



Urban Death & Beauty

It is 2018; the early May Bank Holiday weekend in England, and Spring is sprung as I write.

The News is bad however (when isn't it)

There have been shootings and stabbings in London, and in other Cities. Young people with their lives ahead of them. Denied. Grieving Parents and paragraphs written. Words spoken.

There is Beauty in the Urban Environment; in some places more than others.

I always missed the Countryside in the City in Winter, but in Spring, in the Urban, there is sunlight and birdsong, blossom and leaf; there is hope.

Some areas remain barren however, bereft of nature's sparkle, or blighted by decay or debris or disorder.

These areas often jostle or nestle next to up and coming areas; more affluent, more leafy, perhaps more gentrified, which seem to boast and caw their advantages to people, who must travel through to work or home in their lesser neighbourhoods.

There is Beauty in the Urban Environment; there is the swirling colourful dress or skirt, the dancing yellow tipped butterfly on the breeze, the new Mural, but is there enough, is there enough to make the Perpetuators stop and think, think before or 'Gasp in admiration.

The 'Gasp' of Beauty seen, that stops a person in their tracks. (sometimes has to be taught to be looked for, or to be listened out for, or to be heard from within)

The beauty that is more easily seen in Nature; in the Countryside than in a concrete jungle.
The beauty that is more easily seen in Humans' good and most crafted works, music and deeds.

Art Adorns our Prison Walls

(although Jim Morrison saw it as anodyne when he wrote "Through art they confuse us and blind us to our enslavement. Art adorns our prison walls, keeps us silent and diverted and indifferent.")

Art can alert us too; can re-awaken us, and can momentarily make us 'Gasp', and in this context, can help the individual to stop and think, and perhaps say "No" to peer pressure, or Peer expectation, or to Pride, or simply to start to evaluate.

But that is all very well to say, for without opportunity, without education or release, or a window to the wonders of the world, where is the will or the reward?

Are the Urban Skies visible?
Are they full of birdsong?

or are they overshadowed by high rise, high density Corporate greed and development?
are the skies crisscrossed with vapour trails of the rich and the fleeing?

is the air bountiful and abundant/ fragrant as the orange blossom scenting across the water,
or is it particulate riddled with yet more corporate greed and poor political seed?

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I used to shudder when I learnt that Heseltine had offered up trees for Toxteth's woes, in answer to the riots in Liverpool 8 in the early nineteen eighties, when jobs and opportunity were what was needed. but indeed they both are required; investment and nature.

The hope and the Nature; they both become beauty and the solution, and can evolve and grow.

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/opinion/michael-heseltine-was-there-in-liverpools-hour-of-need/10018378.article>

<http://www.tdag.org.uk/> (trees and design action group)

http://imagination.lancs.ac.uk/activities/Urban_Futures

<https://treesforcities.org/benefits-urban-trees/>

A lady paints a textile pattern on a floral blue dress, and the finished clothing on a young girl causes a young man to stop, gasp and swoon as she passes by on the street.

If there is hope, beauty and gasp in the urban order,

on its horizon,
in its air,

then there is the chance for change and awakening, and if needed, re-awakening - the Individual's Satori.

Until love is written and read (and not just the World's woes or the Newspaper Editor's paymasters' agenda or political negativity),

Until the politics stop promoting fear, and instead provide autonomy to, and funds for, Regions and Boroughs, and provide real opportunity for light and renewal,

good design,
good planning,

locally lead,

bounteous parks and gardens, maintained and funded providing local work and pride.

clean air:

The things that the Corporate and the governing elite have in their gated communities, their escape in the country.

Until we bail out the Urban, as we did the banks.
Until we reward beauty, and fund the Art that makes us gasp.

Until we support the City farm, the Allotments and give the chance for food to be grown, and seen to be grown,

Until we fund our Schools and teachers and parents, violent early death will continue, and next time it could be your child or grandchild..

Until we fund our Services; our Police, our Community Services which provide employment and support, as well as work to train for or aspire to, violent early death will continue, and next time it could be your child or grandchild..

Until we provide beauty, in all its forms, to 'sunlight out' the LED screens of irresponsible urban myths fear and fashion, and allow the individual to grow, and follow their own path, and think for themselves, and even have the self confidence to escape or move away, then the stabbings, the shootings and the bullying will continue.

Until we remove the prohibition on drugs, de criminalise them and take their potential profit, their regulation, production and supply from criminals and gangs, and Transform them to legal varied more healthy, safe tested offerings, then the degradation of communities will continue.

We need trust in our local council, power and funding, and a certain amount of de-regulation, to allow local initiatives, some of which may well fail or fall foul of health and safety or social norms, but the ultimate decision must be for the local populace who vote in, or vote out, but who could at least for once, see words and promises, tangible and happening.

If our politicians continue NOT to facilitate the changes required, then they need to go, or be replaced.

We need to reclaim the 'gasp' of Nature's beauty in the Urban, and that can only happen with funded schemes from the root up, not 'trickle down' which has been shown to be a trick.

It is often the small local group funded initiative, that helps to make the difference, to involve others around them, not just to art-revive and regenerate an area for Developers to move in, gentrify and ruin (by pricing out workers and creatives) -the very thing they moved in to be involved in, but for local people to have affordable housing. It is the small Co-ops, art and family groups, housing associations and infrastructure, that along with some well allocated released capital and property, that can really revitalise a Community.

Buildings need to be released, space made available, roads removed sometimes, green space introduced where flowers, birds, bees and ultimately people can flourish.

Where does the money come from? the same place as QE is the answer, but direct funding into the regions and cities, for structure and projects, as chosen and decided locally, providing both work and involvement. (Not QE going to the already financially viable in the City, in the hope it trickles down, as it doesn't) —trickle trickl trick.

Politicians and the controlling elite, leave people behind economically and socially at their Peril, as when the survivors do catch up with them, Mercy will not be foremost in their mind.

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<http://positivemoney.org/?s=QE>

<http://positivemoney.org/2018/02/latest-wealth-data-shows-disproportionate-gains-rich-era-qe/>

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