

This poem was written by a civilian, Jack Segal, who witnessed an air raid warning.

The Blitz

Throwing ears the siren's way and bringing
Suddenness to the dark under-stairs space
We squat on stools and start our stilted singing
Timed by slot-meter's metronomic pace.
The Old Man slips away, prepared to fire fight
We quieten, glance at gas masks hung on door
As lamps illuminate recesses with their light
Revealing crumbling plaster near the floor.
The secret smell of skin on anxious edge
Intensifies the sourness of the air
Then Mum hands out the day-baked wedge
Of cake and nods back curl of auburn hair.
We blear our way back to bed and sense
Our future may yet have a present tense.