

## Street Scene

I know the mystery wrapped in black and white,  
newsboy, conman, preacher, lacquered woman.  
This moment claws a snapshot of the sizzle night  
prick-pasted grin on snazzed up Dude,  
arm nicking side of old man's cart,  
posing in the strawberry light of June.

You see flowered lady of Betula Avenue,  
gussied, musk-smelling, sashaying cup of hips.  
Her dance step big shanty, hopping, holy,  
strolling slowly past, notice me,  
in front of Daniel's Bar and Grill,  
dine, drink wine, Saturday night delight

I have seen Uncle Inc. standing in the street,  
Harlem's little pathway, 1939—not Dorothy's brick  
but the slick Dude's road—ready to tingle,  
mingle amongst the conversations  
and sweat a bit in the shadowed alleyways,  
taking quick adventure with a flower-petaled lady.

I know the desperate story of the broken apple man  
who sleeps beneath the moldy, borrowed cart,  
“yessir, nickel, got a dime? Take a bite.”  
I know he dreams of dollar bills and paychecks  
filled with glass, cyclone-sucked from deep within  
the windowpanes, Lion cigarettes among the muck.

I have seen the flicker light, the darkened boulevard,  
folks squashed tight, Sister Aimee, Brother Tom,  
passing, nodding, plodding, crawling night.  
I know about two hundred steps, rusty key, crumbling door,  
stolen apple—pocket deep, gut hunger, cockroach mud.  
Seconds tock, tick the man, wander down the avenue.