

Less Than Strangers

Traveller, any age, any gender, any look. Insecure. Anyone.

It's a busy morning on the underground, swarms of bodies flood the tubes, in suits, in dresses, in clothing from the night, the ones who are going to bed, and the ones who are off and see London as their playground for the day. The doors of the tube close. The train departs. The Traveller steps on the platform. The previous train took the majority of the stations passengers, 1/5 remain. The traveller turns right upon entering the platform, they know which door to enter.

Traveller It's morning.
Eyes are heavy, breath is dense and no one cares.
I'm next to them, on either side, if I speak up I'm penalised.
Shocked looks and startled eyes - "did they just speak?" They think.
But I don't.

Words aren't shared and no thoughts too, lies aren't uttered and neither truths.
It's just silence.
Silence underground. Silence filling tunnels for miles around.

Metal, screeches - a sweet sound
Relieved thoughts and mind's eased,
Calm.

It's coming.
If I just fall forward it's over, it's done.
Thoughts of what if and why.
But it's better to be living, then be witnessed to die.
The gust of wind is toxic, yet feels so good in heat.
Sweat is forming; thoughts are dropping, of faces that I'll meet.
People on their daily trip, the first time for more.
It's sad, it's lonely, no one will speak - on this journey I endure.

I'm on. It's tight.
The silence grabs you by the throat and holds you down.
You want to sit but now you stand.

Who am I? Who am I to you?
Are you thinking of the night I've had or the day that lies in wait?
Can you see me?
Can you see the choices that I make,
Are you thinking of the lives I'll save or the paths that I'll take?
Are you thinking?
About the times I've cried or the times I've laughed?
Are you thinking about me at all?
It's daft? Isn't it?
Like,
You're an assassin, aren't you?
Blade's out guns blazing - contract in hand.
You've entered your office,
Mean looks sharp takes, everyone you hate.
There's Phil from sales- smug fuck, he's your first take.
You smile. For real! It's there you smile!
Cus' for a moment you are free, for a moment you are hostile.
But, you're here with us. You return.
You look up for a moment, "3 stops", and then gone.

You,
You don't know who I am, or what I do.
You sit there, eyes distant, glued to the air.
The girl opposite is the same, plugged in, eyes drained, foot tapping to, what?
I won't know, and neither will she - she'll forget by the time she's off.
So, who are they? Who are they to me?
Lives that appear so quickly, and then they're gone.
It's strange, I think.
That you will not know,
The pain I've got or the joy beneath eyes.
You won't know,
The times I've had to fight, or run.
Run from the bullies, from the shadows in the room, from the voice that I've made.
Or run,
Run from the junk food, from the beer after work, from the lack of exercise.
It's real.
For me.
But not for you.

I am physical to you,
'The figure on the tube' - "They wore those shoes I like".
But, that's it we're through.
Potential lovers gaze with flickering eyes, but won't speak - it's taboo.
The drunken man is half asleep, judgement follows too.
The business'mam sees her face behind the passed out man.
She smiles.
I'm pretty, I'm mean, I'm strong – let life throw what it's got!
Whilst the drunk man beneath her, thinks he's had his lot.

You wonder how I got my scar or why my hair ain't neat.
Of the way I move my mouth or if my scent smells sweet.
You wonder why my jeans are ripped, you wonder what I am?
I'm a taxman, I'm a judge, I'm a porno cameraman,
I'm a thief, I'm a priest, I'm the one who sells dogs,
I'm a nurse, I'm a rock-star, I am who I am.
You don't know.
You don't care. That's it, and neither do I,
We're less than strangers, we can't be met with an eye.
And now, now your chance has gone,
You won't know today, who I am.
Because this is my stop.