

Side, in the Gashouse and Hell's Kitchen, in Chelsea and Greenwich Village, the faint and broken ringing of alarm clocks comes to the empty street. *Another day, another dollar. Don't forget to tell the laundryman not to starch my shirts!* Slowly the air between the buildings fills with light.

The crowd increases with the light, a black moving mass, workbound; a million pale faces; a clicking of heels that swells to one sustained roll of thunder. The roar of the city shoots up to encompass it. A rivet overhead pierces the sultry sky; another shakes the earth. *He took me to the Paradise. He's been to college. We came home in a taxi.* The voice is lost in the rumble of an elevated train jammed with work-going clerks gazing at a woman leaning out of the window at 124th Street, 123d, 122d, 121st, 120th . . .

The morning sun picks out an apartment house, a cigar store, streams through the dusty windows of a loft. The racket swells with the light. *These shoes are killing me,* she said, taking the cover off the typewriter. *Main Central is up to forty-six. Did you read about the earthquake?* Looms, shears, jackhammers, trolley cars, voices, add to the din. And in the quieter streets the hawkker with the pushcart moves slowly by. *Badabadabada O Gee!* Hawkers of vegetables, plants, fruit. *Badabadabada O Gee!*

In half a million rooming-house rooms the call penetrates ill-fitting windows. The boy who came to be a writer is waked in his mid-town room and dresses for his shift on the elevator. In Chelsea the girl who came to be an actress launders her stockings. The boy who was going to Wall Street sprawls on his bed, wincing as each cry cuts into his dream of the smell of fresh hay and warm milk. A deep blast rises, drowning the sound of hawkers, children, automobiles. *The Conte di Savoia steams up the river; wine from Capri, olive oil from Spain, figs and dates from North Africa.*

Shouting screaming kids fill the streets, playing baseball, football, hopscotch, jump-rope, dodging swift-moving trucks and taxis. Down Fifth Avenue marches a May Day parade sixty thousand strong. Solidarity forever, solidarity forever, the portentous tramp, tramp of regimented feet; slogans called, banners flying. Up lower Broadway an open car moves slowly through the yelling throng and on its pulled-back hood, laughing, waving into the snowstorm that flutters thickly downward from high-up windows, sits a returned aviator, explorer, movie actor, champion chess player, the first man to walk the length of Manhattan backwards.

The late afternoon sunshine glitters on windshields, chauffeurs' caps,

on Parisian gowns, Chinese ivories, ebony from Africa, Mexican pottery, and furs from Siberia. *Driving back from Southampton in the fall we used to sit up in front with the chauffeur. Aunt Helen had a staircase in her house that cost fifteen thousand dollars. He died right in the middle of the depression.* Smells of cooking fill the corridors. The lights go on in a loft on a side street, in an office on the thirty-fourth floor of the Empire State Building, along the streets and the bridges. The tugs are riding with port and starboard lights.

The sun leaves the highest of the city's buildings. There are no steamship blasts but loud now are the hoarse pipings of tugs, the yap of ferries with homeward-bound crowds. *I've worked overtime three nights in a row. Two martinis. Did you see the way he looked at me when I put on my hat and walked out?* The light burns out at the foot of 23d Street, 22d Street, 21st, 20th, 19th . . .

The light leaves the flat roofs of the ghetto along the river. Here is the greatest city of the Jews. Here, all unconscious of exoticism, thousands of persons celebrate *bar mitzva*, sit *shiva* for their dead. Streets littered with papers, bags of garbage shooting out of windows, lines of pushcarts selling food, neckties, pictures, bric-a-brac.

*East Side, West Side, all around the town,* boys and girls together hanging around shop doors; whispering, giggling in tenement hallways, in courtyards smelling of backhouses. The world's most populous Italian city outside of Italy spends the sultry night on doorsteps, standing, sprawling on sidewalks of broken cement. So with the world's third Irish city. The world's Negro metropolis is the most crowded of all. Home has scarcely room to hang one's hat, which instead is hung in churches, club rooms, rent parties. And in the Upper West Side fifty thousand families will be reading the newspaper by the sitting room table; fifty thousand Upper East Side families will be finishing a quiet game of bridge or sitting at the library table; and among the thousand already asleep on the Lower East Side will be a large number of old timers who have never seen Broadway.

*With final blast, quivering over the harbor, a liner moves out of its docks; southern cotton for Liverpool, northwestern wheat for Bordeaux, Kansas City hides for Brazil, Virginia tobacco, Massachusetts shoes, Chicago canned meats, lumber from the Pacific Coast.*

The ship moves along the path of a thousand living steamers, past the ghosts of ten thousand sailing vessels and steamships; vessels that brought the Dutch, the English and their goods, Negro slaves, West Indian rum, British textiles, Australian wool, German machinery.