

THE ROAD TAKEN

Kate Ennals

It was dark as we crossed the cattle grid, pulled up the Barrack
Hill, down the other side, around the mini roundabout, drove the
N3 out of Cavan, Virginia, Kells, Navan, Dublin
Spiralling the short-term parking, coming to a stop at the top, and
Flying. Then travelling to the station. The train stopped at
Manchester Piccadilly, a fret of ornate iron and glass suspended;
Industrial, opaque, white bulbs hang in the gloom of winter gloam
Groaning with Northern Asia, Derbyshire, an English winter
Red stone red brick red stone red brick red stone
Rows of city suburbs: Hawkeswood, Stockport, Hazelcroft and the
Price is Right. We disappear into banks of soil and tunnel. Black
Electric light blasts into heaving peaks of green, velvet brown
Soft to touch, sloping down. In the sky, a lisp of blue in leaden
Grey, a flash of Hope, followed by a thrumming cab, to a Sheffield
HOME of blue uniforms, snug around a bosom of pinned identity
My mother in law's tiny marbled legs attached to a nappy, a bib
And tucker. A baby mother. A soft face slack with grace
A momentary greed of interest, forgotten in seconds...then repeated.
Over again. Again. Soon, she tires of not remembering. I go on
Travelling on a train, to London. The carriage lights are dim
There are clicks of zips. Creaks of bags. Whispers of coats taken off
Folded. Murmur of pale blue light. Rain squeezes drops down the
Window pane. I snuggle in the interim for the linger of journey
The in-between. Chesterfield, Derby, Leicester, St Pancras
I walk the marble floor that paves the way to Paris, pass cocktail
Bars, sumptuous shops, silver, gold, chains, and jewels
Glamorous hair, bags and suits, leather, barrels of wine
Down
down
down
to
the Northern line
I wade through a tube of Londoners: a commuter, a son
A daughter, an old man, a student, a worker, a patient, a brother
A sister, an aunt, an uncle, a cousin, an only child, a father
To you, mother: old woman, bright beads for eyes, swaddled in
Pads and yellow rage, hunched, slumped, lost for words, waiting
I take off my coat, sit down. You are my destination.

Kate Ennals