Across the street, across schools of yellow taxis swimming upstream,
across our common moorings of pink toenail palaces
and bagmen curled into their inmost snail chambers,
a boy opens his window
    as I open mine. The city seeps in.
Whatever I’ve done today and whoever I’ve been—in an alley,
a flowerpot, or a bar draped with black flags—
and whatever he’s down to or plans to be up to,
    all is diminishing fast . . . to memory or oblivion,
in a trembling white leaf.

Mild nod to brief wave, the eyes of fourth floor north
meet the eyes of fourth floor south.
    Morning’s shadows that leaned my way
are now evening’s that lean his.
And I see he’s wearing the little red cap that makes him an elf
or a bishop. In it he is spared the pigeon histrionics
and the child-of-spring snow quarreling
    with a prepubescent rain.

Say goodnight, kiddo, as I do. What crimes
we shall sleep through, what storms and
stultifying passions. After long voyages
through great stillnesses, may the hull of us
split cleanly open and drop us into shallow soil.