

MARY OPPEN

FROM POEMS & TRANSPOSITIONS

ON A DARK NIGHT

On a dark night
With love-longings aflame
Oh, unearthly adventure!
I went out without being noticed
My house being now still.

In darkness and secure
By the secret ladder
Oh, unearthly adventure!
In darkness and in ambush
My house being now still.

On that night fore-known
In secret, for no one saw me
Nor did I glance at anything
Without other light and guide
But that in my burning heart.

This guided me
More certainly than noon-day light
To where he awaited me
Whom I have known so well
Where no one else appeared.

Night which itself guides
Night more lovely than the dawn
Night that itself unites
Lover with beloved
Lover in lover transformed.

On my flowering breast
Which I kept for him alone

There he stayed sleeping
And I caressed him.
Fanned by the cedars

The wind from the turret
Blew through his hair.
With his serene hand
On my wounded neck
And all my senses suspended

I remained myself and I forgot myself
My face rested on my lover:
Everything stopped, and I was outside myself
Leaving me watched over
Forgotten among Mary's lillies.

(St. John of the Cross)

DAVID SINGS TO SAUL

King
hear how my instrument

flings out
distance

through which

stars meet us in their knowing
and we fall like rain
and a flowering follows

(Rilke)