

Sestina

for Claude

George Klawitter

When sunshine crumbles down to Southern night,
and years get fused, confused, and lost in day,
you shouldn't hope each minute turn a morning
or the reveries of joy sing evening—
in every bit of gloom exists a light
that waxes in its triumph over dark.

Magnolia and azalea will conquer dark
in the Quarter where the vibrant night
submits to fountains curving in the light
as sweepers pull the sidewalks back to day
and bring the Bourbon dreams from evening
full-circle. The pampas grass greets morning.

Morning never mourning! Just say morning
while the sweet recall of him escapes the dark,
and white doves preen forgetting that the evening
ever was, the sun pink-hot, the night
forgotten, tucked away because the day
claims Jackson Square its own, born for light.

Internalize St. Louis and the light
of the Cabildo. Let the scent of Morning
Call revitalize your heart. The day
will bring fresh pecan pralines out of dark
to smile in windows after moon and night

have freed the river, tamed the evening.

Let reverence for him recall the evening
of his life as happiness, as light.
Then Brennan's joy of menu, wine, and night
return to flood your mind as if a morning
streamed across gardenia while the dark
of a chanteuse invokes a lovely day.

You let her crystal melody be day,
her lavender perfume bring back the evening
that he saved for love. When the dark
of winter sealed his eyes, you reached for light
with friends regrouped to croon you morning.
Their springtime smiles eroded what was night.

And after all, what is this thing called night?
No backward glance or wash from yesterday!
You find the softened lull of every morning
crepe myrtle for the soul, and evening,
its penetrating, ever subtle light
subdued for hearts carnelian, not dark.

You learn to wait for night. The winsome day
with passive morning smooths to gentle evening,
each crack of light relaxing into dark.