

The Flowers of Joy
Part 1
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)

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

IV

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

