

A

# CONEY ISLAND

of the

## MIND

Poems by LAWRENCE

FERLINGHETTI

A NEW DIRECTIONS BOOK

1958

15

Constantly risking absurdity  
and death  
whenever he performs  
above the heads  
of his audience  
the poet like an acrobat  
climbs on rime  
to a high wire of his own making  
and balancing on eyeballs  
above a sea of faces  
paces his way  
to the other side of day  
performing entrechats  
and sleight-of-foot tricks  
and other high theatrics  
and all without mistaking  
any thing  
for what it may not be  
For he's the super realist  
who must perform perceive  
taut truth  
before the taking of each stance or step  
in his supposed advance  
toward that still higher perch  
where Beauty stands and waits  
with gravity  
to start her death-defying leap  
And he  
a little charleychaplin man  
who may or may not catch  
her fair eternal form  
spreadeagled in the empty air  
of existence

[ 30 ]