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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