

A LOWER EAST SIDE POEM by Miguel Piñero

Just once before I die
I want to climb up on a tenement sky
to dream my lungs out till I cry
then scatter my ashes thru
the Lower East Side.

So let me sing my song tonight
let me feel out of sight
and let all eyes be dry
when they scatter my ashes thru
the Lower East Side.

From Houston to 14th Street
from Second Avenue to the mighty D
here the hustlers and suckers meet
the faggots and freaks will all get high
on the ashes that have been scattered
thru the Lower East Side.

There's no other place for me to be
There's no other place that I can see
there's no other town around that
brings you up or keeps you down
no food little heat sweeps by
fancy cars and pimps' bars and juke saloons
and greasy spoons make my spirits fly
with my ashes scattered thru the
Lower East Side

A thief, a junkie I've been
committed every known sin
Jews and Gentiles... Bums and Men
of style-run away child
police shooting wild
mother's futile wails
pushers making sales dope wheelers
and cocaine dealers smoking pot
streets are hot and feed off those who bleed to death
all that's true
all that's true

all that is true
but this ain't no lie
when I ask that my ashes be scattered thru
the Lower East Side.

So here I am, look at me
I stand proud as you can see
pleased to be from the Lower East
a street fighting man
a problem of this land
I am the Philosopher of the Criminal Mind
a dweller of prison time
a cancer of Rockefeller's ghettocide
this concrete tomb is my home
to belong to survive you gotta be strong
you can't be shy less without request
someone will scatter your ashes thru
the Lower East Side.

I don't wanna be buried in Puerto Rico
I don't wanna rest in long island cemetery
I wanna be near the stabbing shooting
gambling fighting and unnatural dying
and new birth crying
so please when I die
don't take me far away
keep me near by
take my ashes and scatter them thru out
the Lower East Side.