

# The Messenger

by H.P. Lovecraft

The thing, he said, would come in the night at three  
From the old churchyard on the hill below;  
But crouching by an oak fire's wholesome glow,  
I tried to tell myself it could not be.

Surely, I mused, it was pleasantry  
Devised by one who did not truly know  
The Elder Sign, bequeathed from long ago,  
That sets the fumbling forms of darkness free.

He had not meant it - no - but still I lit  
Another lamp as starry Leo climbed  
Out of the Seekonk, and a steeple chimed  
Three - and the firelight faded, bit by bit.

Then at the door that cautious rattling came -  
And the mad truth devoured me like a flame!

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This was written in response to Bertrand Kelton Hart, author of a daily column called "The Sideshow" in the *Providence Journal*, who, upon discovering that Wilcox's residence in "The Call of Cthulhu" (7 Thomas Street) was his own, published in his column "...I shall not be happy until, joining league with wraiths and ghouls, I have plumped down at least one large and abiding ghost by way of reprisal upon [Lovecraft's] own doorstep in Barnes street... I think I shall teach it to moan in a minor dissonance every morning at 3 o'clock sharp, with a clinking of chains."