

SLEEP IS A DANGEROUS EXILE

Watches, shoes and outer garb?

Superfluous.

Loose-fitting cottons
will do or nothing at all,
depending on the thermostat.

Some claim that sleep's the ultimate
democracy this side of death
although it wastes one-third
of every day and every life
in deference to nothing but fatigue.

Asleep, you feel defenseless
and alone.

Nightmares
will stun you like a storm at sea,
quicksand will suck you
under, and the dead will rise.

It's more than Freudian suppression
that's at work.

It's life's ongoing
war against itself, and you're
the victim.

The lone escape
is waking up.

You leave
your dreams the way a swimmer
leaves the ocean, no longer
threatened by that element.

But dangers
never die, and you will swim

those depths again....

Remember

the swerving car that almost
ran you down?

It grazed you
like a passing curse and smeared
its fender salt like whitewash
on your coat.

An inch here,
an inch there....

But in your dreams
you're always hit.

Your coat's
entangled with a tire.

You're being
dragged and mangled by the wheels.

The driver speeds away
but not from guilt or fear
of being found at fault.

It seems
he never even saw you.