

and this constant waterfall of rain that's washing down the black pane
unfocussing the weightless sulphured mirror-scene of
plastic ketchup bottles grouped on floating half-light tables and
our faces blurred by steam from thick frothed mugs of coffee
somehow ratifies -

I see again two figures stood
- some distance apart -

in the soft grey implosion of Forster Square station on New Year's Eve.

Then one, that is me, starts to walk;

I walk head bowed among the ruins,
the fallen roofs and columns strewn,
and you watch me abstractedly.

CHARNEL GROUND

[It's late afternoon;
and if I close my eyes tight

I could almost believe in that cliché-vision,
long-lost Midland Railway's dim bustle and roar,
shiny red trains bringing fire to a smoke-filled hall.

But my eyes are not closed:
a new road skews down hard across
the vacated waste of the railway yard
and above you a pale moon rises low in a thin blue porcelain sky.

It's just ghosts and old dead dreams out there;
and if eyes that once saw with mine won't see
this awesome sky bleed a lilac bruise over Ilkley Moor-

or the rush and froth of the
Wharfe through the valley at dusk then -]

I look at you now, and feel far inside
the tart melancholic
acid-stab of recognition subside
into nothing on recall. Phase-out.

From a cafe in Wakefield we walk down now past
the cathedral and into the rush-hour bus-crawl,
down Westgate
to the station,
one-by-one.