art thou hiding, where thy peace?  
    This is the hour, but thou art not.  
Will waking tumult never cease?  
    Hast thou thy votary forgot?  
    Nature forsakes this man-begot  
And festering wilderness, and now  
    The long still hours are here, no jot  
Of dear communing do I know;  
Instead the glaring, man-filled city groans below!

