

in the hallways
through the shadows
sometimes I almost notice
glimpses of her, my younger self
that forgotten thing that weighs on her
as that forgotten place draws near to her
shoulders stooped, head down, lips pursed
in this near-invisibility, I recall
her body holds the form of it, the thing
she holds as I walk, almost seeing,
in this near-dark in-between,
through a door I can't open
she disappears again
so I take the form of
her and she
of me

— in the main artery of the metropolis
— passed by more people in one day than any other
—
— glimpses, in an even distribution of light
— crumbling in parts
— there's nothing else
— a neglected house gets an unhappy look
— a lot of empty spaces
— moulded, fashioned and burnt
— in a loathsome sort of way
— a touch of brightness
— floods the building with light
— a lamp burning in the window
— an appearance of stone
— crumbling in parts

in the hallways

sometimes

a glimpse of

that forgotten thing weighing on her

approaches

shoulders stooped, head down

in near-invisibility

her body

in this near-dark in-between

she disappears

of the metropolis

— glimpses

crumbling in parts

— there's nothing else

a neglected house gets an unhappy look

empty spaces

fashion

a touch of brightness

an appearance of stone

crumbling in parts

hallways

a glimpse

of light

crumbling in parts

approaches

— there's nothing else

stooped

in near-invisibility

empty spaces

the form of it

— a touch of brightness

a door that can't open

disappears

Sources: an endnote poem

Speculative,ⁱ

in the main artery of the metropolis,ⁱⁱ

*passed by more people in one day
than any other,ⁱⁱⁱ*

an even distribution of light,^{iv}

glimpses,^v

crumbling in parts—^{vi}

there's nothing else.^{vii}

*A neglected house gets an unhappy
look,^{viii}*

a lot of empty spaces,^{ix}

a god-trick,^x

moulded, fashioned and burnt—^{xi}

*wonderful, in a loathsome sort of
way.^{xii}*

a touch of brightness^{xiii}

floods the building with light—^{xiv}

artistic decorative treatment.^{xv}

ⁱ Victorian Heritage Database (n.d.) *Nicholas Building*. Viewed 21 August 2024:

<https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/2764>

ⁱⁱ *The Herald* (1926) 'Another milestone passed in the history of Melbourne building construction', *The Herald*, Friday 12 March 1926. Viewed, via Trove, 21 August 2024:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/244059229>

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Herald* (1926)

^{iv} *The Herald* (1926)

^v *The Herald* (1926)

^{vi} Heather Z (2019) 'Deco love', *Trip Advisor*. Viewed 21 August 2024:

https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Attraction_Review-g255100-d7622539-Reviews-Nicholas_Building-Melbourne_Victoria.html

^{vii} Lucie McIntosh, quoted in Janssen, Jordan (2021) 'Nicholas building: a community under threat', *Upstart*, 27 September 2021. Viewed 28 August 2024: <https://www.upstart.net.au/nicholas-building-a-community-under-threat/>

^{viii} Wilder, Billy (1950) *Sunset Boulevard* (film), Paramount Pictures.

^{ix} RedTart1 (2018) 'My must visit sadly in decline' *Trip Advisor*. Viewed 21 August 2024:

https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/ShowUserReviews-g255100-d7622539-r598996173-Nicholas_Building-Melbourne_Victoria.html

^x Doucet, Isabelle, Frichot, H el ene, Gosseye, Janina & Stead, Naomi (2024) 'On disappearance within architectural writing', *Thresholds* (52): 108–117. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/thld_a_00819

^{xi} *The Herald* (1926)

^{xii} Hawks, Howard (1940) *His Girl Friday* (film), Columbia Pictures.

^{xiii} *The Herald* (1926)

^{xiv} *The Herald* (1926)

^{xv} *The Herald* (1926)

It was a strange moment, in the Blindside archive, when I first came across Simone Hine's *Corridor*, as I saw in it some echoes of some of my own lasting preoccupations. This moment of connection across artforms, where you sense that you and another artist might be reaching towards something similar (yet inarticulable) is one of the joys of ekphrasis.

Originally shown in this same building in 2009, this video work asks us to look again at the stairwells and elevators we have just moved through in order to be here in the gallery within the Nicholas Building. Bringing this artwork out of the archive, then, is a repetition of a repetition. In this work, there is the hauntological; there are moments of doubling, moments of almost-sense and near-continuity; and in its atmosphere there is something of the way that time seems to collapse within a space that has stood still—but also shifted with its human and nonhuman occupants—for nearly one hundred years, here in the middle of Naarm.

My short poetic response, *Lightwell*, is a movement into these spatial rhythms, as layers of memory and personal narratives fall away, and the silences expand, leaving a moment where the building might seem to speak. Or perhaps this is just an imagining, fleeting, in the shadows.

You have also each been given a card, which includes a photo I've taken here while working on the piece. On the other side of each is one section of this contrapuntal work, including two pieces of a longer prose poem that I won't be reading today, but which forms part of the overall poem. These fragments can be cut together, but they are also designed to stand alone.

If you've read yours, maybe you'll feel you've heard this before, in a dream or a memory or a moment ago. Liminal spaces can have this effect. The poem also includes lines about this building, from some perhaps unlikely texts, such as the 1926 news article announcing its opening, its Victorian Heritage listing, and some mixed reviews from Trip Advisor. And there are some lines from film noir classics *His Girl Friday* and *Sunset Boulevard*. Like Simone, I think of how our stories and the physical structures around us can echo each other and repeat. I'm curious about what we can see when we keep coming back to the strangeness, especially if we start getting the unsettling sense we weren't meant to belong.