

Wild Dreams of a New Beginning

by Lawrence Ferlinghetti

There's a breathless hush on the freeway tonight
Beyond the ledges of concrete
restaurants fall into dreams
with candlelight couples
Lost Alexandria still burns
in a billion lightbulbs
Lives cross lives
idling at stoplights
Beyond the cloverleaf turnoffs
'Souls eat souls in the general emptiness'
A piano concerto comes out a kitchen window
A yogi speaks at Ojai
'It's all taking pace in one mind'
On the lawn among the trees
lovers are listening
for the master to tell them they are one
with the universe
Eyes smell flowers and become them
There's a deathless hush
on the freeway tonight
as a Pacific tidal wave a mile high
sweeps in

Los Angeles breathes its last gas
and sinks into the sea like the Titanic all lights lit
Nine minutes later Willa Cather's Nebraska
sinks with it

The sea comes over in Utah
Mormon tabernacles washed away like barnacles
Coyotes are confounded & swim nowhere

An orchestra onstage in Omaha
keeps on playing Handel's Water Music
Horns fill with water

trumpets and bass players float away on their instruments
clutching them like lovers horizontal

Chicago's Loop becomes a rollercoaster

Skyscrapers filled like water glasses

Great Lakes mixed with Buddhist brine

Great Books watered down in Evanston

Milwaukee beer topped with sea foam

Beau Fleuve of Buffalo suddenly become salt

Manhattan Island swept clean in sixteen seconds

buried masts of Amsterdam arise

as the great wave sweeps on Eastward

to wash away over-age Camembert Europe

Manhattan steaming in sea-vines

the washed land awakes again to wilderness

the only sound a vast thrumming of crickets

a cry of seabirds high over

in empty eternity

as the Hudson retakes its thickets

and Indians reclaim their canoes