I

He thought about Joy because of her laughter and her great beautiful arms.
He pretended that he did not love her but it was not true he had to pretend so many things in those days of immense confusion recalling the white flower she wore in her smoky black hair.

It was about the letter she wrote to him from Mexico where she had gone to stay with her father or did she or did he merely hear about it from their friends that she had gone away.

It was only a small part of her life in the Zen river of carp and diamonds.

Look at the pigeons.
in flocks
do they kill
  and who is to blame
if we are all innocent

The streets
were dark
  and filled with paper
    like a storm
    dry and hot with dust
and then when it became
  too dry
clouds would break
  over the hills
and rush rain
into the tired
  Mexican town
She would lean
  her elbows at the window
and feel refreshed
wondering
how she could ever
  have cared for him
  She would sigh
and watch the rain
  falling
and the paper
being blown around
  by the wind

He was in New York
when her letter came
the letter she had written
  with her finger
on the glass and sill
  her almond eyes
cast upwards to the sky
The storm had finished
and there was a moon  

II
Her mother was Italian
and came over from Sicily
She met her husband
    in Mexico
when she went there
to buy jewelry for her store
there was
    music from the thirties
    playing
lively
    but sad
Why must there be such
    anguish
    in the world ??
We will be married
there will be children
    we will dance
    and sing
but of course
they were only children
    themselves
to be having children
and setting up stores
    of silver
    in plates and goblets
and in time
things went wrong
    at the window
    of romance
    and storm

III

The beast
that bore down
    upon the town
with horns
    of fire carries forth
its cross of iron
even as it crumples
into sticks and dust

behold * )

IV

Perhaps he was dreaming….
about Joy
    with her arms
        full of children
walking across the moon
There were
    bolts of lightning
in the distance
and the clouds
were as black as smoke
    and smelled of sulfur
He awoke
and listened to the sounds
    of the city for awhile
and then
    fell asleep again

He remembers now
that he saw her once more
before returning to New York
from San Francisco
that autumn afternoon
she was so casual
like a cool breeze
brought back with her
    from the Sierras
They spoke only
of incidental things
and acted as though
everything was just the same
She turned to go
and then on impulse
embraced him
and then ran off
before the tears came
It was a cold day
with flocks of pigeons
around the monument
suddenly flying up
    into the clouds
    and fog

V

In his dreams
it seemed as though
the world were crumbling
beneath him
and Joy was leaning
from the ledge of the window
as he fell
He fell from
a great distance
    like rain

VI

The seasons were
    changing
The rain sat
in puddles
    in the street
and the lazy dog
drank the rain water
and the sky
with its blue clouds
could be seen
dripping from its chin
and birds came
and scooped up
the round droplets of sky
and flew away

It would be winter soon
snow in flurries
from the mountains
would swirl
in the streets
just like dust devils do
   in the dry season
and the old dog would shiver
and crawl into
the warmth of the barn

Joy would close the window then
and sit with her father
   by the fire
and watch the sparks
   pop from the pinion log
   what could she ever
   have seen in him
a skinny young man
with sad eyes
what ever could she
have seen in him

   VII

The bishop wore
a tall conical hat
It was yellow and green
and he walked slowly
   through the desert hills
swinging his cup of incense
and chanting over
   and over again
the names of the saints

A coyote followed
at a distance
and then became
like a blue flame

   VIII
It was the place he had on East 4th Street with the broken lamp and the window open to the snow. It was an angry and dangerous place where broken wine bottles and orange peels were arranged in the gutter in correspondence with the lonely street light and the colors emanating from the bar. Everything seemed to glow with a violent and shuddering energy; it distorted the music and altered the mind.

They would hang out there or wander around and talk and talk go back to his place and make love and sleep

IX

The snow sifted in through the broken window and settled on the floor

X

In the night the mice scurried back and forth a half-moon was nailed
to the blue-green sky and tilted as it moved slightly the heat pipes clanged and hissed against the wall

Part Two

I

He was dreaming that he was with Joy her black raven’s hair against the white pillow and how she slept so soundly

And then he was dreaming of a blue coyote

It was summer in his dream It had been hot and now with the desert cooling it was comfortable again The coyote came and lapped water from the spring that had no sound and flowed on and on to no end and then he slept again

II
There were only stars
firing lines of cosmic beauty
He was content
within himself
there was nothing
he wanted
He would wake for a moment
in his dream
and then go deeper
into his dream
and into his sleep
and then he would come
fully awake
and find that he was
in bed with Joy on 4th St.
and it was winter
and snow was sifting
through the broken window
onto the floor

III

Winters on 4th St.
were sometimes very cold
Derelicts huddled in doorways
or congregated in vacant lots
heating hot dogs and cans of beans
over rusty oil drums
The winds off the East River blew
as cold as ice
forget the past
and the stone tables
in the park
for chess players
and pigeons
the streets
paved with red bricks
forget the seasons
and the passage of time
forget the past
There was a café on the corner
where they went for coffee
They would sit
at the counter
    of marble and glass cases
and dishes
    and glasses
like Manet’s painting
of the bar maid
at the “Bar at the Folies Berge’res”
over and over in the mirror
“You see
    my friend
the world creates itself
and then
    falls apart”

The waiter
    said things like that
that made no sense
    and they would laugh
and drink their coffee
    and dunk their corn muffins
    and hold hands

and then
because it was suddenly late
run from the café’
    to the subway train
    and in time
were gone