1942

Open All Night

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Recommended Citation
Murphy, John Maher. "Open All Night." New Mexico Quarterly 12, 1 (1942). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol12/iss1/24

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OPEN ALL NIGHT

We need not say a word. The countersign
Is plain upon your table-top and mine—
A cup of coffee poised in septic light
To halt the icy scimitars of night.
Can any man go quietly to bed
With dynamos a-thunder in his head?
Better to face the ghosts that wake and walk,
Better to cry them down with nervous talk,
Better this sentry-post than hours of knowing
That flesh is dead and only steel keeps growing.
Near half-past three! Now hackmen thumb the rim
Of blurred aquaria where crullers swim,
And in tall urns tart lullabies are massed
To lull what time has left of Faust at last.
We got there—with accelerators jammed
Down to the floor. We got there—and were damned.
Hail, heirs of ages! We took a world apart
And put it back without the sweating heart.
Forever now our thoughts are meshed with wheels.
Space is a lapdog humbled at our heels.
But who will make the raucous seconds chime?
But who will soothe the baying hounds of time?

JOHN MAHER MURPHY

OCTOBER CALLS

October is the month
of portents:
upturning old earth
and forming flesh and blood
with wind and rain.

Dead leaves scattered by winds
lie upon the land, in cities,
like silent communiques.
The rain,