

Night

© Alan Stuart
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The birding today has been good
As is usually the case
In this diverse productive wood;
It is such a wonderful place.

And now sunset is drawing near
With the calls of day birds thinning
But lots of birds we've yet to hear;
Night action's just beginning.

Stone-curlews start their shrill calling
As dusk spreads its veil over day,
When the temperature's falling
And campfire's warmth is underway.

Unobtrusive in the daytime
Cryptic-roosting in a shaded grove.
Night-time is the curlews' playtime
Making eerie noises as they rove.

Just on sundown a frogmouth starts
To make its deep oom-ooming call.
A throbbing sound that gladdens hearts
Cast down by impending nightfall.

Two squabbling lapwings start up next;
Shrieks and protests never-ending.
We wonder why they seem so vexed.
Perhaps there's a danger pending.

Then as we settle into bed
Comes a sound we know instinctive
A pair of wood ducks pass overhead
Their nasal call so distinctive.

Now it's the willie wagtail's turn
And throughout the night he'll feature.
His presence easy to discern
As he sings "sweet pretty creature".

At two a.m. a barn owl's screech
Disturbs the calmness of the night
It calls three times, well-spacing each.
Between the calls is silent flight.

A few hours now to get some sleep
Before next our ears are sensing
That as morning's rays start to peep
The dawn chorus is commencing.