Two Scavengers In A Truck,
Two Beautiful People In A Mercedes

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti

At the stoplight waiting for the light
Nine A.M. downtown San Francisco
a bright garbage truck
with two garbage men in red plastic blazers
standing on the back stoop
one on each side hanging on
and looking down into
an elegant open Mercedes
with an elegant couple in it
The man
In a hip three-piece linen suit
With shoulder-length blond hair & sunglasses
The young blond woman so casually coifed
with a short skirt and colored stocking
On his way to his architect's office
And the two scavengers up since Four A.M.
Grungy from their route
On the way home
The older of the two with grey iron hair
And hunched back
Looking like some
Gargoyle Quasimodo
And the younger of the two
Also with sunglasses and long hair
About the same age as the Mercedes driver
And both scavengers gazing down
As from a great distance
At the cool couple
As if they were watching some odorless TV ad
In which everything is possible

And the very red light for an instant
Holding all four close together
As if anything at all were possible
Between them
Across that great gulf
In the high seas
Of this democracy