**Hotel Room**

**Annotation**

**Hotel Room, 12th Floor**

* Impersonal, detached. Removed from the world below

**This morning I watched from here**

**a helicopter skirting like a damaged insect**

* Simile: likens a helicopter to an injured fly – implies the stuttering movement of such a creature as well as the abrasive noise it might make
* A very negative image, unpleasant connotations. Insects are invasive, annoying and often feared.
* Allusion to death

**the Empire State Building, that**

**jumbo sized dentist’s drill, and landing**

**on the roof of the PanAm skyscraper.**

* Reference to real landmarks of the New York skyline – adds realism to the poem
* Metaphor; compares Empire State Building to a dentist’s drill – appropriate as it relates the physical similarities in terms of shape, as well as suggesting that the building digs into the sky just as a drill digs. Reference to pain and suffering. ‘Dentist’ evokes ideas of fear, anxiety, helplessness. All these relate the emotions of the narrator.
* Alliteration used in the term ‘dentist’s drill’; dull, thudding, harsh plosive sound.

**But now midnight has come in**

**from foreign places.**

* Idea of an invader, something alien that doesn’t belong

**Its uncivilised darkness**

**is shot at by a million lit windows, all**

**ups and acrosses**

* Suggests something wild, untamed, to be feared.
* Violent connotations of ‘shot at’ – suggests the buildings are trying to fend off the dark
* ‘Ups and acrosses’ implies a grid pattern – very impersonal, perhaps also religious imagery (reference to the cross)

**But midnight is not**

**so easily defeated.**

* Idea of an adversary (enemy) or an attacker that can’t be fended off

**I lie in bed, between**

**a radio and a television set,**

* Trying to drown out sound, hide

**and hear**

**the wildest of warwhoops continually ululating through**

**the glittering canyons and gulches –**

* Alliteration along with onomatopoeia. Repeats idea of violence with war reference. Warwhoop particularly associated with native Americans; idea of the untamed, uncivilised. Ululating = onomatopoeia: refers to sirens but suggests they sound like cries of sorrow/pain. ‘Glittering’ suggests idea of expensive, wealth, beauty. Juxtaposed in its setting describing violent, poverty-stricken streets.

**police cars and ambulances racing**

**to the broken bones, the harsh screaming**

**from coldwater flats, the blood**

**glazed on the sidewalks.**

* ‘Broken bones’: alliteration used, perhaps suggests the dull sound. Synecdoche shows that the casualties of this war aren’t recognised as people. Depersonalising, detachment.
* ‘Coldwater flat’ probably referring to the banks of the Hudson river. Isolation, poverty
* The last is a very visual image; wet blood glistening on the pavement

**The frontier is never**

**somewhere else. And no stockades**

**can keep the midnight out.**

* Concludes with two short, direct declarations.
* Repeat of negatives ‘no’ and ‘never’ to reiterate futility of resisting
* ‘Frontier’ refers to the boundary between the wild and civilised; the narrator feels they are on the front line, in danger.
* ‘Stockade’ = a barrier intended to protect from attack.
* ‘Midnight’ = substitute for evil

**General Notes**

Structure

Three stanza poem

* Ist Stanza: deals with the city skyline. Neglects the harsh realities of life on the streets
* 2nd stanza: deals with what lies below: brutal violence, suffering, death, poverty
* 3rd stanza: strong conclusion. Asserts the hopelessness of trying to repel evil in the world.

Theme

* Good vs Evil: repeated references to war suggesting that Evil is winning
* Rejection of materialistic attitude of the West, particularly America: they celebrate their huge symbols of wealth (such as the Empire State building, PanAm skyscraper) while their people are suffering on the streets. Ostentatious symbols do not reflects the realities in which they stand
* Fear: poet/narrator is frightened and feels threatened. (Remember, he’s Scottish and so will feel alone and isolated in this foreign land)
* War: repeated references to Wild West roots the poem in America and refects idea of the demise of civilisation.