

Designed to Fade

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Designed to Fade

— *A Narrative Poem* —

Dedication

lettertounknownfriend@citylocation.org

Dear unknown friend

Survivor in arms

can you spare the time

to recognise whether the writer has understood

I have known you exist for many years

I have loved this city

still love this city

measure my years of growth

seize my catalogue of achievements

by this city

extend my hopes for this city that

'When one fled past . . . her name was Hope'

would it be enough to say I hear voices

study heteroglossia

in the interests of racial harmony

wander the streets of SE5/N21

find the kernel of ideas

say which day it is

the picture is overall or regional

see headlines:

. . . walker expresses concern for city streets

'no go' hits city junction

'not enough' for walk out nurses

Straw catches mood of epidemic

I have understood that poetic forces may be at work

are there devices here?

we are together on this one

we have walked these streets

been through gates

walked up steps

opened doors

is it the precise location you are after?

The Grove The Warren

Copse Drive

warning
there is a moment's stasis
my privacy
I have lived in this city
continue to live in it
once when I woke
I heard the roar of traffic on Hanger Lane
I have never forgotten it
planes thunder or purr overhead
I retread familiar streets to everyday destinations
those days when I don't go
the days when I would not go
we all of us dream of the place beyond

Prologue

Dear Reader
grown from request
sought by need
created by a woman's words
clarified by energy
thinking I could do you a service
I have spoken to the night and day
to the critics and lovers
the supervisors and friends
consulted my almanac
then
take out the personal
metonymise emotions
attend to the chaotic
produce a semblance of objectified energy
put in some focus
construct a prosodic technique
devise the narrative
understand alienation and mimesis
achieve equivalence
growing up positions
chart this labyrinthine map which
on account of its lack of compass markings
is impossible to read
set the mechanism in motion
it will start anywhere go anywhere
our destinations are unknown
now
all along the corridors and up and down the stairs
with only a ball of string
tied to the first memory
then on to other memories
it runs out it runs out
gyroscopic stability mocking stasis
the unknown the not understood
leaving us only today and tomorrow

Foundation Poem

List the founding fathers and mothers
extoll the founding virtues and errors
inspire the founding energies and frustrations
 count yourself lucky

This is a great city A-Z
encompassed by literal measurements
 OS grid references
 heights and depths
we think of the underground and the overground
we read about the mains cables
 sewers telephone wires
 the flight paths
 the neck aching upward vistas
 the sodium and halogen auras

there are layers of
 dialogic heterodoxy
 dreadful night awful day
 one or many
 organisation chaos
the city of constantly renewing our bargain
 of never being the same
 of always being there
 exploration not explication

Great City built on hope effort greed communication
Great City built with bricks glass cement steel
Great City built on water land marsh downs
Great City built with hard work energy ideas passion
Great City built on poverty degradation criminality forces
 Settle neatly under the stars
 that outlive you
 Rise up each morning
 Shake yourself in the steam that rises with the sun
 that outlives you
 March earnestly through the day creating more heat more dust

with the air that outlasts you
Slow down in the evenings
with pregnant echoes that resound
memories that you will not recall

Kaleidoscopically

here are invariably housing
and Giant Gherkin with inside lit light
twist watch mosaics fall into place
histo-sorrowfully backward vistas
trailing lights against tumbling colour
back lit beautifully through windows
irrevocably greys blues and browns
alternatively aspirations
rejects venously the forms shake out
into place form dash through ugliness
interchangeably piecemeal and fall
diffusely riotously into
let's and out of here and there quickly
transiently of pockets I want
shall necessarily poverty
restlessly through Maida Vale Hackney
capriciously sorted through by chance
located centrifugally thrown
suburban surround delightfully
it's the dusty dramatic of it
windswept in echo of romantic
wistfully no yes once unwanted
moment's poise delightfully children
say we are happy all perspective
alters by fragment by moment by
dome or line or link unlock we think
science places inconstantly whilst
reflectively degradation holds
there are whilst travelling hopefully
on the rustling cascade of fragments
music of the earthly spheres these are
these are the people thankfully yours
respectfully to inspectors who
just asking for money whilst busking
managerially we need a
shake up if I can only get a
taxi first left south of the river
pointing sunward blinding quicksilver

do I love you relentlessly still
movingly hateful pieces tumble
to the rim stickily come to visit
annoyingly the pattern repeats
this requires attention it doesn't need
this turning fast powerfully held
to ransom traffic warden plumber
phone phone you must come to the phone in
dependently we hold hands he needs
help manifestly reversibly
humanly I am yours tickets guard
caretaker take mine when thrown away
carelessly poets calling pieces
use notes from page to sound from pattern
to falling to change all change lovers
then and now