

Sermons Are For The Silent

“This country has gone to the dogs”

says the old man

on the midnight bus with misted windows

bustling breath releasing silent scripture

“This country has gone to the dogs”

says the old man

not with a bald head

tattooed in a bulldog barking British

but a beautiful Japanese immigrant

who found a new home there

in Manchester

in Britain

discovering the identity of a nation

and its violent voice

lumbering rhetorical cliché

gifted with bus pass retirement

generation passing into generational dissonance disorder

but the I

that is my

voice

subdued within public transport's ecosystem

in awe of a cliché I'd detest

borne by an anomaly

the sacred immigrant engrained

in the barking mad mundanity

an audience natters about the established old man

and the woman opposite

in her little black distress

exorcising bile

not of the mind but of the stomach

narcissus' puddle pooling on the floor

of the West Didsbury 147

whispers from the dissenting squashed seated

whispers from swaying youths standing not still

whispers from the translucent window words

wretches bring up the by-product

of spirits hanging over the body

even when they've been drained

attentive medic claws at her pendulum plaits

reassuring the girl

by old man's measurement

“We're nearly There”

combatant and medic shuffle to exit at There

which wasn't a hospital armed in stomach pumps

but another bus stop

with another advert

of old McDonald and his farm of fickle beasts

the old man speaks

popping coat collar laden with honourable badges

that all talk in tongues

red flowers remember

was my deciphering

“If it was me in that state, you'd all want me off the bus”

all whispering mouths silenced in silent soliloquys

all tense bodies dancing in decayed dignity

only stabilising yellow bars speak their red truths

STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP

fingers gripping too tight to try

the bell doesn't ring

no one rises from their corners

a space where screams go unheard bloats

and then the ding-ding

voices of my own bodily badges sing

my choir of questions

“Does he think that because he's an immigrant?”

“Does he think that because he has generational dissonance disorder?”

“Does he think that because he's subversively sassy?”

“Does he think that because he's all of his interests and inspirations?”

“Does he think that because he believes we all voted Leave?”

he leaves

muttering in broad cultural dimension

after the engine coughs for attention

and brakes squeal like skewered comrade pigs

Orwell lecturing in the back bedroom of my mind

“Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech that you are used to seeing in print”

this country has gone to the bulldogs

