

"WHEN IN THE NIGHT WE WAKE AND HEAR THE RAIN."

BY ROBERT BURNS WILSON, in the *July Century*.

When in the night we wake and hear  
the rain  
Like myriad merry footfalls on the  
grass,  
And, on the roof, the friendly, threat-  
ening crash  
Of sweeping, cloud-spiced messengers,  
that pass  
Far through the clamoring night; or  
loudly dash  
Against the rattling windows; storm-  
ing still  
In swift recurrence, each dim-stream-  
ing pane,  
Insistent that the dreamer wake,  
within,  
And dancing in the darkness on the  
sill:  
How is it, then, with us—amidst the  
din,  
Recalled from Sleep's dim, vision-  
swept domain—  
When in the night we wake and  
hear the rain?

When in the night we wake and hear  
the rain,  
Like mellow music, comforting the  
earth;  
A muffled, half-elusive serenade,  
Too softly sung for grief, too grave  
for mirth;  
Such as night-wandering fairy mins-  
trels made  
In fabled, happier days; while far in  
space  
The serious thunder rolls a deep re-  
frain,  
Jarring the forest, wherein Silence  
makes  
Amidst the stillness her lone dwelling-  
place:  
Then in the soul's sad consciousness  
awakes  
Some nameless chord, touched  
by that haunting strain,  
When in the night we wake and  
hear the rain.

When in the night we wake and hear  
the rain.  
And from blown casements see the  
lightning sweep  
The ocean's breadth with instantan-  
eous fire,  
Dimpling the lingering curve of waves  
that creep  
In steady tumult—waves that never  
tire  
For vexing, night and day, the glisten-  
ing rocks,  
Firm-fixed in their immovable disdain  
Against the sea's alternate rage and  
play:  
Comes there not something on the  
wind which mocks  
The feeble thoughts, the foolish aims  
that sway  
Our souls with hopes of unen-  
during gain—  
When in the night we wake and  
hear the rain?

. . . . .

When in the night we wake not with  
the rain—  
When Silence, like a watchful shade,  
will keep  
Too well her vigil by the lonely bed  
In which at last we rest in quiet sleep;  
While from the sod the melted snows  
be shed,  
And spring's green grass, with sum-  
mer's ripening sun,  
Grows brown and matted like a lion's  
mane,  
How will it be with us? No more  
to care  
Along the journeying wind's wild path  
to run  
When Nature's voice shall call, no  
more to share  
Love's madness—no regret—no  
longings vain—  
When in the night we wake not  
with the rain.