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

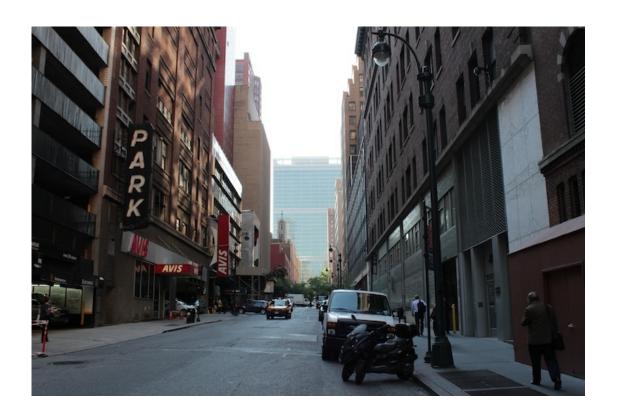
Where is this Paradise of which we seek?

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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