Brooklyn Bridge

Give, Coolidge, a shout of joy!

I too will spare no words

about good things.

Blush

at my praise,

go red as our flag,

however

united-states

-of

-america you may be. As a crazed believer

enters

a church,

retreats

into a monastery cell,

austere and plain;

so I,

in graying evening

haze,

humbly set foot

on Brooklyn Bridge.

As a conqueror presses

into a city

all shattered,

on cannon with muzzles

craning high as a giraffe—

so, drunk with glory,

eager to live,

I clamber,

in pride,

upon Brooklyn Bridge.

As a foolish painter

plunges his eye,

sharp and loving,

into a museum madonna,

so I

from the near skies

bestrewn with stars,

gaze

at New York

through the Brooklyn Bridge.

New York,

heavy and stifling

till night,

has forgotten

its hardships

```
and height;
and only
         the household ghosts
ascend
       in the lucid glow of its windows.
Here
     the elevateds
                   drone softly.
And only
          their gentle
                      droning
tell us:
       here trains
                   are crawling and rattling
like dishes
           being cleared into a cupboard.
While
       a shopkeeper fetched sugar
from a mill
           that seemed to project
                                  out of the water—
the masts
         passing under the bridge
looked
       no larger than pins.
I am proud
            of just this
                       mile of steel;
upon it,
        my visions come to life, erect—
here's a fight
             for construction
                              instead of style,
an austere disposition
                       of bolts
                               and steel.
If
  the end of the world
                       befall—
and chaos
           smash out planet
                            to bits,
and what remains
                   will be
                          this
bridge, rearing above the dust of destruction;
then,
      as huge ancient lizards
                              are rebuilt
```

```
from bones
           finer than needles,
                              to tower in museums,
so,
   from this bridge,
                    a geologist of the centuries
will succeed
            in recreating
                         our contemporary world.
He will say:
            —Yonder paw
                           of steel
once joined
            the seas and the prairies;
from this spot,
               Europe
                       rushed to the West,
scattering
          to the wind
                      Indian feathers.
This rib
        reminds us
                    of a machine—
just imagine,
             would there be hands enough,
after planting
              a steel foot
                         in Manhattan,
to yank
        Brooklyn to oneself
                            by the lip?
By the cables
             of electric strands,
I recognize
           the era succeeding
                               the steam age—
here
     men
         had ranted
                     on radio.
Here
     men
          had ascended
                        in planes.
For some,
          life
              here
                   had no worries;
for others,
```

```
it was a prolonged
```

and hungry howl.

From this spot,

jobless men

leapt

headlong

into the Hudson.

Now

my canvas

is unobstructed

as it stretches on cables of string

to the feet of the stars.

I see:

here

stood Mayakovsky,

stood,

composing verse, syllable by syllable.

I stare

as an Eskimo gapes at a train,

I seize on it

as a tick fastens to an ear.

Brooklyn Bridge—

yes . . .

That's quite a thing!

[1925]