WALKING WITHOUT A DONKEY
for Iain Sinclair

'a dense and diverse city engages people in a particular way. [...]
You could say that people have to engage in a kind of disordering.'
 – Pablo Sendra and Richard Sennett,
 *Designing Disorder. Experiments and Disruptions in the City*'My wager is that by pausing to dwell on and in a particular place,
we may once again know who we are by discovering where we are.'
 – Mark C. Taylor, *Recovering Place*
How well do we think and how do we take photographs
in their many hundreds to know our urban landscape?

How to document the visual experience of experience,
of how cities make us feel and walking makes us feel?

And how do we locate ourselves? I seek the significant
or insignificant equally, delve into forgotten images

which convey and explore the simple ways we forget
moments. What can shift our perception of knowledge

is disclosed by the everyday: taxi lights streaming by,
people chattering, crowded streets, political resonance,

elderly dancers moving slowly in synchronised steps,
using nonvisual senses to reveal what they can’t agree on.

Otherwise overlooked, protest is a method of creative enquiry
into regular patterns of experience between the buildings,

deeper connections to the city and local urban spaces.
Looking at things, getting lost, drinking tea and having fun

stops you feeling like a tourist, whereas gentrification,
advertising and magic produce organized capitalism.

Our city is wonderful, is made for psychological effect
to counteract passive image-dominated consumer culture

through revolutionary acts. I walk with a camera to record
the palimpsest of the streets, uncover hidden histories

and drift away from well-trodden paths to recombine space
and alter awareness. Cut-up elements are re-contextualised

within the shifting history of a cartographic explorer,
recalling memories and impressions, creating multi-temporal

and multi-faceted depictions of feeling that attempt to merge
the literary and artistic work of contemporary practitioners.

Documentary becomes a critical form that everyone can access,
a story expressed through multisensory combinations of sound,

olfaction, taste, and the visual. Much of the twentieth-century
is easily overlooked, was a daydream stroll around academic papers

which answered questions about phenomenon and representation
in urban languages translated into ways of walking and ideation.

For many years I’ve been airdropping into your experiences,
the swirl of the city's ring roads or the headache-inducing vortex

of the tube, your public nightmares and acts of protest,
the random shenanigans of your writing about place. I may

balk at what you have unexpectedly discovered but share your
street level experiences and an interest in the forgotten and unseen.

By shifting perspective slightly I feel invited and strong enough
to watch the seemingly dull geography of everyday slowly unfurl.

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