

Seen in Sheffield

This is what boys are for! To strip
to the hip-sagging baggy pants;
shrug, slouch, then somersault to the brim
of the fountain; cat crawl the wall,
cartwheel, lazy-vault a stone plinth,
bend knees and flat foot it free-style,
down the stepped seven levels
of stone slabs sliced by blades of water.

This is what boys do: brace
on the handrail of city steps, spring
so that two feet lunge up to stand
on the next rail. Let go, drop back, land
squarely in size 12s on the pavement.
Stroll back to the crowd, unflinching,
unsmiling, like no one's watching. Cool
as this cutting edge curve of water on steel.

This is what public sculpture's for: to mirror
these moves. This is what public spaces are for.
This is what this Saturday afternoon's for:
sliding down stone bannisters on one hip,
September not quite here. This
is what boys are: poems freed in air
above the sandwich wrappers in Sheaf Square,
break-falling among pigeons.

Poetry in The Bath

Snuggled in the heart of the pub,
held in the crook of the street's arm,
we bed down, hot as the fat
sausage rolls they serve in the bar.

The door yawns gently inwards.
The board we made to fit the hatch
is beginning to lose its seal. Poems
rise and ring over a hubbub of pub talk.

One summer night, Morris dancers
played their clackety clack
on the pavement outside.
We almost gave up. Not quite.

When time is called, we find
some lines have stayed, like friends,
to cheer us, soothe or sting us,
or sing on the lonely road home.

(Writers in The Bath has been running for 7 years in The Bath Hotel)

Cora Greenhill