

## MESSENGERS

*Our hero has been blown up on Paddington Station. This is what he experiences next.*

### 8. NOWHERE, NO TIME, NOBODY

An airbus leaves the tarmac at Heathrow.  
The airbus climbs, then banks above the curves  
of reservoirs, estates and motorways.

The flight's first seconds: focus on a car.  
It shrinks. It loses colour, shape and name.  
The plane's high side frames heaven's scudding clouds.

Dissociation creeps in with the smell  
of air recycling. Muffled, mannered clicks  
precede announcements. Strangers look around.

They sit inside a nowhere, metal-skinned.  
A glance reveals accoutrements of ease.  
Brains atune to frequencies of dream.

Colours drain to pastel, turps-thinned hues.  
The conversation's formal; taking turns.  
The plane slides out beneath a brilliant dome;

the ground is cloud. A solid shape of nil.  
A Dead Sea floating calmly in the sky.  
Its ceiling can't be seen. For there is none.

Fierce light has blurred its features, smoothed its skin  
except where beams thrust down from who-knows-where.  
All is still. There is no thing to move.

You see this place In Japanese cartoons,  
also in filmed depictions of the crazed,  
and mornings after snorting lines of coke,

when phoney skies refuse to tell the truth  
and won't come clean unless you do it too  
and animals and church bells split your head.

You push away this bag of motley tricks

and gaze instead at what sits at your side.  
Despite the interference, it gives grace.

It neutralises traffic in the brain.  
It stills the wanton fury of the nerves.  
It leaves the heart alone to do its work.

People float away on g & ts.  
The tourist cabin loses outlined form.  
Somehow you bathe in sulphur springs of light.

Some of the briefly dead - now quite alive  
facing banks of microphones and lights  
blinking at the figures on the cheques -  
describe their sampled dying in such terms;  
they stood and watched their bodies disengage  
from fuel-lines; a bomber in mid-air,  
supplying who-knows-what for who-knows-why,

then, watched as all the skullcaps mushroomed, coined,  
then turned to stars outlining Bulls and Goats  
or roads that thread a valley seen from hills.

Then, twisting otter-like in middle air  
they viewed the ceiling crack. The sky above  
which – as from planes – was bitter Manga blue  
with rays that hoist like lifts up to their source  
while Southern voices said: " Move to the light".

Arse over tit: that's always been my way.

And if I shove the reference aside -  
the tatter and demallion of a book,  
a film, a song, a poem, painted walls –  
a million more crash in to take their place,  
to soak my life, then warm it to the boil,  
dissolving what is squarely in my sight.

I watched my ( soul ? another self ? a twin ?  
an essence squeezed like sludge from rancid milk ?  
my migraine – like a gathering thunderstorm  
objectively displayed and nullified? )  
float up above me, through the surgeons' masks  
as they discussed the test match score from Lords.

Something's leaving. I'm trapped inside the flesh:  
that component of my is-ness I despise.

The stuff projecting meaning, which I crave,  
(those unrelated thoughts and nervous tics),  
turns round and waves while scything like a shark;  
its' piggy eyes reviewing what it's used  
to fuel the blood-scent path to its next kill.  
It tips its hat ( the shark is well-attired ),  
pats tie, checks shirt and briskly buffs its shoes –  
a spring is in its flight ( the shark can fly ).  
Its colour seems to wink. It disappears.

The doctors now talk Chelsea's loss of form.

A voice cuts through.

“ Turn out that bloody light.”

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