

BEGINNER'S PRAYER ON 89th STREET

It took a long time to climb, Lord,  
away from the oozing landfills,  
away from where the slumlords mock  
the masses yearning to breathe free  
of fumes and radon and asbestos.

I was like a roach, Lord, crawling up  
a slimy pipe while you watched.  
When I got to the top I was blown away.  
In that terrible hollow of my falling,  
I heard laughter. But not yours, Lord.

You're the one who caught me, jarred me  
awake inside. The first time, I made  
my way up alone. This time I know  
I need your help. This time, Lord,  
I can see-- up isn't where I thought.