

The Captain Cook

There are places that resist the future,
where the notion of regeneration is nothing
but the stinking corpse of a dead pigeon
rotting on a carpeted stairway, where
the heavy air of a summer afternoon
settles in dust, caught by a sticky stain
on a bar that hasn't served anyone, nor been
wiped, in a year; where a circle of pinpricks
marks the spot where a cyclops eye once hung
and polaroids of the good times lie scattered
randomly, here and there; one snap beside
an upturned chair, another under the pink bow
from a bouquet, a third propped on a shelf
next to a slimming book and a novelty cock;
where light shafts crawl across analogue faces
patiently bleaching the fashions, the colours
and all of their tightly held distinctions.

We pick through its grime-thick past
not knowing who drank here, who brawled,
who won the meat draw, who sold wraps
of coke and weed in the bogs, who bought
which whore for a night onboard his ship;
the tidal river has carried them away to escape
the telechanging world, they are deathless
though something remains or returns, pressed
to our skins, ear drums, clinging to wood grain
of a submerged wreck, dressed in slop,
as we move, they entangle our feet, clamour,
'Stay, drink with us, have another swift one!
We have stories and have ye' heard this joke.'
And I am a dogfish skulking through brevity
supping upon the current's historic sludge.
When we re-surface into daylight the sun-
dragon breathes on my face, hands, time.

Bob Beagrie

