

Ciaran Carson

ON THE NIGHT WATCH



Gallery Books

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for Seamus Heaney

From in Behind

the wall
hangings

watched
through slits

is what
is innermost

a voice box
wire grille

crackling on
the darkness

harrowed by
dragon's teeth

a minefield
salted with eyebright

It Is

never
as late as

you think
you think

you know
the small hours

grow
into decades

measuring
eternity

or dawn
to the chink

chink
of the first bird

Between

two hoots
of a factory horn

an aperture
of silence two

puffs of smoke
an afterthought

against the blue
of night

becoming morning
as you stoop

below the lintel
to step out

into the street
beware

The Other

darkness dawns
with yet another

all-clear
over

the blossoming
whitethorns

under which we
are still

in twos
in spite of all

the great owl
uttering

its two-whit-
to-who