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## Now I Lay Me

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## Now I Lay Me

Down to sleep. Words from childhood  
Boring their way through all the years as  
I lay awake in this dark apartment on W. 21st.  
Sleeping not as a winter rain begins  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

I see you now as I saw you that day  
So many days that summer  
By the side of the dirt road picking  
Monardas: fuchsia, lavender colors  
Against your white blouse. Smell of mint.

Now I lay me down to sleep staring  
Twilight sidewalk games before dinner  
More sounds than sight, rhythms  
From childhood's comfort  
If I should die before I wake

I get up and go to the window sleep  
Lost. More images. 21st street is oddly  
Quiet at this hour rain creating a scrim  
The Tuscan countryside undulating behind  
Like the sound of your name—Mariola.

I hear my neighbor's steps. Key in the locks  
Door opening, closing. A cough then quiet sounds  
Drifting in, Wynton Marsalis. The bed is more  
Welcoming. Mariola. Now I lay me

-Donald L. Parker  
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