

The Presence

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Beneath the floorboards of this old house,
There is a tapping, dripping sound
I hear every night as I drift to sleep.
I have been down there. Under the stairs
I've inspected the plumbing. I have found 5
No source for the noise of that leak.

And yet, somewhere there must be a leak
Dripping in the fundament of this house.
And how many times have I woke, and found
That, far underneath my bed, the sound 10
That creeps steadily up from downstairs
To my ears, to bring fits to my sleep.

It is not a noise of being asleep,
This is not my dream deciding to leak
Out into the world. Washing up the stairs 15
Is a real thing, a part of the house
And a truly real, even recordable sound
But the source simply refuses to be found.

I have thought, if it were to be found
It'd be infernal fluid, from a world of sleep 20
Monsters, creatures who emit the sound
To draw the unwary, ready to expand the leak
Into the whole world, rooted in this house
Built over the abyssal, hopeless stairs.

What horrors wait at the bottom of those stairs?
Do hadean, cyclopean memories wait to be found 25

Just beneath the foundations of my house?
That same thought returns every time I sleep.
As I lay back, and hear the dripping of the leak
Which makes the entire building reverb with sound.

How I hate and fear that endless sound— 30
It's as there were a creature that stares
From beyond the chasm of ages, the leak
The dripping from his jaw. He is found,
And he is hungry. No more does he sleep—
And thus keep the world safe—in his house. 35

I tremble at the sound of dripping found
In any space, upstairs or down. I sleep
No more, for the leak in that house.