

BEGINNER'S PRAYER ON 89th STREET

It took a long time to climb, Lord,
west of the oozing landfills--
back where the slumlords moon
the masses yearning to breathe free
of fumes and stink and asbestos.

I was like a roach, Lord,
crawling up a slimy pipe
while you watched. And when I got
to the top I was blown away.
In that terrible rush of air
in the hollow of my falling,
I thought I heard laughter. But
it wasn't yours, Lord.

You're the one
who cried me awake inside.
The first time, at least I made it up
alone. This time I know I need
your help. This time, Lord, I see--

UP
isn't where I thought.

Glenna Holloway
