

But if (In response to *What If* by Andrew Motion on the side of the Hallam Building)

O travellers

Who pause your journey here
prepare yourselves
to climb up from Sheaf Square
and wonder at
the monolith that bears

in square cut white
a bold sans serif script
fashioned with care
intended to uplift,
to prompt our dreams
what if....?
what if....?

.....but if,

as you rise up
amidst steel and concrete
strewn as if by
some great accident,
you'll maybe think
of those that are now spent

who toiled their days
lungs clogged, throats burred,
limbs tempered
hands roughened and made hard
from beating out
the ploughshare and the sword.

From the ether
we now are ruled and fed,
we capture air
see it populated.
While we may dream
our future is connected.

Paul Carnell