

## Beggar in Seoul

*Maxine Susman*

Surrounded by pulse and neon  
of Hongik Youth District,  
the festive dressed-up crowds  
tripping to Friday night street life,  
he inches forward along the pavement  
on his belly, pulling himself by hands and elbows,  
face inches from the ground,  
pushing before him with chin, outstretched lips,  
a plastic begging tray holding a few coins.  
Behind trail two wide flaps of rubber  
cut from tires. He has no legs.  
No one stops for him and no one steps on him,  
so separate from the upright.  
Miraculous chrysalis ignored by swarming ants.  
A small girl holding her mother's hand  
startles but is pulled ahead.  
No one can see him until  
they see him  
no one can see him without  
looking down  
no one seems to be looking down  
I look but try not to  
but look  
and almost stumble on one of the flaps,  
then I'm swept past.