

The Moth

If a moth could fly into your mouth while you were taking
an evening run, fly up into your head,
behind your eyes, and then further back—where the darkness
is filled with streams and underground pools

and if you could imagine that moth as a person
who could dive in and swim out into that pool,
grasp a root hanging through a hole in the ceiling,

and if that young man could pull himself up
to the roof on that root, out into daylight;

if he could walk then, until he recognized
the houses of his home town, and if they were all run-down
and empty of furniture. If there were birds and squirrels
in the rooms of those houses; if there were saplings pushing up
through the floors; if the whole world was silent
except for the calls of those birds, and if the young man

turned then and climbed back down through the hole,
back down into the pool, toward the front of your brain,
fluttering mothlike while he moved, buoyant
with a new sense of life.

If he started feeling
the warmth at the front of your head, and if he
threw himself out of your mouth on a sneeze

into the evening, to flutter up toward
the streetlights, which had just then been illuminated,
and which he would hurl himself against, again

and again, until he broke himself against the light
or fluttered, exhausted, to the sidewalk.

Michael Hettich