

KEN NORRIS

WHEN DAWN COMES

The early morning darkness enfolds. In the next room
they're discussing plans to secure the Maltese Falcon.
When dawn comes Effie will be here with the black bird
wrapped in newspaper.

Does the ship sail
from Honolulu? I can't remember, but think so.
Dead captains litter our lives.

I was always on the verge
of something important. Things were always going to change
in big ways. The song would deliver, the poem
would change the way we see flower petals fall
forever.

Loneliness puts its arm around us
all. You in your lonely room and I in mine.
And the world changed itself. It went on
without us, in spite of us, to spite us
in our pride.

The black bird arrives
and I'm outside of the story. It's a fake.
Cairo and the Fat Man take a hike, Wilmer
takes the fall, and Spade pushes Bridget over the falls.
A man's got to do something, in the face of a dead partner,
in the realm of fading dreams. . .

when dawn comes.