

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

AT CRANBERRY AND FULTON STREETS

I came to Brooklyn,
up from the subway, map in hand,
to see where first the type was set,
the presses run
for *Leaves of Grass*.
I thought to drink coffee
where the print shop used to be
and turn in the worn volume to
"I believe a leaf of grass
is no less than the journey-work of the stars..."
but no building was there
to cast a shadow on the street sign--
only a rubble of brick and stone
awaiting the crane, the jackhammer.

Too late I came to Brooklyn,
the poet lost to me in a loss of history,
but there on the windy corner, anyway,
I opened the book,
"I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept
by a carpenter's compass..."
and I read myself straight into
Walt Whitman.