

TO

**BROOKLYN BRIDGE**

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How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest  
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,  
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high  
Over the chained bay waters Liberty ---

Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes  
As apparitional as sails that cross  
Some page of figures to be filed away;  
--- Till elevators drop us from our day ...

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights  
With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene  
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,  
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen;

And Thee, across the harbor, silver-paced  
As though the sun took step of thee, yet left  
Some motion ever unspent in thy stride,---  
Implicitly thy freedom staying thee!

Out of some subway scuttle, cell or loft  
A bedlamite speeds to thy parapets,  
Tilting there momentarily, shrill shirt ballooning,  
A jest falls from the speechless caravan.

Down Wall, from girder into street noon leaks,  
A rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene;  
All afternoon the cloud-flown derricks turn ...  
Thy cables breathe the North Atlantic still.

And obscure as that heaven of the Jews,  
Thy guerdon ... Accolade thou dost bestow  
Of anonymity time cannot raise:  
Vibrant reprieve and pardon thou dost show.

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,  
(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)  
Terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge,  
Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry,---

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift

Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars,  
Beading thy path --- condense eternity:

And we have seen night lifted in thine arms.  
Under thy shadow by the piers I waited;  
Only in darkness is thy shadow clear.  
The City's fiery parcels all undone,

Already snow submerges an iron year ...  
O Sleepless as the river under thee,  
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,  
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend,

And of the curveship lend a myth to God.