

This poem was written for the **Take Back the Night Rally** held in Halifax on October 9th, 1987.

NIGHTSONG:

For we women who
would take back the
night

the night is a shadow of male intentions,
holding myth and fear
and pain that is too, too real
for the children
the men
the women who live each day
and each night.

the boy-child learns to brave the night,
the girl-child learns to fear it.

and, through it all,
orchestrating all of our growing-up years:
'Be home before dark!'
'Be careful of the dark!'
'Never go out alone at night!'
that leitmotif of warning and awareness.

the night beckons with a voice
that is, at once, seductive and betraying;

the night is a time of magic and dancing
and trysting by moonlight
in glitter and glamour
in satin and silk
and the stiletto heels of nightlife;
a little night-music, perhaps.

the night speaks in a voice that is
at once seductive and betraying,
and demands a payment in a bruise,
blood, and unwelcome penetration.

Every campus is mine, and I'll walk it.
Every park is mine,
and I'll stroll around or picnic by day or by night.
Point Pleasant, are you listening?

Every alley and corner is mine, and I'll have it.
Every hospital ground, blackened by night-shade;
Every road, every crossing is mine, and I'll walk it.

I will rattle Morris and Hollis, and north and south commons;
striding over and up that hill called Citadel;
down Artz and Granville and Grafton and Sackville;
down Maynard and Preston and Seymour and Russell;
Spring Garden and Blowers and North Park and South Park.

Let me push back that shadow,
that night-ful, hurtful night-shade;
or let me enter it, and fill it with my body, my name,
my self that is woman and strong and make it my own;

let me fill the night with my face and my stride
and my new-found woman-self;

let me rattle that block and that road,
and that street-corner lamp-post nighttime urban battleground
with this ordinary woman-courage
as I
as we
TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!

Maxine N. Tynes 09/10/87

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