

Hogwarts Castle, Midnight

The castle never sleeps.
In the unlit hallways, I walk amid memories
of former students
who climbed the marble stairs before me,
generations of footfalls
pressing shallow indentations into stone.
I am one more face,
one more black-robed figure,
one more shadow on the wall.

I hear the echoes of the dead.
Champions of Triwizard Tournaments
cut down mid-task,
watched by stadiums of frozen onlookers;
Accidents of Quidditch games
struck by rogue bludgers
or fallen from broomsticks,
unsaved by anyone,
teammates holding the unmoving body;
Potion misbrewings
with ghastly aftereffects,
tears shed in the hospital wing;
Midnight duels,
Misthrown hexes,
Falls from moving staircases.

In the still, dark silence of the corridors,
I walk through squares of moonlight
and think of the unnamed dead.
I will be among them one day
when we are both a memory:
the Boy Who Lived
and the Dark Lord,
footnotes in a worn-edged textbook.
Someday, the outcome of the final battle will be an exam question
and not the cold sweat of the future on my brow.

For now,
I dream of the living
and walk with the dead
in this moment where tomorrow
is forever.