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these nights

Reading *Poems of the Night* by Jorge Luis Borges,
I find the Argentinean's old obsessions:
incessant mirrors; dreams and blindness;
twilight and dawn. Lamentable death.

Our suburban nights – the neighbour's ute across
the road, the benign You Yangs in the distance –
must be altogether different from those of the old
Buenos-Aires suburbs Borges almost romanticised

(the knife fights and maté, jasmine and patios –
the streets teeming with dirty colours). What would
childless Borges have known of the unassuming routine
of putting children to bed, and waking to their night cries?

If, here, night still falls immense, it is not only
a problem for artists. It is practical, proving
the domestic order of households. Each night
we mark our page in books, turn off television.

We let the dog out, then in; turn deadlocks;
check on the baby; turn off lights: a nightly
shutting in, like the early-moderns with their keys
and crosses. We still go to that strange separation

of sleep thinking of morning. I know already I will wake
before first light, Borges cold on my bedside table,
feeling you, my love, waking beside me. We will wait
together, almost blind, to hear our child calling,

needful and repetitive as life, 'I want to wake up'.