Corner gang

I - RAVENS

Everyone knows
   about the ravens
they are there
   in the morning
above the wires
in their moods
   and resilience
as if the day was theirs
   the spots of sun
   and dirty grime
   the news..

Isn’t it strange
   how language
is not our own anymore
   the curtain
having washed away our sight
like clouds

That man over there
   for example ,
he strikes his match
   and lights it to his pipe
days go by
   like dead things
   the ravens watch….

People now
are marching
   into the café’
   one step foreword
two steps back
wouldn’t it be right
if it were night
The darkness invades the soul.
It is everywhere
in the yellow bricks
and behind the parking lot
What if it were real.
The raven flies away
            the sky
is abstract
    in an array
            of things
nailed up and down the fence //
a bunch of people
a house there
        ideas
        feelings

“….the poor used to be tough
there was a sense of drama..”

Leaves
are still
    falling from the trees
as they always are

people enter a car
they drive away
going to Alaska
maybe

“do you think
his friends will still
    be there
    when he is gone?”

“It’s doubtful”

“….who do you mean?”

One of the ravens
     flies off
“Oh yeah, lots of fun….take in the laundry shop for the kids..”

“Isn’t there a hospital
   at the end of the block?”

“….no, they closed the library
   now it’s a thrift store….”

The languid afternoon
pours itself out
   like oil……..

“….that man coming
   is round shouldered
   and loafing along
   like Quasimodo….”

“….watch the smoke over yonder
   it has come
   to scoop us up
   like a funnel….”

II - EVENING

From the West
the wind
   begins to increase
   along the tops
of the thistles and weeds
there
in the vacant lot
of broken bottles and stones

a low horizon
   of black clouds
hovers over the world
   there is
a shuddering loneliness
   to it all
you can tell
   why the ravens are leaving
they begin to feel
uncomfortable here
they are not
creatures of the night

a spotlight opens
   before the store
the pavement there
   is scattered
with bottle caps
mashed into
   the black tar
it is a mosaic
that looks best
   in the spotlight
   of the night
it widens
to include the store
   we stand before

We are the Corner Gang
we huddle for warmth
to smoke and drink
and talk with a shuffling gait
the moon
   slides behind us
admonishing us
to go out and create
   it is our fate

“is that Hinchie
   over there ?”
   someone wants to know
and we all cross over

Someone waits for a car
and the shadows of us
curve
 with the movement
 of the headlights

“No! Listen to me Hynchie
She was a great photographer
You don’t know shit

Hynchie
 is slow to take
 the toothpick
 out of his mouth
 “Robert Frank.”
 He says. Emphatic.

“No! No! You haven’t
seen her stuff. Vivian Maier. Little known.”

We all return to
the corner
 it’s like a school of fish

Doyle says:
 “Maybe I should
 go off somewhere
 and become a farmer.
 I like working in the soil.”
 Someone says:
 “Yeah, Doyle. That would be
 good for you.
 Goodbye. When do you leave?”

Hynchie is laughing.

The night goes on like this
 like music
 but not just background music
 inter-woven
 as it were
like a theme

It starts to rain a little
and everyone acts
  like it’s a gale
we’re goanna melt
get out of the rain fast
“I wish I had brought
my umbrella” Doyle says
Hynch says:
“Fuck you’re umbrella”
and we all go in
except Doyle
who just stands there
with his mouth open
to the rain

III - IRON CACTUS

Morning again
the people
going in and out
  of the café
have gotten out of step
you can see
  the imbalance
right off
That Mexican lady
  with the wide hips
for example
  see that ??
the sunlight
  on the pavement
is an iridescent sparkle
It goes down to the depths
  of the sand
it is distracting
Well
are the ravens Mexican
then
Is that to be considered?

Beside the telephone pole
there is a cactus
with sharp
rectangular spikes
like they are
made of iron
Between the spikes
there is a red flower

“it seems strange
don’t you think Hynchie?
like they could be plastic
those flowers”

“They are” Hynchie says.

There he comes again
the round shouldered guy

“He’s gonna drag that
suitcase to hell,
Hynchie
you know that don’t you”

time
like a snake
like a grave stone

the cattle
browse the water
in
the draw
magpies
glide across the sky
time goes by
IV - EVENING AGAIN

There are
  early stars
    like diamonds
Were her eyes like that
I cannot remember
what have I learned

Nobody
  has seen her around
    lately

I drink my coffee
  and look off

    a raven dances
      across
      the top wire
      on one
        foot

V - THE CAFÉ AGAIN

and here we are
Doyle’s girl friend
  sits alone
    in a corner
she is dressed in green
and likes the night

Across the street
  from the corner
if I didn’t tell you
is an antique shop
with all kinds of
odd junk
to tempt
the unwary buyer

A bank on the corner
adjacent
savings and loan

that’s about it

The world is turning
it forbids us
yet opens its doors
at the same time

Probably
we are the killers
who seek
to destroy
everything
until we have learned

is there
a way out of this
I wonder
to think of the prison
and then the world
to be just
a school room
to read and write in
about delusion
and who knows best
“It’s gone
man
we blew it.”
Hynchie says.
but he’s a cynical bastard
so I don’t listen

but then
no one listens  
on this purgatory spire  
ask that raven  
on the wire  

The End