

Candles waking

by [Paul Willis](#) in the [June 17, 2008](#) issue

When I get up in the night to stifle
a cough with hot tea, and make my way
through the black terrain of the dining room,

there are candles waking in the dark,
open eyes that never sleep:
the blue glow of digital minutes

winking under the television,
the coffee maker, the microwave.
A laptop beams its single pulse,

and the mouse beside it arches
over the red flame of a beating heart.
The rat scratching away in the attic

suddenly seems superfluous,
the stars outside the sliding door
a vestigial redundancy.

When I wake in the night and cross
to the greening numerals upon the stove,
I voyage within my own fixed sphere,

my lonely festival of lights.