

Springtime in an American town

John Tottenham

Published online: 4 June 2010

© The Author(s) 2010. This article is published with open access at Springerlink.com

Why is it that I only ever notice my gut in motel room mirrors?
Perhaps obesity is contagious in these parts, the natural result
of pride and fear. And why am I not noticed here? Barely
branded by sidelong glances in one dead-eyed town after another
by a populace whose chief talent lies in the ability
to instantly distrust anything they don't understand.
The feeling is mutual.

I have passed like a ghost through your cities,
scavenging for scraps of the past. I have rambled, ambled,
bled your cities dry, arriving at the end of the trail of trash,
weighed down on the great white way,
on tired streets of dead blood-red brick.

And I have found the old buildings,
in all their purity, perfectly preserved, in paint
on the sides of new buildings
in towns like silences
that need not be filled.

And there is nothing left anywhere
that hasn't been turned over and undermined
by overawareness. For in this tarnished day and age
the luster of everything must be restored
and celebrated with meat and sugar,
and a soundtrack of feigned emotion.

J. Tottenham (✉)
Los Angeles, CA, USA
e-mail: otiosity@sbcglobal.net

There's a lot of ugly laughter in this world:
stranded in other people's reality;
trapped by freedom and vexed
by pointless innovations in a homogeneity
somehow born of distance and inconsistency.
Discovering myself again
as a useless member of society:
belonging nowhere, only wishing
I wasn't wishing
I wasn't here.
Meditating, amid ruins,
upon the ruin of myself,
realizing that the decline of all I hold dear
can be traced to the exact moment
that I first became
aware.

Open Access This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial License which permits any noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and source are credited.