

Conversations with Ghosts on the A13

Lights strung in chains
Against the darkness
Windows in broken lines
Old net curtains, haloes
Of nicotine-stained lampshades
Curry houses and
Perfect fried chicken
Salt marks across brick faces
Still puddles, depthless
Endless black
Mirrors the sky, mirrors
The grey of the clouds
The extravagant carnival
Of Canary Wharf
Flung back at the ground
At the puddles
The yellowing
Of the fluorescent tube in her kitchen
Eyes staring out
Onto the endless action,
The nothing going on
As the cars pass
The washing up and
The music of another night
The silence
Waiting, and not one word
Not goodbye
The silence
That destroys
That is the rejection of everything
The twisted double-helix
The shape, the voice
The thought
Of never looking back
The motion never made
The refusal never given
The nothing
The void of the heart
That opens up
The roads and the railways
Escaping from the centre of herself
To start again
Lights slipping by
Frictionless dreams slipping past
Behind glass, mute,
Easy
Televisions, vivid colours
Leaked across box rooms
The woman by the window
Staring out,
Reaches for another plate
Another place
Escaping cars
A long train of lights

Like stars on a veil
A brass band at a wedding
Wanting it all to be real
And always like this
The drama of nothing
Acted over every window
Cracked skin of palm
Held to the eyes and
Crazy with the paths of conversations
Radio waves
Telephones
Disappointment
Turned into lust
Into the eyes of the billboard posters
Staring up through the wires
The windows and the concrete
The tin dragon at Westferry
Guarding the memory
Of the lost
The hollow hoardings at the junction
A shape of a building
With nothing inside
Colours kiss in rain-soaked asphalt
Electric signs
Towers, promised bodies
Of Titans, their sick light
Irradiating the future
As it once looked
Market forces under the eye
Of a dead sun;
Not anymore
The helicopter at Whitechapel
Hawksmoor's sick laugh
And the call to prayer
Shakti hanging from the corner
Of a shabby council house
The right thing done, as announced
On videotapes, a hill of corpses
Smearred red meat and fragments of bone
Glass, buckled yellow poles
And the floor risen up to a hole
The new sucking hole
Of God
Nothing but death and fantasy
And division
Children with sweets and flowers for soldiers
And democracy
And women in headscarves
Abused by drunken men at bus stops
Confess, viciously, vicariously
What we will do to the camera
The world wants to know
Our power to write ourselves
Into boxes, Chinese boxes
Ever smaller
Into heroism, bigotry

We don't want more
We don't want to see
We don't want any alternative
We want
The fast answers of the flesh
The pictures, whispers, comfort
Text messages
A disembodied fury of desire
Thrillingly simplified
Waiting, bathing the pavement
The minarets, the altars
Of the closed churches and synagogues
The cars parked on dead end streets
The benches by the Lea
A tube stop, chosen at random
Letting the trains run by
The fervent hope of something more
Unsaid but present
Expressed in lips
And hidden blood
Sweetened to honey
Memories in demolished brick
The old yards, factories
Lorries larded with whale fat
Everything gone rebuilt
And retold:
New stories of what we always were
What we never did
Our denial
Your silence
The shattering of that bridge
Of hope, the spine leading back
To touch, the thrill of meaning
The possibility of writing anything
Gone
And instead nothing
The cold leak of the traffic
Heading East
Unseen stars in red shift
The entropy and the cars
Under light after light
Laddering the darkness
But never heating it

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