Again I let my gaze rest on "arrangements" of our neighbors' living rooms. Emblazoned to dazzling focus as the darkness swells, binding me to them in deeper ways. These folks I banter with when gardening, or swap quick nods when driving past. As they lean midday from porches in their wooden rocking chairs, sipping ice tea slow as breath in Appalachian heat.

But now I feel like secret words, or some regenerative hope, their need to mold a portion of their lives, like art. To decorate the hidden will. Despite the constant flicker of those TV screens that lull most nights into a common thought. Each nest like a bold signature of brightly painted "Piedmont crafts" and photographs of vanished kin, alive or not, whose distant spirits--framed in gold or cherry--touch their hearts.

And some with items more obscure perched along the thresholds or their hearths. Those rough-block hounds with grinning snouts and crazed wide eyes, or gaping scarecrow-featured saints, of self-taught mountain "outsiders" they purchase, on occasion, with that woodstove kindling trucked down dirt-cheap to our valley in the fall's first chill each year. Carvings from split blocks of montane cherry, chestnut, oak, prized black willow or sap-dried pine--carvings from the same trees as those caimlike piles left beside their doors, in leafless damp, that touch their sense of place. For a few bucks more than firewood, they line their mantels with crude figurines of rustic mountainfolk, often grouped to bow in "grace" as if before a simple feast--bright buttons, bottlecaps, or even their grown daughters' girlhood beads affixed into droll features of those gruff faces of bark.

Or even stranger "visions' by avowed wood-chopper prophets now and then... Christ Crying "Quo vadis?", forked arms of wild cherry spread toward the glowing Blue-Ridge sky.

Or wedged beside the lumber in the flatbeds of old trucks, works equally queer from the strong hands of zealous wives (who fathom their own trials in the Bible's soulful tales) . . . Baffled Hagar wandering under a dangling rubber ball of "fiery" gold, grasping an unwanted babe in snaking arms of juniperroot, her gaze tear-bright from eyes of broken glass . . .

Images through which our neighbors feel the vatic presence their region's hands, if only seen by them and "God." Visions gouged by those impassioned souls who drop down on our quiet streets, like trolls emerging from the spirit of these hills, just once a year . . . To cast the spell of their quaint "art"--odd secrets shared--beside those flickering TV sets that rarely douse, like haunting stories tapping some deep vestige in the region's heart. Sold with woodstove logs, for barely more.

So I walk each night, a displaced teacher from the North, to peer into my Southern neighbors' gleaming rooms of curios, both sacred and mundane, in the valley called Spring Garden where we live beneath Virginia hills. What we've come to call that queer "Museum of the Soul," arranged by their TVs with some deep need.

And whether walking with her or alone, I feel my spirit lift each time, despite fatigue, "in deeper ways." Deeper even than the reason that I'd journeyed from a suburb of Chicago, back a decade and a half, to teach here in their region at a local Baptist college called Virginia Intermont. That red-brick oasis of more worldly thought, within the church-bound town of Bristol, it's become over the years. Where their children or their children's kids, or sometimes older relatives (curious but clinging resolutely to their "faith") have turned up in my classes now and then (some with touching eagerness to hear remote ideas from their amusing "Midwest-walker" friend). And where I'm meant to comb their heartfelt poems for cliches, or steep them for a while in the "philosophic books" of cultures other than their own--the pure ideas of Socrates, the higher Brahman, or perhaps the earthly wisdom of the Tao. That puzzling array of "worlds" beyond these hills they tolerate good-naturedly, with momentary interest intermixed (alongside gentle invitations to the churches of their families) with always fuller doubt . . .

But tonight, again, I feel that deeper nearness to our neighbors (somehow near as kin), imbued with mountain lore that we both share, in different ways, and live beneath. Each nest like a bold signature they've stroked into the darkness just for me to "deeply" read and ponder while, each night, I wander by--that I deeply read to know them (and those other lives, from hereabouts, whose offerings they know and feel upon their hearths and shelves)--that I deeply read from darkened streets beneath these hills more closely than those papers that I grade. Papers based on "remote thoughts" their kin and children, trying, write for me.

But tonight, again, I witness those "arrangements" touching to our lives, culled over those years (preserved in gold and cherry frames) their children grew and left, their parents waned and died. Arrangements touching to our lives, despite the flickering bluey glow I also see each night. But do not feel.

Arrangements bound as close as pumping blood to each home's heart. If only, in their own minds, seen by them and "God."

Arrangements like the secret of "Quo vadis?"* shared, despite the swamping mesmerism of the sit-coms and the game shows that pervades. Till sets flicked off, in rooms fraught with their hopes and fears--each witness to a deeper thought--beneath the darkened Blue-ridge hills, we sleep.
“Greek for “Wither goest thou?”--the question posed to Jesus by both Simon Peter and Thomas before His ascension, and which He rhetorically repeats before rising, in lieu of clearly answering, suggesting that others may one day follow Him if their devotion to God, and concern for each other’s lives, persists. . .

--John 13.36, 14.5

Non-fiction is any narrative primarily based on fact, that is, not a work of the imagination. The word technically applies to any medium, but is most often applied to printed books, audiobooks, and ebooks. The term “non-fiction” technically includes any narrative based on factual material, a definition that includes news coverage, documentary films, and scientific journals. In popular use, however, it refers specifically to books and literature presumed to be largely or entirely factual. non-economic as well as marketplace decisions. Thaler & Sunstein present their writing as about choice architecture which they describe as “organizing the context in which people make decisions”. The choice architecture which they advocate is what they call "libertarian paternalism": the libertarian element derives from their stance that people should be free to do what they