

**Soho at 4 a.m.**

*by Diana Raab*

Ripped out of bed this morning  
by a wake-up call, and buzzing alarm  
which I smashed down with my half-asleep

hand. I rolled over to perform morning rituals,  
and before rolling a suitcase into the elevator  
I tossed toiletries inside,  
then pushed neon buttons to ground floor.

Moments later, its doors slid open  
to transport two drunken lovers to their rooms  
where they'd consummate some passing attraction,  
united over a martini and salt from our earth

At hotel's entrance sits a wooden bowl  
of fresh apples, scrumptious-looking,  
yet too large to jam into an already  
stuffed carry-on on way to airport.

At curbside another sexy couple staggers  
from my taxi, feet getting in the way,  
they head for our hotel. Before slipping into  
the cab's back seat, I move aside to let them out.

After a good morning to our driver,  
silence ensues between him and me  
that familiar city protective barricade.

This cab reeks of fermenting alcohol and ghosts  
of necking lovers tottering between successes  
and obsessions. Which bridge to our airport,

driver asks. Why are you asking me? I live in Kentucky.  
The fastest way, I guess. That's not necessarily  
the shortest, he says, always traffic-dependent.

I ponder his 4 a.m. insights while my morning eyes  
swivel across streets laden with silent homeless  
lying sprawled along its sidewalk.

I want to go home where people sleep in their beds.