The City

by Jack Woods

"Why are you crying?" I ask

"The city…" a single tear rolling down your cheek

A place that lies in the East, North West and South, here in our world beyond all time. An echo of every letter rhymes rolling off the tongue down into the ocean, patient for the neon eyes next door to arrest the shaman in each street for their crimes against order.

If we may today share a city, of pride and horror, of some starlight moonscape and musing on our shadows at sunrise, of early morning freedoms contained fading to the evening's escape or exodus or exile; fate is not up to us. The city spits you out whenever she wants, however she wants.

"We attest!" the city cries back turned to the busy narrowly avoiding the underground-flash of commuters delaying another dinner, standing on the platform shoulder to shoulder sharing tailored secrets of the damned. Knowing truth has no suit, it is the city itself in damnation waiting to relieve the chosen few of her gripping solitude.

A Joyceful mind of Dublin once said to know the heart of a city is to know the heart of every city. We should clarify; to know the heart of your Sydney is to know the fundamental rhythm beating at the center of all humanity. Simplicity, the elegance of civilisation where reality collects the same, constructed out of fellow countrymen, intellects, religious sects, a cathedral to satisfy every fetish of individuality. Efficient as we render Gothic useless to rally people around designs truly ambiguous, yet somehow ours.

I apologise for descending into terms of possession but unfortunately we trust a storyteller to believe in their own stories, and as this page dies under the weight of analysis we do not flinch nor flutter even an eyelid in pain, instead improvising new narrative's off the stream of the tongue, for though we may discredit a story it's meaning remains alive and eternal, to be conveyed any way we choose. It may turn out this city is human; each fragile

Copyright © 2014 Jack Woods. All rights reserved.

building a relic of ancestors/memory harmonising our consciousness into the future; a living, breathing tomorrow of yesterday.

But this is no arbitrary Melbourne, but the aroma calling your name each night. A siren beneath the rainbow seducing us with her song, to the Darwin we discover, and blind we follow, not in search of her but that fatal evolution missing in us all. Our soul, our city in which we discover the elusive Truth we unknowingly call to in our dreams that finally speaks back, grows legs to walk through itself and know. Has that spark of soul and sits in the rocking chair when you're alone with nowhere to go, helping us move onto the next once we wait happy, between the four walls of the apocalypse we now call home.

We move to these cities to escape the inactive countryside. A stimulant the city forces upon us unavoidable experience as we waste our lives reacting, instigating for the first time at 30 only to realise creation needs practice, like any good Perth. Not another prototype but built on the foundations of every Rome and New York as their governor's sue us for plagiarism, an eternal tax to the first philosopher for the initial conclusion of life. Never allowing us to break free and reflect on a society frowning upon the thinkers. And, as with any second act of merit, the action comes to define thought, a feat entertaining may never accomplish.

The city I speak of is both mine and yours I'm sure. Its cavernous streets are home to infinite minds flowing from different forms on every plain; flora and fauna, human and viral and inanimate—unlike us the city never excludes a consciousness it fails to understand, on the contrary it carries the newcomer along the breeze, cultivating their personality until it rests perfectly the same and unique. Skyscrapers built as testimonies to humanity now stand tall over the water in ohmage of the Great Palms that once stood in their shoes protecting the fragile shore, each glass gram brilliant beneath the summersun amplifying fragments of red, green and blue till the spectrum combines the light fantastic, bringing back to life and colour even the deadest of fruit. We sit and watch, breathing juices from our bruises soaking in the fresh syrup of time.

The crowds wait patient for their bargain on the corner of First Av and Market, Elisabeth and Russell street bathing in each beam as the careful clerk keeps them in purgatory, idle until they purchase the perfect glasses to hide the truth in their eyes, protection from others ready to cut you down and run at first sight of relinquishing the game. Then there are those whom relish the hunt and fail to see themselves playing into the cities hands, falling in love before realising theirs isn't the only mind in town, and these tricks are only as real as we make them. Following without a second glance the subtle roseline of the city's agenda laid deep in our distant history.

We all follow someone, even if we don't know it yet.

We may be all following ourselves.

Through a city designed so all roads lead to freedom, fooling the newcomer with visionary dreams of escape and secret quest for life, instead hunting into memory our road of choice, passing between vogue until we realise the happiness each of us holds dear is as hollow as the next. Confusing ourselves further only thinking of truth as we realise too late truth cannot be entertained, only known; there's not enough time to stop and smell *every* flower. A city teaching its constituents there is no time for anything, performing the Final trick as we believe, anything is possible. A magic we fail to translate as our parents cry in vein, “Everything is possible.”

Each street a duplicate of every other assigned an appropriate proper noun to confuse the tourist, inviting to the unobservant some simple death and destruction to complete the evil of creation we pretend not to notice hidden in plain sight. Sometimes you will see the streetlamps weep in Blake Light Tragedy witnessing the lonely stoner cornered for an excuse, an execution in passing New-Meth Town for the cigarettes that could wait till dawn. Instead, volunteering for the midnight stroll to combat his insomnia by feeding a true addiction; experience. Denizens respecting denizens until the fatal last push sending every mailman into confusion as they fail to miss the memo; forward mail to the edge, ‘cuz that's a system we live in.

We all have idea's of this city but we still like to think such a place free from ideals—from satire when really this collection of absurdity beats through every artery, beneath the soil and structure it flows between the streets crawling up our spine until it's harmony fills our ears with soft spoken sounds of truth. Uniting our betters and better-off's so we may all have something to laugh at and distract our tired minds from a civilisation built without us, born from the fragile hands of generation's passed. Whether it be the suit earning his coffee each day smiling on the loon or the loon jesting the suit dressed in his best daily commute; the medieval difference lies in their polish of armour. Our ultimate deception.

According to statues imposed by its Mayor, the old area's require renovation to look new as we erase our true history, painting yet another pretty face over the bodies below, affording us the luxury of similar perspective's looking at the situation from all side's of the city. You can see this law as the communities attempt to dress up disgust to present a solution until we end in tragedy at the turn of each decade, or you can realise swampland is indeed the most fertile—contains the most nutrients and another statutory re-beautification is but an ohmage to the soil allowing civilisation to flourish in the first place. In a city, everything has a slant.

Or we can see every direction from its heart, from the center and up to the suburbs. We try to hide because we think a truth is not beautiful. In the aesthetic sense as the world descends back into the Wilde and we care only to see some face penetrate the mist. These people move away from the action, choosing instead to live on the 70th floor on top of the world, living each day out of spite, proving nature wrong with our continuing existence in the unliveable. Little do they realise the location is a direct dialect with Gaia, her contouring body-language advising life; if you wish to stay alive, live far from here. An absurd fetish we recreate in the architecture of our most modern cities; glass buildings with closed curtains, fenced properties you see into from the street, public property governed by private law…the purgatory of starring behind a bar blind, waiting for the 24 hours to finally close.

The beauty of this place comes in knowing someone somewhere in this void, for every idea we generate there is another mind ready to believe. For in a city we collaborate till everything is true.

But in what terms am I now describing this utopia? The city itself—it's spatial features—seem to be lost in conversation, stripped of all meaning from abusing the word to contextualise the tangents…

Maybe that is all a city is, the civilised context of society giving rise to the understanding of our fellow man. Knowing that what makes this city tick also makes me, you, everyone's heart beat to the fundamental rhythm hidden in these vibrations we try but are yet to understand. Each of us dancing to our own chaos this city brings to order and for a moment, we see the pattern of truth kaleidoscope across our eyes and finally know! Forgotten in the heat of the epiphany because some things ring too true, and as such must remain unknown. Instead bequeathing to you a promise: there is truth to life so please don't lose sight. And walking to work you stop in the morning haze for no reason, people bustle past and the bus leaves and you realise; the promise of possibility is greater than the guarantee of nothing, beautiful and elegant.

Over the heads I see you starring off, into the fog or future who can be sure, wherever you were in a world I can only hope to one day understand. That you may be the one holding it's secret in your smile, ready to share with the one willing to listen and not simply nod their head. For a question should never be wasted, just as an answer should not waste the time of the one willing to learn. Because all roads lead to truth, so I walk past the shopping people, past light posts, past the markets and parks and signs and up to you.

“Excuse me…”

You do not acknowledge me but for the question, instead to no-one in particular, you begin telling a story, of some city in existence and beyond it, set both between and outside time's delicate fabric. I am not sure if you talk of this city, your home town, some traveling dream or even pure fantasy, but I have this strange

feeling it's hard to shake; the words you speak of the place you describe, though I have never seen such a place I have lived here all along.

“…stories shine brighter through a tear in your eye.” You say.

Home.