

Eric Nelson

CONNECTICUT AVENUE

The awnings yawn from the store-fronts,  
red and yellow mouths flapping in the face  
of the passers-by dressed in the dress  
of the working day, thin tired men  
in round collars, their eyes fixed  
on the sky breaking building tops  
or the leg left bare by the manly stride  
of a young woman in slit skirt stepping  
into the intersection.

On the avenue of verbs coins clatter,  
horns bark, exhausted air blows blue.  
Busses lumber along like whales  
filled with a multitude of Jonahs.  
Cabs dart out and in, small fish in the great wake.  
Shop windows sparkle peripheral,  
fashion flashing through a prism.  
The just dressed mannequins stare out.  
The side-walkers watch themselves from the corners  
of their eyes moving from pane to pane.

The sour-mouthed and unshaven linger.  
They stand still as clocks, not knowing  
their left hand from their right,  
One huddles inside himself and delirium.  
He rubs his head and mumbles something  
about bees, how sweet they sting.  
By the fruit stand, in the fragrance of fruit,  
over-looking the apples and plums, the gourds,  
the castor oil eyes of a rag woman.  
She wipes her face with a new piece of dirty cloth.

Under construction the crane-fed building  
pulls itself erect as human desire  
towering towards completion.  
The population of the world registers  
on a digital sign high on the face of the street.  
Three per second rush by in a box.  
Time is quicker than the eye.  
We are born and born and born.  
From the Circle to the Square the Earth is flat,  
and everywhere between all the stop-lights are green.