

Rubble by Ellen Moran

Ellen Moran speaking

Local stone wears the landscape with pride, remembers
when it fortified confident castles, the bricks of an ancient,
barricaded boundary - when quarrymen's hands hauled it
into walls, carved its corners into squareness
and eventually sheltered inside.

Sandstone grains tell stories
thick with pebbly memories.
They construct quiet cottages,
comfortable communities
luckily too far from the city to be
taken over by commuters.
Too far from fashionable coast-lines
to get eaten by suburbs;
thoughtless second-home-owners won't corner any
immoral market here.
These buildings are protected
by their own isolation.

In the heart of the village
family lines are tracked back
to the great-grandparents
of residual residents in cosy pubs.
They meet with smiles the blow-ins

who intend to make the place their own. And when the
summer rabble of instagrammers took photographs at
Crammel Linn,
clad in fluorescent bikini chic
leaving litter on sandstone crags
they came together to close the roads,
and protect their lands.

Where i'm from, communities can't conserve much. The city
stacks cement so high
that the sky is punctured by colossal concrete - Trees are
anchored by paving slabs,
roots like pipes sucking up the the civic sweat of
professionals paid to build upon the rubble.
Each trip outside seems more isolating.
Club bangers blast in 24 hr sales-rooms,
edging past backs in Tesco Express,
delirious students roam glass-splattered streets groping
bottles of wine
I'm ready to quit the comfort of concrete.

No one nods when we pass each other
in crowded parks of compacted grass -
our distance isn't defined by proximity.
And every day as streets blow more empty with plastic bags,
pvc and cans
we stay back, masked, and
remotely crumble inside, to rubble.

And so as a Covid-blow in I drift in,
with luck, mobility and just enough money - swap traipsing
through town for trudging through mud, swap hordes of
commuters for herds of sheep, swap screaming sirens for howling
wind.

And on my back I carry rocks
returning to where they were first cut.

Foraged from the city I arrive,
remembering rubble,
assured not to be a tourist in the rural
becoming instead a brick to build.

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