

The City is a Dream

Faces both familiar and strange,
curve through the mystic canopy
of skyline skylights.
Grey men move into mercantile ziggurats
 holding hostage time,
sit in plush rooms, smoke cigars,
above the People's marketplace
(a quaint breeding ground
 for redneck carnivals,
a pulpit for clownish impresarios).

The City is a Dream
 of a full moon, a blood moon
 an invitation to a scarlet masquerade,
written on an old postcard
whose memory is never the same.
The City is yearning, desirous
exultant in the reckless passions
executed by youths,
 (eased into
with wrinkled hands holding old age)
 behind one hundred doors
 soaked into the love stained sheets
of a thousand boudoirs,
a condom thrown from the shotgunned window
 of a pimped out gangsta car.

The City is a Nightmare factory
 of dripping chemicals bleaching ancient shells,
 a bricked over canal covering ancient hells,
an underworld of secret pipes and drains,
graffitied in the calligraphy of fire:
 hash smoking sultans
 hide harems in the sewers.

Paved over, the street tops are pock marked
like the faces of snout nosed politicians
 who ride across in motorcades
their tongues crooked,
 forged from broken blades.

The City is a Palimpsest
 a lingering note on a musical score,

long forgotten, locked in a dusty drawer.
The City is a Cemetery
whose dead aren't laid to rest
(children step off yellow school buses
 into puddles splashing rain
not singing the cemetery song)
only the dirge is heard, struck at cathedrals
 on clockwork hours, marking the beginnings
 of endless rotework shifts,
sleepwalking, the grey men dead suits
 drift into

dreams of invisible cities
where friendly dogs lick the coal ash
 off the face of a chimney sweep.
Dreaming of internet cities
 constructed from blinking lights
red lights inside the crackhouse parlors
where vapor trails of crystal smoke
 vivisect the night;
 consumed by sordid dreams
inside bickering brothels
 of carnal pleasures and venereal spite,
where the puttanesca is as cold
 as the John left to breathe
 his last asphyxiated dream.

The City is a parking lot
 built over your grandpas baseball field,
a meadow of screeching whales
 as trains bleed into the harbor.
Incest knows the city
 as does dishonor and Victorian disgrace
the City is a kingdom of illegitimate sons,
 fallen princes,
a place where birds fashion nests
from old braided nylon weaves and fast food wrappers,
where sleeping bags are unfurled beneath the overpass.
The City is a jaundiced liver
 fortified by wine,
a fecund blister, a conundrum
sticky as the bubblegum on the bottom of a shoe.

The amusement park is a City
 waiting to be dumpster dived,
a menu whose restaurant is never the same

a library of babel whose voluptuous pages
electrify the fatigue of a fog smoked brain.

The City is a ruse,
 a weary mirage enticing neon travelers.
The City is a sphinx
 of many headed riddles,
a phantom trajectory
 whose presence cannot be traced.

-Justin Patrick Moore
approaching Summer Solstice, 2009
Cincinnati, Ohio

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