

Independent Republic

Evening skips along the Pershore Road:
Looks for adventure.
It grasps the smell of buddleia by the arms
And falls in purple step along the street.
In the cocktail bars and vegan cafes
Bare elbows rest on tables – sepia tattooed,
Nose studs, long hair, dreadlocks.
Accents clutter up the cup clatter
And bubble into the flyers on the toilet doors
For yoga, world singing, moon cycles, activism.
Evening and the Buddleia Smell have a gin,
Take a pizza, wander the canal,
Argue about Marx, gorillas, and Artefacts,
Then go to hear the band –
Suzy song thrush and the willow warblers;
What a riot.
They raise a beer from a Couch as the moon rises
And the swifts dive.

There is a willow grows aslant a brook

Drop off the main road. Descend to hidden pockets. Sneak out the back
Stretching narrow, bewilderingly, to garden, subversive with lilac,
Into the wedge of green, flinging willow, dragonfly; barricaded by birch, rammed in by the Rae.
Uncowed by tarmac, an egret flaps its wings.

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Destination

Crowded terraces brave the Pershore Road
Bare breasted to the traffic, spilling wheely bins
Grimy with diesel.
Hot sun glares off bus screens and car windows
They line the streets like stunted limes.

Away from the road rush,
The speeding up of air through compressed space
The district criss-crosses, radiates, wraps around
Rows of gardenless brick, grey gabled warehouses,
Buddleia tapping at the broken windows of ruptured factories
That poured out chocolate and flour, once.
They lead you back on yourself in a maze, a square, a circle, the
centre.
The district squats, stops you, seizes your wrist,
This is journey's end.
This is everything we have.

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