

Slow Gherkin, Shed Some Skin

It's Christmas Day in gay Paris
Not so gay for Galen Z.
Sixteen hours in a sweaty kitchen
For money that makes
minimum wage look good.
6 a.m. on the subway
Stop station, through the doorway
Crowds of people
Standing, yelling, screaming
"What's going on? I must be dreaming."
And the city forgets
They didn't even perceive
And the trains keep blowing up
week after week.
Franzel's traveled wide and far
Back from the U.S.S.R.
Went there to pursue a lifelong calling
You found only numb toes and helpless longing.
Now you're back at home today
Back in the old USA.
Scoop up handfuls of your native dust
And cross the country in a Greyhound bus.
Another failed attempt
It's no use trying to pretend
Now you're right back where you started again.
I saw what's wrong but I didn't see how
I saw, I saw
We're all grown up now.
Today's your twentieth birthday
Alone you walk the banks of Maine
As time runs out to write the second verse of
The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock.
While you're gone we'll be here still
Just beyond those distant hills
Could be that you got the upper hand
When you left this rustic never-never land.
And my breathing constricts
I feel the walls closing in
Could it be that finally we're all
Shedding some skin.