

Untitled (from Postcards from a Railway Station)

by Iain James Robb

As the silence starts gashing I decide it's the moment to take all my thoughts for a walk;

To a sound like a million lightbulbs shutting their fuses I resume my view,

Across the sun-strobe streets with blind nightlamps; the safflower sun is lopped on its stalk

As I decline my own face, dear strangers, now, as I am winging away from you.

Have I yet said a word to these harlequin dummies; it's a map without plan

I march to: I have no need to enquire of a self-made prince with a tinsel crown

What the news is, or what to frown to; I paint my own face on, I am Corky the Clown-

Yet the day's light will hold a few hours yet, I guess, says the TV weatherman.

I am tired of deciphering shadows; there are some shadows I cannot parse.

There is one that looms to left of my shoulder, bent in front of a wall,

And some pages spilled out of a trashcan remind me of something a parsec past:

The thought I forgot reawakened with papers two minutes from planetfall.

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If you're tired of putting square pegs in square holes for a price you can come for a ride:

Bash square pegs in round holes with a mallet? Sky perched over
a brindled abyss

In the country instructs you to nothing, and still, if you're sick of
all this,

You can still find a place that's yet empty and fill it with places to
hide.

-
And the shopstore-front mummies, who don't see me travel, have
no glass for a skylight;

From the black bleeding screen of the Evening Gazette I turn eyes
but don't run,

And it turns in the gutter much further than clouds out of
eyesight;

I don't care for the news, but deciphering masks made by monks
is my notion of fun.

And a jackhammer man woke me ere Sunday service: someone,
give me a gun,

With which I can shoot charmed roses; parson, where is your
flock?

Do they drift to get caught in my crosshairs, if they're tired of
your talk?

Come and follow my wisdom if you must hark to no-one's, if you'll
be my chosen one.

-
The city's a head that is empty, its detours stone vales, I walk
valleys of glass;

Though the light might be fine a few hours, I reckon the curtain
may fall

More silent than twilight when all moons are ashes and absence
shall pass

Over sun-strobe and star-length, distinguishment lightened of life
and a bobble-necked doll.

The red dung of comets will burn out of orbit and prophets now
blind will be blest

With blindness for always: as a stalk after harvest is chafed in the
air and was dead-

In its lifeline fore-ordered a fleeting of freedom; but the lover will
too lay his head,

Though the sun will crawl on, circumscribing the circle of its
circled nothingness.

All the tumbledown worlds from system to system grow cold in
their entrails, and pass-

Though no cease to repeating; in the hell of the heavens strange
clocks have the novas as drones.

Rebirths? In their halos it is only the angels who shift wingtip to
chrysalis,

In unfolding pinions; all else measured minions, who drift to a
hillock of bones.

Bored with ovaries, harvesting births out of substance of nothing
that holds to strange glue,

Time's words make a sculpture from nothingness — even the ice
runs remiss

In retaining its captive when thaws break — and my arch bungler,
Nemesis,

Will your hand pluck my soul from my bones: dead elephant,
whose trump yells for you?

And the Swami Radha Bhaktivedanta says he understands
circumference,

According to the man with no hair, though; at some point, we all
question Zen.

Is it the wolf or the jackal laughs the hardest, after our harvest?
Pound for pence

We are led to our stalls' gates by venaller leaders, our premier a
pig in a gilded pen.

But, honey, if you should read your own scripture, paint on a smile
to your injured frown:

“Tis not quite so bad in the darkest of ages no light hits our
window”, I quoth.

My indolence now is my only true teacher, I quail at the measures
of wrath:

Let sheep here who wallow in layers of adipose sleep, though I
see what's gone down.

Six hours to the flipside of light in the sun's stare, and now I must
chart my retreat:

My words make a sculpture that melts as they yammer for what
they've not caught and they cease,

For what they've untouched: but I'll see the stars stammer like
arrows that catch at your feet.

It will be time soon as I sense, that you enter; steal down for a
pantomime clown as you seize

My tongue in your trust; I was born for the circus but hold my
own show without view:

A court lit in distance that cries for a chorus, to noise, that my
head thinks the best

Withheld from the others, but I follow the spoor of your footsteps
with all of the rest:

It is only my heartbeats that sound with the fall of your foot, as
I'm winging to you.

