

William Susman

Moving in to an Empty Space
(1992)

for Voice and Piano

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from three poems by Sue Susman

1. HOT TIME

Hot time
this summer in the city
in the artificial light of the street.
At night people scurry and run together in packs.
Too many rats in the cage.
Running towards something in the distance,
in the dark;
something hidden from sight,
something they cannot name.
They come here to hunt and groan
in hot dark rooms filled with sweating, hungry bodies,
dancing with fever into the morning.
And as the music blasts into flashing strobe-lights,
the walls begin to swell and breathe.
There are bodies on the street tonight,
each with its own hidden secret.
You can choose one to take home with you.
You can go on alone.
You can help yourself.
Steal into the night. No one can find you.
You become invisible in the dark,
invisible to others who may want to hurt you;
invisible even to yourself.

2. BEGGING THE NIGHT FOR CHANGE

She approached me in the supermarket's parking lot,
a tired-looking woman with a worn-out face,
asking if I had any change.
And as I shook my head,
I felt the dimes and nickels burrow deep in my pocket,
felt my back stiffen, my hands curl into fists.
I couldn't look her in the face
and so I hurried on,
shaking my head to lose the fear
that one day she could be me,
talking to strangers in parking lots,
alone in the street, unknown and unseen,
begging the night for change.

3. MOVING IN TO AN EMPTY SPACE

Tonight I stood watching the stars
twinkling through the bare branches.
The air is cold and I am alone
here in this quiet faraway place.
And I am at peace, in myself,
still somewhat afraid.
I stood watching the night sky,
as if it would change,
as if the tiny white lights would move
or rearrange themselves
the better to please my eye.
But there was no change; the night was fixed,
immutable and cold.
I am a shifting star, fallen down
from the vast empty blackness
to burn on the earth.
I look up to see where I came from.
And the lights return my gaze.
There is no message, no sound
just the silent reflection of my own face
shining in the night to remind me
that I have always been here.

— Sue Susman

Moving in to an Empty Space

Poems by Sue Susman

William Susman
(b. 1960)

1. Hot Time

$\text{♩} = 152$

Voice

Piano

pp

simile

6

Hot time this sum-mer—

mf

11

— in the ci-ty in the ar-ti-fi-cial light of the street.—

mf

f At night peo - ple

fp

And. lightly

scur - ry and run to - ge - ther in packs.

f *fp*

f *f*

8vb

f Too ma - ny rats in the cage.

30 *mf* *p*

Run - ning towards some - thing in the

33 *pp* **Tempo I** ♩ = 152

dis - tance. in the dark; some-thing hid -

pp simile

no Led.

38 ♩ = 76

den from sight, —

fpp

no Led.

42 *p* *f* **Tempo I** ♩ = 152 *ppp*

some - thing they can - not name. —

f ppp

no Led. *

46 *pp*

They come here — to hunt and groan

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. *

51 *p* *mf*

in hot dark rooms filled with sweat-ing, hun-gry bod-ies,

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. *

56 *f*

danc-ing with fe-ver in-to the morn-ing.

Leo. * no Leo. *f* *simile*

61

And as the mu-sic blasts in-to flash-ing

65 *ff* **Tempo II** ♩. = 76 *mf*

strobe - - - lights, the

ff

Red. lightly

69 **Tempo I** ♩. = 152 *f* *p*

walls be - gin to swell and breathe.

p *mf* *pp*

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

74 *f*

There are bo-dies on the street to-night,

f

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

79 *p*

each with its own hid - den se - cret.

p *mf*

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red. off*

84

mf

You can choose one to take home with you.

89

Tempo II ♩ = 76

You can go on a lone.

Ped. lightly

93

♩ = ♩ Tempo I ♩ = 152

f *p*

Ped. off

97

p *mf*

you can help your-self. Steal in-to the night.

102 *ff*

No one can find you.

ff

And. lightly

105

p

109 *f*

You be - come in - vis - i - ble in the

f (*f*)

113

dark, in -

116

vis - i - ble to o - thers

119

who may want to hurt you;

123

Tempo I ♩ = 152

pp

in - vi - si - ble e - ven to your-self.

pp

Led. * Led. * Led. * Led. * Led. *

128

Led. * Led. * Led. * Led. * Led. *

133

133

cresc. poco a poco

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

137

137

ff

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

2. Begging the Night for Change

$\text{♩} = 100$

pp

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

5 *L'istesso tempo*

pp *p*

She ap-proached me in the super-mar-ket's park-ing lot, a

pp *simile*

* roll if necessary

10

tir-ed look-ing wo-man with a worn out face, ask-ing

15

if I had a-ny change. And as I shook my

20

head, I felt the di-mes and nick-els bur-row deep-er in my pock-et,

mf

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.*

24

felt my back stiff-en,— my hands curl in - to

mf

mf

Red. * *8vb* * *Red.* * *

28

fists, I could-n't look her in the face

f *p*

f *p*

8vb *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* * *

32

and so I hur-ried on,

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

36

pp

shak-ing my head to lose the fear that one day she could be

pp

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

40

mf

me talk-ing to stran-gers in park-ing lots, a-lone in the street,

mf

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

44 *pp* niente 17
 un-known and un - seen, beg-ging the night for change. *attacca*
 (8^{va})
pp niente
l.v. *attacca*
 Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

3. Moving In To An Empty Space

$\text{♩} = 80$
pp
 To-night I stood watch-ing the stars twink-ling through the bare bran-ches.
pp
 Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

6
 The air is cold and I am a - lone here
 Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

10 *L'istesso tempo*

in this qui - et far - a - way place.

Ped. * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

14 *p*

And I am at peace, in my - self, still some - what a fraid.

Ped. * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

19

I stood watch - ing the night sky, as if it would

Ped. * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

24

change, as if the ti - ny white lights would move or

Ped. * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

re - ar - range them - selves _____ the bet - ter to please my eye. _____

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

33 *L'istesso tempo*

But there

Red. * Red. * Red. *

36

was no change; _____ the night was

Red. * Red. * Red. *

39

fixed. _____ im - mu - ta -

Red. * Red. * Red. *

ble and cold. I

rit. *p*

pp

Red. *

46 am a shift - ing star, fal - len down

mp *p* *mf*

mp *p* *mf*

Red. *

51 from the vast em - pty black-ness to burn on the

mp *f* *f*

mp *f*

Red. *

56 earth. I look up to see where I

fff *L'istesso tempo* *p* *pp sub.*

fff *p*

Red. *

62

came from. And the lights re - turn my gaze.

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

68

There is no mes-sage, no sound just the si-lent re -

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

74

flec-tion of my own face shin - ing in the night

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

79

to re - mind me that I have al - ways

Red. * Red. *

83

been here.

ped. * *ped.* *

87

ff

ff

ped. *

91

pp *ff*

ppp *ff*

ped. *