

O seasons, O cities
By John Xiros Cooper

I

There must be perfect cities where shadows
are strong like buildings. Imagine rushing out
to the boundless possible, past the dented cans
the dog-shit and the crows. Imagine how free
you'll be when the fear comes and uncovers you
without a murmur. Remember May? It received us
with buds and jolts. It came one day at a time
disturbing the shades of that village in Devon
when you stood in the road turning round
and round, waving your arms at the sky.

Confused spatterings of rain at Hebden Bridge.

The song-birds fidgeted in the tree-tops
while we searched among the graves for something
lost. Where have you been all afternoon? Here.

Clapped down under an adjective.

The graves were empty; they left blank
oblongs like chords sounding memory.

II

Our train rushed south towards the queer sunset.
Out there the distant hills seemed raw like old scars
newly opened. Your words were little gusts
of ire over stones feeding your appetite for voodoo
gods as you dazzled for an hour in the glare
of that green space. Irked by a look, time divided us
into stark wit with rooms. The elms at Court Green
were sounding cataracts. Dusk drenches them still.
They are dank like the tongues of dead animals.

As the night shades licked their way through the city
patches of private hair were exposed in private lairs.
When everything that can fall has fallen, don't fret,
the wounds soon dry. Vodka and fags for the burial
of the living. Blessings of drink and smoke bring stupor
and the brazen blare of traffic on Euston Road
imparts when still beautiful the hunger
for fingers & tongues, the taste for perfect cities.