



from The Bridge: To Brooklyn Bridge

BY HART CRANE

*How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high
Over the chained bay waters Liberty—*

*Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes
As apparitional as sails that cross
Some page of figures to be filed away;
—Till elevators drop us from our day ...*

*I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen;*

*And Thee, across the harbor, silver paced
As though the sun took step of thee yet left
Some motion ever unspent in thy stride,—
Implicitly thy freedom staying thee!*

*Out of some subway scuttle, cell or loft
A bedlamite speeds to thy parapets,
Tilting there momentarily, shrill shirt ballooning,
A jest falls from the speechless caravan.*

*Down Wall, from girder into street noon leaks,
A rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene;
All afternoon the cloud flown derricks turn ...
Thy cables breathe the North Atlantic still.*

*And obscure as that heaven of the Jews,
Thy guerdon ... Accolade thou dost bestow
Of anonymity time cannot raise:
Vibrant reprieve and pardon thou dost show.*

*O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!
Terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge,
Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry,*

*Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift
Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars,
Beading thy path—condense eternity:*

And we have seen night lifted in thine arms.

*Under thy shadow by the piers I waited
Only in darkness is thy shadow clear.
The City's fiery parcels all undone,
Already snow submerges an iron year ...*

*O Sleepless as the river under thee,
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend
And of the curvship lend a myth to God.*

Hart Crane, "To Brooklyn Bridge" from *The Complete Poems of Hart Crane*, edited by Marc Simon. Copyright © 1933, 1958, 1966 by Liveright Publishing Corporation. Copyright © 1986 by Marc Simon. Used by permission of Liveright Publishing.

Source: *The Complete Poems of Hart Crane* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2001)