Dirge (For Tambourine)

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DIRGE (FOR TAMBOURINE)

Once a festering sore
From which poured the living ooze
Of the Tammany Tiger and Tweed
And the red lights,
Raw money,
And horse feces,
And the flowing blood of
Lindberg,
Al Smith,
And a million protoplasmic ghettos,
Reviving and revived,
Microcosm of life,
But now a scab.
Millions scurry over the remains,
Ants in brightly-colored death masks,
Parasites to the last sweetness of decay.

Empty tenements (a place to leave) like constant, bloodless wounds
Betray the death of inward spirit:

Buildings protrude grotesquely like musty aged
Many-tiered wedding cakes
From a wedding long past fertility;

Like some huge reclining leper the Great White Way
Shines phosphorescently to fall
Piece by piece
Into the protean bay.

JAMES BOND