

Running the Gauntlet

On Polk Street at its straighter other end,
Beggars keep bankers' hours. The poor you have with you
Always, if only after ten. I condescend
In my way. Errands that I have to do...

I try to do them early. Do I need
Calcutta on my way to Walgreen's? To this stretch
Of curb the dying drunk will come; and on that bleed
The young self-perforated. All will retch.

Early to bed and surly (sic) to rise
Is not the route that made me wealthy; tell me whom
Health ever made unsanctimonious, if wise.
Such will, though, in a world of little room

Create a space. The pristine morning drips;
Its dregs have yet to surface. Pray do not suppose
This poem is some condemnation on my lips.
It's my safe conduct, so far as it goes.