

From April Pierce on *To Brooklyn Bridge* by Hart Crane, a film made by Suzie Hanna, Tom Simmons and Sally Bayley

When we think about metaphor, we tend to think about something essentially linguistic. Here, though, in a mixed medium, we find something else -- something *alive*. Something that presses against us with a few more tectonic layers. What does the mind do, when it reconciles words to images and sound? Can we call this translation a metaphorical process? Isn't this much more similar to our lived experience? There is a grappling between forms, words meet with a kind of auditory and visual friction. Sparks fly. This frantic motion -- these sequences of gyrating shadow -- animate the poem. We are required to leap. Certainly this version of Hart Crane's "Proem" gets close to an experience of New York City, with its jostling enticements. There are not many places to stop and sit in New York. One has to keep walking. And up out of the neon beams and cluttered soundscapes, between Tennessee William's familiar lilt and the cries of seagulls -- rises the Brooklyn Bridge, which has for so long been an eternizing icon of American poetry, written and re-written, praised and cursed. Crane chooses not to condense the bridge into an idiom, but invites us into the passing darkness, graced by the shadow of the bridge. Whatever metaphor might be -- whatever it is that pushes us from subway scuttle to heaven, from the fury fused to the lifted night -- that lives in the shadow too. And the shadow keeps moving.