

Lawrence Ferlinghetti's 'Dog'

The dog trots freely in the street
 and sees reality
 and the things he sees
 are bigger than himself
 and the things he sees
 are his reality
 Drunks in doorways
 Moons on trees
 The dog trots freely thru the street
 and the things he sees
 are smaller than himself
 Fish on newsprint
 Ants in holes
 Chickens in Chinatown windows
 their heads a block away
 The dog trots freely in the street
 and the things he smells
 smell something like himself
 The dog trots freely in the street
 past puddles and babies
 cats and cigars
 poolrooms and policemen
 He doesn't hate cops
 He merely has no use for them
 and he goes past them
 and past the dead cows hung up whole
 in front of the San Francisco Meat Market
 He would rather eat a tender cow
 than a tough policeman
 though either might do
 And he goes past the Romeo Ravioli Factory
 and past Coit's Tower
 and past Congressman Doyle of the Unamerican Committee
 He's afraid of Coit's Tower
 but he's not afraid of Congressman Doyle
 although what he hears is very discouraging
 very depressing
 very absurd
 to a sad young dog like himself

to a serious dog like himself
 But he has his own free world to live in
 His own fleas to eat
 He will not be muzzled
 Congressman Doyle is just another
 fire hydrant
 to him
 The dog trots freely in the street
 and has his own dog's life to live
 and to think about
 and to reflect upon
 touching and tasting and testing everything
 investigating everything
 without benefit of perjury
 a real realist
 with a real tale to tell
 and a real tail to tell it with
 a real live
 barking
 democratic dog
 engaged in real
 free enterprise
 with something to say
 about ontology
 something to say
 about reality
 and how to see it
 and how to hear it
 with his head cocked sideways
 at streetcorners
 as if he is just about to have
 his picture taken
 for Victor Records
 listening for
 His Master's Voice
 and looking
 like a living questionmark
 into the
 great gramophone
 of puzzling existence

with its wondrous hollow horn
 which always seems
 just about to spout forth
 some Victorious answer
 to everything

Lawrence Ferlinghetti served in the US Navy during World War Two, and was stationed in Nagasaki after the war's atomic end. 'Anyone who saw Nagasaki,' he later wrote, 'would suddenly realize that they'd been kept in the dark by the United States government as to what atomic bombs can do.'

'Dog' was a favourite of Ken Coates. It originally appeared in Ferlinghetti's collection, Coney Island of the Mind, published in 1958. Ken spoke of hearing the poem on a long-player record, before reciting a few lines himself. Some years ago, we wrote to Mr Ferlinghetti, care of City Lights Bookshop in San Francisco, asking his permission to print 'Dog' in The Spokesman. Although no reply has reached us so far, we trust its appearance now will not displease the poet, whom we salute in his 95th year.



**If nuclear technology is
 so safe, why don't we have
 reactors in Westminster?**

**Mick Whelan
 General Secretary**

**Alan Donnelly
 President**

**ASLEF the train drivers' union
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