

Lying Awake with the Windows Open

MAIRÉAD BYRNE

After you left I heard car doors closing
across the river in Lafayette.
I heard crickets like ratchets. I heard
footsteps coming softly up the street
and down the street and through all
the alleyways. I heard shiny green
leaves load with raindrops and spill.
I heard the town grumble deep in its throat.
I heard darkness congregating in clumps
like infantry at ease, the nervous gear-
shifts of drivers circling for cigarettes.
I heard email arriving like an elevator
at the right floor. I heard insects
colliding against furniture, the din
of the drowsing house. I heard
my own careful breathing, the sky
opening out above Fort Ouiatenon,
the scraping of trees against air.

To Mark