

**Letter to N.Y.**

by Elizabeth Bishop

*for Louise Crane*

In your next letter I wish you'd say  
where you are going and what you are doing;  
how are the plays and after the plays  
what other pleasures you're pursuing:

taking cabs in the middle of the night,  
driving as if to save your soul  
where the road goes round and round the park  
and the meter glares like a moral owl,

and the trees look so queer and green  
standing alone in big black caves  
and suddenly you're in a different place  
where everything seems to happen in waves,

and most of the jokes you just can't catch,  
like dirty words rubbed off a slate,  
and the songs are loud but somehow dim  
and it gets so terribly late,

and coming out of the brownstone house  
to the gray sidewalk, the watered street,  
one side of the buildings rises with the sun  
like a glistening field of wheat.

—Wheat, not oats, dear. I'm afraid  
if it's wheat it's none of your sowing,  
nevertheless I'd like to know  
what you are doing and where you are going.