

Curfew

After the Baltimore riots, April 27, 2015

From the Old French, *covrefeu*, literally, [it] covers
[the] fire. See *cover*. See *fire*. Hear the church bell
toll the hour to cover the hearth fire with ashes
to prevent conflagrations from untended fires.
His eyelids swollen shut; the police van a sealed casket.
The lids of ten thousand prescriptions, empty pill-bottle
shells looted from pharmacies under flickering streetlight.
See what burned under the cover of night, what simmered
under the cover-up. See smoke signals rise at sky's edge.
Spell it with a blanket that covers and uncovers. Spell
conflagration. Write *the destructive burning of a building,*
town, or forest in blood-soot across the underbellies of ten
thousand vacant clouds. Spell *mayday*, that muscle-sear
of rage. Spell *justice*, that bitter ache. Hear sirens long
into the dark hours, then the odd quiet of empty streets.
Taste the legacy of corpses in the embers glowing at dawn.

Matt Hohner

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