

To Mac  
(In Memorium)  
Kenneth Lifshitz Circa 1967

We walk on sparse and  
brittle leaves, to balance  
the sad prose of absence, Rapt  
in trembling trances  
                  , –on this windy  
waning day- a sufi dances  
he  
whirled around again,  
and disappeared near the fountain  
Oh, graspable vacancy–fluid form  
whose every breath draws one nearer, like a whirlpool  
stuttering and serious in your underwear

Tapping his  
can of  
'near beer' to the  
big beat– Ella's 'fascinatin' Rhythm'  
or Count Basie's 'Take the A train'  
like the man without a country  
waiting for the bus  
to Cooper Union

In store window your fractured sunlight is disbursed  
to blanched whaler's wives  
who ignore as an occupation  
yet remain in limbic doubt, like dead floating fish  
a putrid decoration.

## II

He signalled for the check– like a sophisticate  
then leapt up from his chair and made the children vomit while  
the mothers cheered,  
and so he applauded the sufi, who then  
danced some more, till the tears  
of the workers stood straining at attention, proud of relation  
to his sweat which flew from his brow like emeralds  
the swantabulous motions hypnotized the fares  
while the taxi drivers wait  
with sore eyes wracked by his spinning soliloquy

When they snapped their fingers in jubilant mirth  
he transformed immediately

into a great elephant drawn to the stars  
yet chained to the earth  
And he signaled again and again,-- the time, but  
no one saw, and he shrunk and hung tired in the sky, like  
a pallid  
    melancholy  
moon.

For he'd heard us parting  
like pieces of a broken stained glass window  
    The breezes blowing the curtain  
as we sipped our sodas  
made one thing certain  
    that he gone,  
    through the window himself

Now sing, almond eyed mulish chorus  
of his ancient behavior  
in wakeful watching hours chant through the night  
and save your best voice till later.

And some Autumn eve when the breeze is low  
and the Rocky Marciano bout is on T.V.  
He'll come to hear the sacred sufi song you sing.