THE STREETS OF NEW YORK

The streets of New York
were always wet
in the autumn
of dead leaves
cold
and unheard of
like the love
he ran after
and was always losing
in a sea
of blue and green
butterflies and moss

The road
that he chose
to journey on
took him north
to the white cliffs
and he would end
in the rich songs
of Bernadette
oh how she lives on
ever in the flames!

His mother
was down
to skin and bones
like chicken soup
with floating pieces of marble
and lights
coming and going
at excessive speed

She died
fighting dragons
with her arms
always holding
to courage and strength
No one loved her
  better than the moon

There
was a wistful
  vision
of the great actor
  posturing
  before the gods of trees and rain
  and the outlaw playing
  his steel guitar
for the savage women
  of the Mexican plain
The train
  drove south again
  across the Nile
There were flamingos
  then
  on 42nd St.
  and an alligator
  with a smile

His friend Richard was a magician
  who showed him
card tricks on the avenue

He showed him
  how they were done
but it was no good
he could not duplicate them
which was alright
he didn’t want to really
  anyway
he wanted only to be alone
at that hour of the night
Up 7th Avenue
    the stars
were pinned
    to the sky with names
                and numbers
and the dates of their arrival
as though it mattered
    he could not
count them all
He would walk along
the storm
    driven night
his footsteps
squeaking on the dry
    snow
of the pavement
    and garbage pails
mist coming from
the steam of the basements

He would prowl
at the doorways
    for something to pawn
                but the thrill was gone

I will live
in another world
    he thinks to himself
one without
    hunger and thirst
or newspapers
    with trials and errors
and savage drums
I will go there
only when I wish
and the cost
    will be nothing
I will sing
    to the west
where the colors
will be rainbows
  of showers
and the days and nights
  are all the same
  and on and on
  he would go
to take his mind off
  the cold
  and the snow

Someone
  was singing
in Gregorian chant
on a high hill
  above the sky
  with bells
and falling ice

It must be coming
from a church
like the one Van Gogh painted at
  Auvers - sur - oise
He imagined his thoughts
falling down
  upon him
like flakes of snow
as in the final
  scene in “The Lady with the Dog”
the falling snow
and the notes of the oboe
and so it went
  on and on
like a dementia
  with pain
that was eating at his brain

Is that Henderson
over there on the corner  [ ?
as gaunt
as the snow
he’s standing in
the bastard
always strung out
on something….
but those were the days
all about ‘Romance’
and little else

The sky was white
but a falling kind
with pointedness
“I will tear it
into so many pieces
that no one
will recognize
the author”
he said
in his slow British slur
and laughed
in a maniacal way
pointing at the white sky
and lost

We walked on
together for awhile
Henderson
going on
about the snow
his hands
grabbing at the flakes
as they fell

He left me
at a corner
drug store
and
I was alone again
on 7th Avenue
The skies parted briefly on a full moon

There were moon-beams of course all wafting about in the wind

There were killers across the street
They sat like weasels in the window of the bar
their eyes shifting beads of black glass that followed him as he came and went
He owed them money and one day he would have to pay….

They would wait for him at the eve of an alley some unsuspecting night a monotonous green fog surrounding him

Cut to: a close moving shot of his feet as he walks along The music is droning and tedious Cut to: a wide shot as he moves foreward

It will be “The Killers”
as in
Hemingway’s story
    across the street
        and down the green alley
and the music changes
into something
    more plaintively sad

Everyone
    will be there
as soon as
the full moon
rises
    above the soft
        green hills
to say goodbye
    and throw flowers -
        red carnations
because of the
    white snow

They will
    all wear black
and dance
    a slow waltz
before bowing
    and leaving

Richard might be there
    at least in spirit
Of course Henderson
    hates funerals
or any kind of pomp
and will beg off
but the others
    will mostly come
his many friends
of passion
    and delight....
(An ambulance turns the corner
   on two wheels
and disappears
in a haze
   of pink gloom)

….He decides
that a few
of the women that
   he has known
should be wearing white
again because
   of the red flowers
   and the snow
Then they can go

He wonders if the neon colors
   could go on and on
until dawn
   like smoke
He wonders about
   a lot of things
if they are real
and if the Gods
forbid them to be known
   Secrets
   Why
Let all the sins and sorrows
   empty out and pour
down the alleys with the neon
   and the fog
Let them mutter
like absent-minded ghosts
Let them pierce my heart
   with steel
I wouldn’t care
   like those pointed
spears
at the end of the fence
any one of them
A dog is howling
  as though
  insane
It must be foaming
with disease
  to care
on a night
  as cold as this one
He must have known
for a long time
  his end was
  coming
because of the song
There was no name to it
just a memory
of strings
in harmony
  of a child’s
nursery rhyme
as
the ship sails
away with the clouds
and the waves
  are moving
  all exactly the same
  exactly the same
Time out
  for the pirate
with his black patch and wooden sword
Time for the maiden in distress
  and a black cloud
to drift
over the endless horizon
  and park beside
  the falling snow
He was right
about the alley
But
whatever became
of Richard and Henderson
and all the others
who might have cared
to find him
in the blood-spattered snow
he probably
would never know

The End