American Dreams: Lost and Found

Studs Terkel

This conversation appears in American Dreams Lost and Found (New Press). At the arrival gate of the Chicago-to-Cleveland flight, a skinny kid who appeared no more than 19 or 20 reached out for my torn duffel bag. I thought he was one of those Horatio Alger heroes, whose opening line is usually “Smash your baggage, mister?” This one said, “Did you have a good flight, Studs?” I’ll be damned, he was the person I had come to visit, Dennis Kucinich, the Boy Mayor of Cleveland. He was 32 then, though he could pass as anybody’s office boy. As he carried my bag through the corridors of the airport, pa