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Portrait of Two Freshmen Quoting Two Vermeer Paintings and a Wallace Stevens Poem

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The Nocturnal Sonnets

XV

Are you a conjurer to make light things
Vanish before my eyes in gray grave shades
Like that obscuring dusk in which all fades
To fears of failures and vague threatenings?
Suns swallow star like czars that trampled slaves;
A light too bright to glimpse the lesser lamps:
Are you, perhaps, that searing glare that tramps
Upon the clouds whenever one misbehaves?
But happily both, brazen light of day
And seamless-post-sunset-before-moon's-rise,
Fade indistinct beneath the nighttime's sway
Of a shared mutual dark. Common pitch ties
Our souls in bondage black while our virtues play,
Sparkle, and dance like stars on the night skies.

