

*This Is Not New Jersey
Jimmie Durham*

This Is Not New Jersey

Look, cousins, you made the wrong turn.
This is not New Jersey.
These salt marshes and pine trees understand
Neither Gaelic nor Sasenach English,
And those Leni Lenape' your fathers killed
Are walking around your closed, scared, suburban houses,
So you'd better just split.
If you want New Jersey, well, I think you go to
Tear down Old Jersey and build a new one there;
You can't import Jerseys, or Yorks, or Hampshires.

Or Georgias. Those $\frac{1}{2}$ acre wooded lots are not suitable for building
And Mr. Penn does not own that sylvan countryside.

Now look, you huddled masses are messing up our corn
Crop and the beans rows we took such care with.
Why don't you go huddle in Jersey or Silesia,
Or just ride a passenger pigeon into the sunrise?

Why don't you just clear out? Drop dead?
At least forget about Jersey, cousin; you're too lost
For that.

Hey, cousins, even the grass around here hates you,
You know that? Why don't you just pack up your golf
Balls and jump in the gulf?

Or at least straighten up. You made the wrong turn.
This is not New Jersey and this is not the new world.
You need to get your bearings straight.
We live here and you are scaring the fish.
See, we don't call this place New Mongolia, or New Jersey.

If you lost, New Jersey why don't you just go
Home and start out again in a different direction?

There are no golden doors here; that's only corn,
And we planted it. You got nice wheat to eat
Back in Jersey, why don't you pack up your Wonder Bread
And jump in the ocean?

Or turn your stationwagon around and drive off
The scenic overview?

Why don't you ask the government to sterilize you?
You're so unsanitary, dragging around that load of Jersey
Bull shit. You are just German germs and Dutch Elm
Disease.
Why don't you O.D. on English tea and jump into the
Irish sea?

I'm not trying to put you down,
But we've had to put up with you so long.
You made the wrong turn and now you're lost
and blame it on me but this is not
New Jersey and you are really impolite guests, cousins,
Putting up all those New Jersey Turnpike signs.
Those signs won't do it.
What if I put up signs in your cornfield?

A pack of wolves are going to ride down
On you. Our wolves can beat
Your German shepherds that guard your
Family treasures. Cyclone fence or not.

You may think that I'm just talking tough
But this is not New Jersey.

From Columbus Day by Jimmie Durham. Copyright © 2000. University of New Mexico Press, 2000.

