

'Be Music, Night'

By Kenneth Patchen

Be music, night,
That her sleep may go
Where angels have their pale tall choirs

Be a hand, sea,
That her dreams may watch
Thy guidesman touching the green flesh of the world

Be a voice, sky,
That her beauties may be counted
And the stars will tilt their quiet faces
Into the mirror of her loveliness

Be a road, earth,
That her walking may take thee
Where the towns of heaven lift their breathing spires

O be a world and a throne, God,
That her living may find its weather
And the souls of ancient bells in a child's book
Shall lead her into Thy wondrous house

Kenneth Patchen, "Be Music, Night" from *Collected Poems*. Copyright 1943 by Kenneth Patchen. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *Collected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1967)



An inspiration for the Beat Generation and a true "people's poet," Kenneth Patchen was a prolific writer, visual artist and performer whose exuberant, free-form productions celebrate spontaneity and attack injustices, materialism, and war. Born in Niles, Ohio, he was an avid reader as a child and kept a diary from an early age; later he traveled throughout the United States, meeting a wide range of people and having the experiences he would explore in his prose and poetry. Patchen was also one of the first poets to read his work to a background of jazz.

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