

IV

43rd Street *UNREAL CITY*

“The sky is a landfill.
I see you take another drag.”

Jeff Buckley, *The Sky Is A Landfill*

“HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME.”

T.S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*

UNREAL CITY.

Beneath a timorous sky it trembles
Electric blue flanking Tudor red
Where is this Paradise of which we seek?
Put down your swords, they say
Put down your plowshares too
Come, divest yourself of your vestments
And let's dance naked beneath the pagan moon.



SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Vapors vanishing, vacuous, vacillating
Where is resolution? There is no resolution.
Only effort: copious bloodletting like Sweeney
And strident conversation.
The illusions of charity sweep over latter-day dons
With their fat purses of gold coins,
While down South, heads are lopped off:
Trophies in Darfur;
Bombs raining in Damascus.

(Allahu akbar!)

Where is the city?
There is no city. Only broken reflections;
Ripples of mendacity;
Distortions
Of towering ziggurats
Flickering like a lightbulb.
Lost in the twilight, the child looks up
And sees a sign of the times:
Nothing.

UNREAL CITY

Beneath a clamorous sky it cringes
Shades of basalt and grey
Answers become questions
And questions lead to dead ends.
There are too many SECRETS IN STONE:
Mayan intimations
Of Anthropocene dealings
Laced with grief
Or apathy:
I forget which is which.
These exigent letters and filigreed sentences,
Framing beasts of burden
Slumbering away Eternity.

At Grand Central Station

I met a man
Who reminded me of a man I once met
And who stood there staring at the intricate play of light
On the concourse
And the rapturous sprawl of the constellations overhead.
And I said, "What do you do?"

And he said, "I am."
And he looked at me with a twinkle in his eye
As if to say,
Don't you believe a word of it.

"Ye shall know the truth
And the truth shall make you free."
But you see
We do not desire freedom *per se*
But the freedom to oppress.



Suddenly there was a flash
And I realised that I wasn't in the same scene;
The same stage anymore,
This one being mere façade,
Sleight of hand,
LIGHTS AND MAGIC;
Pictures at an exhibition
Insubstantial.

It is time! It is time! It is time!
We must hurry! We must hurry! We must hurry!
But to where?
Where are we racing to?
Where everyone else is racing to of course!
To our own hasty demise.

But until then, we amuse ourselves
With caricatures:
Swinging spiders and green goblins
Bubble-butts and cardboard cruise-ships;
Giggling tourists taking shots
Of armed men on their steeds,
Riding out to war.
In this world, anything goes,
And “*Ah mean anythin'!*”
Except, maybe, peace of mind.

UNREAL CITY

Beneath an execrable sky it extends
Antediluvian landscape
Of giant undersea lava towers
Seething with crabs, eels and other deep-sea critters
That have never seen the light of day.
Between these swim the humpback whales.

SKY AND LANDFILL

Un-photosynthetic wasteland.
How do we make nutrients
From this infertile expanse?
With much effort, my dear,
And pretentiously
So no one else notices
The toxic sick we regurgitate elsewhere.

Food for the Soul.
Hell's Kitchen.
"I am" being "I have."
We store so much and discard so much
And yet we keep accumulating
With no concern for where this exuberance may lead.
Let our children deal with it, we say.
Yes, that would be the solution.
Let them deal with it, the little shits.

I got up this morning and I asked myself
Obsessive-compulsively:
Are we there yet?
Are we ever going to get there?
Are we there yet?
No seriously, are we there?
Are we?

No, my dear, I replied to myself.
We're never getting there.
And we never will.
"There" simply doesn't exist.
There is only *here*
A tragic circle
An infinity of stasis.
Alfred J. Prufrock.
Amen.

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