

Byker Wall

*Artists invest in
doing it too neatly across
Byker. A six-year crime
spree located within
its depths provides
hardcore problems.
Flat fall victim – partying
eye witnesses. He got
himself into trouble. Got himself
Earless. Got himself dead.*

Raby Gate

Bill shuffles
early through
Raby Gate,
nods at
pristine glass
fingers
robust panels
and
newly polished
intercom covers
and
tips his cap
at the
silent caretaker.

He passes
pale walls
blue scooters
circle against
cobalt cladding
towards
St. Peter's.

In the
distant sun
behind
fingered cloud
lads

in grey joggers
smoke rooted
on outdoor
stairwells.

Then they are gone
*absconding from
council care
hiding
in heating shafts
back behind bars.*

Empty benches
peel red patches.
Weeds thrust
through
cobbling cracks.
Bill sits
breathless
and
slowly
and
neatly
folds up
his sleeves.

Truant boys
cycle between
unworn hillocks
and squat terraces
porch roofs hang
at shanty-town

angles.

Fine mesh

keeps in

keeps out

pigeons.

Ornate nets

shelter behind

flimsy birch trees

bright red

blue yellow

brick green.

Bill rises

and walks

bent in shade

between

numbered

buildings

lost

among white

Rosa Rugosa

and gravel

car parks.

Backdrop

i

Albion metal work
apes Tyne Bridge.
Peep through
zoom lens at
cultural icons
– heritage
through gaps
and half
bridge arches.

ii

Lime-green trees dapple
silver scrawls old suckers
painted over poisoned
climbers uprooted
tell-tale memories
of green abandon
dark orange patches
over pale brush strokes
graffiti silenced in
unfrequented pathways.

iii

People *live*
within the
wall.

Climb indoors
re-inhabit brickwork
hang off pebbles
with fingernails.

Roped ghosts
whistle down pipes.

Vacant powder-blue
and terracotta
shaded billboards
art-deco eye-glasses
squat against curving
double yellow lines.

The netting slips
the mustard and
peas bolted
the blue hoops hold
nothing but relics.

Down here there are
no rules, make up
your own problems
and get strong!

iv

Against
feathery-green car-part art
waves

on shuttered businesses.

Back to the
black white paint splashes
and *bins for those
extra things
you can't recycle.*

Black gaps,
violent nosings through
railing spikes above
head-height.

Grand with a lick of
gold bird logos –
can they fall
like that echo
landing without talons
on unworn surfaces
dotted
with miniscule
Elder blossoms.

Posters

I am torn between a boy band and a breeze block.
Free street lessons shatter glass in art-leaf patterns.
Grasp paper corners and pull at whitewash dust.
What was isn't street art – a full palette backdrop.

Willow herb and nettles wave in downdrafts.
Blank out words with spare colour spectrums.
Replace with tribe names when no one is watching.

Last year, the men with tattoos smiled and revved with gusto.
The colour of your *Shaddee Grim* makes my mouth water.
Blue peppermint ice cream before they thought it ought to be green.