



Bernard Wills

Houston 4. A.M. Montrose

You would be surprised at what goes on.
Some of the locals here are bats, fireflies, mostly out at night.
I know. I don't sleep so well.
Sometimes I'm up at 3 or 4 A.M.
while a whole layer of life is being lived outside.
The police know this.
The chopper still circles my building on the hour
its searchlight sweeping a geometric arc
across the darkness of my sparsely furnished floor.
Damned if I know why. It's pretty harmless here.
There's me, the Mexican, the terminal gay guy
and crazy Basil who invented, so he says, the crunchy granola bar
then had his patent stolen. I know. What villainy.
The others here seem jobless and alone,
no kids, no hassles, acres of unstructured time.
A sad lot to be sure: poor, foreign, distracted in their wits.
Most of them are white haired, fading,
their foreheads wrinkled deep beyond the need for making trouble.
No sir, hardly a rowdy bone in this decrepit bunch
though the HPD feels it should keep tabs regardless...

So, what's up tonight on Montrose street?
One of my neighbors is up and about,
puttering in the courtyard.
I can hear his echoed footsteps shuffling.
Suddenly he stops, a thought has crossed his mind.
He's not sleeping...why not get some housework done?
Well...that seems sensible enough.
He pounds vigorously on my neighbor's door.
A miserable voice with its high distinctive whine answers
"whaaaaaaatttt?". Yikes, the poor guy
saw no harm in knocking, even at 4 A.M!
He's blown back by such crabbed hostility.
Sheepishly, his voice quavering he asks
"Do you have a vacuum cleaner?"





A shrieked “noooooo” pierces the dank, humid air.
It echoes but the silence slips back in,
just a light breeze whispering in the banana trees.
Really... some people...the guy just wanted a tidy floor.
He mutters sorry, sadly, then beats a glum retreat
beneath the all-seeing eye of the HPD police chopper.

