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Dog City After Dark After reading *The Great Divorce*

Rick Hill

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Dog City After Dark After reading *The Great Divorce*

Cover Page Footnote

Revised for the conference. Original version published in *Christianity and Literature*, Winter 2000. Also anthologized in *Christianity and Literature's Best of Fifty Years* issue. 2001 and *Imago Dei: Poems from Christianity and Literature* Abilene Christian University Press 2012.

DOG CITY AFTER DARK

After reading *The Great Divorce*

by Rick Hill

Everybody has a dog in my neighborhood,
and all the dogs are pacing sad ruts around
their junk-lumber doghouses.

And after dark the dogs bark warnings, inquiries—
bark insults and defiance till morning, bark
short-chain, short-chain, all night long.

Listen, dogs, I understand you can't articulate your more
complicated longings,
and I realize you're sick of those piles that ring
the end of your lonesome tether.

But we all have to live in this little gray town
Let's try to wag with it, dogs. Let's curb our incessant yipping,
heel our pathetic whine

when the master draws near but then is seemingly
yanked back to his easy chair in the big house.
And let's face it, dogs:

whatever we're trying to get across, all the rest hear is barking,
snarling, irritating, chain rattling, growl bark growl
just dog noise.

So snuffle down now, dogs. Watch the moon sink
and the stars dim. The world is pausing,
steeling itself for morning.

We'll all have our day, brothers, but no one is going
to unhook anyone—not this long tonight,
oh love, not just yet.

(Revised for the conference. Original version published in
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