

DICK ALLEN

Sleepy Old Towns

In America, we have them, too—old towns
Huddled under forests,
Or alongside the kind of rivers that always seem to flow calmly
Into the West.

Here are the antique shoppes, the oak lane walks, the lullabies,
The slow falling snows,
And cellars and attics and antebellum porches and the tinny
 sound
Of old radios.

Towns that never flourished, towns where everything
Lingers too long,
Where moss grows under the shutters of dilapidated houses,
And no one seems young.

Rip Van Winkle towns. Winesburg, Ohio. Poker Flats.
Hannibal, Missouri.
The heartbreak town of Grover's Corners and the dog-eared
 one
Of Yellow Sky.

And out on the river, the mist,
And deep in the forest, the devil;
Where the world's just an eagle's wing in the dusk, or a cloud,
Or the moon growing pale.

*The devil entices the good man
Who ventures too far.
The river's too dark. You'll lose your way, you'll drown in it
Even under the stars.*

Morningtown, Frenchmen's Bend, Lonesome Dove,
Gopher Prairie.
Eatonville, Cooperstown, Old Eben Flood lying drunk on the
 hill
Over Tilbury.