On West 4th Street

by Lori Lou Freshwater

"There is no present or future, only the past,
happening over and over again, now"
~Eugene O'Neill

Julie drops a quarter in the jukebox,
Some People Call Me a Space Cowboy.
Dylan sits on the bench outside.
A homeless man wearing a giant condom
on his head, begs for another buck
and gets it.
Across from the Hell Hole
the Cage on Sixth pulses,
sweats, swooshes, hot concussion as players
play for keeps.
People gather, Jack Kerouac talks in vain
on a stool in the tavern *snap snap snap.*
The owner of the bar on Bedford gives
me a sweatshirt, red letters say Chumley's.
I stumble over a dog, into another night,
dim lights, Fitzgerald sits and writes
in the corner, red light on the door blinking,
blinking.
Pierogies at The Kiev, can't hear faint sounds
Tat Boom Tat Boom Boom Boom Boom Boom
Hendrix fires Machine Gun at The Fillmore.
Standing on an island, Times Square, Jim
kisses me and nothing more, one moment
no anything else, anywhere. Thanksgiving
dinner alone at El Quijote, everyone is
upstairs at The Chelsea.
A transvestite applies

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lipstick in the reflection of my door on twenty-
second and tenth. No one minds the sharing.
    Inside
the railroad apartment, I collapse and feel
my old self slowly die.   And Kerouac is on
the road a couple blocks down *snap snap snap*.
    At the bar, Krissana makes a chip butty before
the fryer is turned off, after work five of us pitch
in tips, to the west side to take a helicopter ride
around Manhattan at dawn, before finally
time to sleep.
                    But first, drop another quarter Julie,
it hurts how much I wish
I had known about the poetry at St Mark's church.