

Walking Back at Night

Coming back across the campus while the
lights
were turning off, one after one,
til only the path lights steady shone,
I met a campus police, all shirt and badge,
who cried "Hallo!" to reassure.

What I'd mostly been thinking was
were my earrings safe (with all those grates
I crossed across).
It wasn't a party night, dorms empty,
late summer, and, as I say,
I wasn't walking in the woods—

Would you have been scared? It wasn't
downtown,
though emptier than Windsor Street, if you
needed to scream, but it isn't a place I'd
lurk in, if (imagine being a lurker)—
Now, downtown, apartments all aglow,
sometimes, somebody goes berserk—
best to be here, a plain field in my view,
nobody crossing anywhere.

Would you have worried? I never thought,
much, that is (you always think, just a little,
you know) what I could have done—
Imagine: somebody following, I could have
reached
houses almost soon enough.
But monsters? They can be anywhere!

"Take back the night"—it was never mine.
But still, at times, so beautiful,
and as I slip along the lawns,

below the dozy windows, to believe,
for a while, in the dark, that I am "pure
eye"—
invulnerable, invisible, and safe,
a sort of minor spook, star, angels, shade—

(and don't you know just what I mean?)

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