

O my city, my city

And then he goes to Africa, not Africa proper, but the other one, and all his colors and smells are different—boxwood and dust, no more *lys*. I remember, I remember too! The cobalt evening fell, still stinging, still smarting on Mission Street, Market Street, Geary Street. (Ferlinghetti says we have our own light, an ocean light, a light from fog.) And he says the green fervor of newborn spring, the leaves of a parade ground, the grey sky, the fields, the field girls, the town girls, the omnibus, the train. Everyone thinks they've returned and that the city burning inside them under the intoxicating weather surely is a sign: they were an irreverent boy who ran away to Paris. I can see the carousel under that ink blue sky, the horrid cathedral, the chill of cold blood murder on the streets, by the river, in the prison. I know the smoldering in spring, sliding down the avenues, above the people, long dead in their windows—running up the stairs to an apartment, the soft hours bargained, plied. And when you come out again, it's— night! You light a cigarette, you're strolling through the world, riding above it. White tile is gleaming in the dirty sooty underground, you come above ground, clouds in the dark are rising on the hills, everyone is gone.