Queens Cemetery, Setting Sun

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Airport bus from JFK
  cruising through Queens
  passing huge endless cemetery
  by Long Island’s old expressway
  (once a dirt path for wheelless Indians)
  myriad small tombstones tilted up
  gesturing statues on parapets
  stone arms or wings upraised
  lost among illegible inscriptions
And the setting yellow sun
  painting all of them
  on one side only
  with an ochre brush
Rows and rows and rows and rows
  of small stone slabs
  tilted toward the sun forever
While on the far horizon
  Mannahatta’s great stone slabs
  skyscraper tombs and parapets
  casting their own long black shadows
  over all these long-haired graves
  the final restless places
  of old-country potato farmers
dustbin pawnbrokers
dead dagos and Dublin bouncers
tinsmiths and blacksmiths and roofers
house painters and house carpenters
cabinet makers and cigar makers
garment workers and streetcar motormen
railroad switchmen and signal salesmen
swabbers and sweepers and swampers
steam-fitters and key-punch operators
ward heelers and labor organizers
railroad dicks and smalltime mafiosi
shopkeepers and saloon keepers and doormen
icemen and middlemen and conmen
housekeepers and housewives and dowagers
French housemaids and Swedish cooks
Brooklyn barmaids and Bronxville butlers
opera singers and gandy dancers
pitchers and catchers
in the days of ragtime baseball
poolroom hustlers and fight promoters
Catholic sisters of charity
parish priests and Irish cops
Viennese doctors of delirium
now all abandoned in eternity
parcels in a dead-letter office
inscrutable addresses on them
beyond further deliverance
in an America wheeling past them
and disappearing oblivious
into East River’s echoing tunnels
down the great American drain
