

Metropolitan

by Iain James Robb

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I.

Atlantic harbinger of this our swaddled dawn:
Mistaking moon's sea sweep for this the frown
The sky's plain-countenanced creatures maytimes weep
Upon the surface-sundown of our lawn,
When gaily surfaced for mute festivals...
At their revues of lazing, sharing same
In sweat with dewdrops that no tears bequeath-

Paint iron circles on this Glasgow heath,
If you do not truly disinherit me;
I am not the prophet you are that I flee,
But I was born in the same cloud-clown as your own
And must, like Dumbness, recognise your throne
Upon the shriek and lull that also disinherits me.

O Whitman, Swinburne, strangely looking down

Upon the purple lengths that flood the gloom,
Come purply to me, disinherit whom
Does not, on this strange sudden Glasgow night
Does not ensurface on your symmetry.
The Mettle fins of this Clyde bridge ring true
The same as yours, but do not ring as bright
As April moths upon your midmoon night,
That knows but does not know of this the flee

Of twilight ridges bridging into cobalt dreams
The Green by the distillery is dumbest to,

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Almost as much as we ourselves, as I..
But other colours plumb through numbness now,
And skies
Prodigally heaping like the frowns
Of Odin's neighbours Aphrodited likewise-
The spoor of covert stars and radial revues
Pavillion keeps for the unkept below their cradles...
Ejaculate their triumphs
And their fears
Without discerning-

BUT THERE ARE NO NEIGHBOURS HERE.
Speak platitudes upon your nearest lawns,
And do not dream yourselves chimeras, for the drift
Of festive flesh resolves to its own doorways.
I mean yours-
But skies,
That heap the Turner's painting at the last point down,
Commit your eye's leap utter into frown,
Commit the last length of the last sigh's beat
The late snow keeps, but do remember us.

II.

Like Lowry, each pram pusher and each rake whose face
Distinguishes itself like passport transit and no pawn
Or quite content to play the knight, in stage or place
Their upcast visors pass no comment on-
Both leans and does not lean here: streetway bums,
Postmodern yuppies hooked to mortgages
As surely as a dipsomaniac's drip,
And tanned young wantons frowzied trim and flip,
The tinsel queens and hardened cardboard sages...
This is the sum of lipless images
Whose tongues run staunchest at the point they stall...

And do their eye-stalks stalk upon the wall
Whose high clock's apex-iron eyelashes
Split either density of light, and sightlessness
They hardly notice, or has this noontide twilight be-
come no more than urine's musk or ambergris
That leaks past one bleared out or one painted eye. *Do hope*
There lies something more close below this. Rusted cars
Are not within the satellites of rusted minds.
Commuters crashing into staid routines
That neither lives or leaves by. Recompense us
For all our sweat and piss and smell of fox-
Transcribing faces to those forms in feverous dark,
Made heedless for the ardour of the prize.
We flagellate our second solstice in the hours
Whose seconds bleed us, chords of the same clocks
Whose images themselves are deadened eyes.

III.

IT'S 12 'O CLOCK....THE HEAPING LINES
OF YOUNG EMBRACERS SHUFFLE THROUGH THE DOORS
Of nightclubs and of escalator palace
Equally, but some are lacking cheques-
A sea of mobiles granting a reprieve
From the monotony of needing such: have I
Or you one? Cheap Armani knock-offs
Speak volumes for their quiet profligacy.

"Yet have you got spare change?"Wet pussies and hard cocks
Deny the ruffian waiting by the phone booth;
Cash machines redeem the emptiness
For only a split second from their eyes.
...The advertisement billboards mock the broken clocks

Whose shadow lasts a second or has passed
Into that point no second shadow passes.
Yet we have no need to recognise this fact.
"It's 12 'O Clock I only ask for change" ...

A beer can stationed at the Civic Centre
Speaks volumes for its dash below the wall-
We ask for city stamps at vacant ticket boxes,
Relinquishing our arts for stumps of change.
"And then, then fragilely, I ask you why
You saw your band mates last", and the more muscled cry
Rumples inanimately up from passing buses...
IT'S TEN TO MIDNIGHT PEOPLE, WONDER WHY...

And wonder, passing in the unborn rain...
"I never asked once more to have you back again"...
LAST ORDERS....and it's sovereign and sweet
To walk a circuit in your love's retreat,
To feel the hulk of your hypocrisy...
A lie the truth of you that does not lie-

DEMOCRACY...
Oh, yes it scrapes within.
And that's a FACT-
FOR SOAP ABRADES THE SKIN.
The street-long placards always speak the truth,
A conscience virtuous as your newborn ruth
That vanishes when souls forget to fly,
In learning to, when you've resumed your Act.

It is the time now for the garbled skies
The next year scrapes on the lobotomies
Of vagrant issues and a shriven crime-
IT's 12 'O CLOCK, SO HURRY UP IT's TIME.
Lord, look on us and then look back again,

From greystone high-rise and from lapis lawn
The sequined people parrot in their harp-song time,
Unaware the music makes them live as long
As all that leaves them to return again
To sapphire gardens, and the grafts of men

Return your circle, Lord...

Amen, Amen.

