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Night Character translated by Frank Stewart

Dino Campana

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NIGHT CHARACTER

Florence below was an abyss of lights of trembling sordidness:
On wings of fire the faraway rangling
Of the tram faded: the enormous dull river
Flashed its serpent's scales.
Above the indefinite spirals the disquiet smirking faces
Of thieves, and I between two equal rows of cypresses like
sputtering torches

More bitter than cypress hedges
More bitter than trembling box-trees
As from my heart this love
As from my heart, the love a pimp breaks into song:
I love the old whores
Swollen with the fermentation of sperm
Who flop like toads on all fours on their red mattresses
And wait and pant and gasp
Flaccid as bellows.

*translated by
Frank Stewart*