WAKING AT NIGHT
IN JUNGONG LU

It was ever a disturbed sleep:
ships moaning somewhere
up the foggy Huangpu; a freight
train shuffling rakes of trucks;
the hee-haw of an ambulance
or the rising scream of police pursuit.

A chair leg shrieks across laid tiles.
Someone is coughing in the smoke
of a post midnight cigarette,
a lorry batters iron manhole lids
in the comatose street. Then
a door betrays a muffled
departure, a walker in the road
hums a sad song. There is one
brief cry. Or was it a shout?

Only dogs do not bark in this night
nor cocks crow in the small hours.
Creaks of a bed above or below
as a body turns towards the wall.
Or was it mine? Sleep creeps back in.