

## 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