

Night Jogging in the City

No stars, but there is weather
To convince me of the mortal limits
Of these streets, taut as underground cable
That gives us the capacity to talk.
Passage through the night is a thrust into absence,
The pull of emptiness ahead, the risk
I'll throw myself at darkness once
Too often, and finally it will catch.
My body never knows what will take it, butcher
Shop doorway between barred windows,
Gaping driveway of the vacant garage,
Or the stretch of blocks becoming time.
Or maybe the dream of the old man
Lying in his bathtub after the fall
Behind the third floor frosted glass,
And no one to see the universe
Slipping through his eyes.
Out here, it is all image, and I am
Neither privileged nor blessed:
I promise myself I won't do this any more.
Still the pavement is the swimming place
Of knowledge, dark or lighted, each window
Somebody's womb against time.

—Susan Elizabeth Howe