



They swarmed round her on set. She didn't have a moment to herself. An actress who would not live long in life, but whose films would make her live forever.

**live (1)**

now she's the queen of the town. accompanied by a piss sweat stench. Right chewing wet lettuce on unspectific meat, throbbing head and wine stained teeth, she hopes it's all another dream. The centuries of concrete on a night like this, walls are still real, not trusting the unsuitable for movement, checking the sheeters over cobble stones in shoes

**high street**

The seams between the cupboard walls transmit no light into my tiny room. Sweat droplets sooth my heated skin as I lose my balance, brushing against the sides and right myself, reminded of the fall. He put it up high, above the musty place and no way my feet will touch the ground this time. So I'm perched, claws out waiting for release, but then there is a sound. He thinks too much about what's happening here, when he could take a look and feed me for a change. Does he think I've got something going on in here? Is there a party or does he just suspect I know the way out?

**isolation (2)**

You will respect me  
Got Hackett on my jacket  
Shiver in the cold

**kudos (2)**

**extremism (1)**

90 miles an hour downhill towards a sheer drop. Blood pumping and teeth clenched in anticipation of beating the best. The rush. Commitment is everything, freedom of movement, chasing a thrill. There is no other way, no other life. Just this and now. The cuts, bumps, cracks and tears. Signs of devotion. Faith marked large by this holy mission, this pilgrimage of pain.

**over-crowded (1)**

As he reached up for the handrail, my face was squashed between a backpack and his armpit. Sweat.

**orbital (1)**

Mina awoke twelve days later in a pale green room. In a bed with a patchwork counterpane. This was somewhere new in the complex that she hadn't been taken before. Being a Memmer had a lot of privileges but she was only Second Class. Or at least that had been what the initial test score had said back when she was eleven.

At the Coming of Age rite her parents had been so proud, when her test score indicated that their daughter Carmina Tatangelo, who had never achieved anything of note at Scule, not even in the monthly imagineering expeditions to the Outside, had the propensity for the Brain Pillow. From that day when she was taken away to begin her training, excused from the daily Scule lessons, Mina had not seen her parents. But she remembered they had looked happy. At least that's what the Head Seer at the time had told all the children who were removed.

'Your parents are very proud.'

At his control desk, Seer #132-A+ was beginning to think something must have been wrong with that initial assessment. Could it be that they had underestimated Mina's latent abilities? They had never known anything like what happened the last time Mina was placed in the machine. Some of the colours that orbited around her for the next three days had not been seen for centuries. Had only been passed down in stories. When the colours stopped, still asleep, she was taken out of the machine and bought here, to this lab deep inside the Memory Recognition Institute, to be studied.

For three days the Seers basked in Mina's rainbow glow. They thought for a second to keep it secret, but there are no secrets between Seers.

For twelve days Mina had been scanned and studied and when that revealed nothing they resorted to touching her face with the palm of the hand, an old, half-forgotten magic, something to do with young ones and parents, explained Head-Seer Granding, as she pulled off her white glove and placed her hand on Mina's cheek the first time. The other Seers gasped.

Head-Seer Granding suffered no ill effects. In fact it might even be said that as she serenely walked away a little flush could be seen in her marble complexion, such as had last been seen who knows how many years ago when she was much younger. (...)

...The city as an object with no definite or definable attributes...

In The 'Encyclopaedia Citaacephale', ME4 Writers are trying to capture the essence and nature of the city and life in it, in a collection of creative writing on and around city-ness.

Want some more?  
The collected Encyclopaedia will be available to buy this year from <http://me4writers.wordpress.com> and part issues can be found in the city...

**Encyclopaedia Citaacephale**  
'A city without a head'

**Sampler**

Alienation (1) Alienation (2) Architecture Boredom Bourgeois Bowerly Business Busyness Capital Cathedral Claustrophobic Clone town Consumerism (1) Consumerism (2) Conurbation Commerce Commute Concrete Concrete Jungle Crime Derelict Isolation Desperation Energy (1) Energy (2) Extremism Fashion (1) Fashion (2) Fear Finance (1) Friendship Gentrification Glow Graffiti Haven Homeless Industry Initiative Inhabitation Isolation (2) Jersey-strip Kudo Light Multicultural Metropolis Metropolitan Multicultural Neon Nightclub Orbital (1) Over-crowded Paranoid Park/Parking Police Populous Protest (2) Pollution Queen Republic Revolution Seedy (1) Seedy (2) Stranger Suits Tourist Town hall Transport Traffic Urban Urinal Underclass Wasteland Windows Xenophobia You Youth Zoo





**consumerism (1)**

I want you. My life will be complete with you. My breathing speeds up when I think of you. I can't concentrate on anything except you. It's possible I will die if I can't have you. Life is a four-letter word without you. You get me up in the morning. You give my life CPR and GPS. You put the carrot into my cake. You are everywhere. You block out the sun yet provide its warmth.

You are like the rest. You suck me into your vortex with promises of passion and plenty. You vomit me out the other side with a smirk on your face. You have nothing to give but are willing to take. You offer emptiness, as if a carefully chosen present. You expect me to be grateful. You are still hungry.

I have no energy left to despise you. I should have kept that receipt. I am spent.

**populous (1)**

I used to torture the little people on the isometric island, unleashing an earthquake or destroying their houses in fire or by flood. They would swim frantically for a few moments before their pixels disappeared from my screen. I was supposed to lead them to the land of milk and honey, but it was far more fun to fuck with them for a few hours before flicking the thing off and heading to bed.

I haven't played for years, wonder what they're doing?



**lost (3)**

It had taken Flo quite some time to get out of the apartment. The central locking system had fused all the doors shut when the power was cut. And it *had* been cut. She had dismissed the darkness initially as one of the periodic shutdowns experienced by the good folk of A3Burb when the peddlers had been thinned during the holindow.

Clearly this was not about a lack of leg power in general. Outside The Fugue the grid got thinner for sure but she could hear the trams were running and even Zach would have made it home by now. Besides, he would have called. He always called. If he knew what was good for him. No. The power was off on purpose. They had shared the light for decades and now they were being made to share the darkness too.

Well, so be it. Magnetic locks are no match for a meat tenderiser wielded by a disgruntled Aberdonian. Flo's hair was decorated with a few splinters and smoked slightly as she trudged up Green Lanes to see a certain gentleman. It looked quite becoming in the moonlight but it would have taken a brave chap to have pointed that out under the circumstances.

Green Lanes is known to the whole neighbourhood as a place for the obtaining of the illicit. It led to an abandoned part of town known simply as "Down". It was rumoured that people still lived in there although that may have been to stop teenagers from hanging out beyond parental control. Judging by the standard of the graffiti<sup>1</sup> it occurred to Flo that that gambit had clearly failed.

So much for what "everyone" knew about Down. A thing that hardly anyone knew was that deep in the undergrowth, virtually engulfed by ivy, was a telephone kiosk. This in itself was unusual as they had ceased to exist in most of the nation years since. What made this one unique was that it actually still worked. (...)

<sup>1</sup> Under the so-called "Goldpeg" laws that were gradually adopted in the early '20s under the, then, home secretary Mr Lewisohn, it became legal to write graffiti if the owner of the property had not applied for an exemption certificate or had failed to display it properly. It was seen as a more harmless form of self expression than that which could be retrieved electronically or printed on a page. These were still rigorously censored.

**stranger**

Do you know who I am?

Who are you? Hello Pretty Boy, let's stop listening to your existential drama and get one thing straight. Shall we? Love, like flying, is a popular nightmare. And OK, I'm afraid of heights. But that's a good thing, because there's no safety net.

You are not an angel and I am not a fool.

Flying? You step out and there is nothing there.

Spare me.

Spare me the crowds, the throngs of the aviation field. The fan club. Unaccustomed as you are and all that... Let's return again.

Who am I? I'm here on the ground, not grounded.

Let's get one thing straight, and before we begin. Do you know who I am? I think it interesting that you can say with such certainty that I am a coward.

You are the one who wants to fly. Right?

So what's keeping you?

Spare me. Spare me the bullshit.

Spare me the words. If I want to take off, I don't need your baggage weighing me down.

I fly solo.

Just. Spare me. I am not a stopgap, to keep you grounded.

Go Fly.



**migration**

Caged pigeons can't fly south since they ate the bread from cities. I think the tall buildings confuse them. Lured by the smell of rotting decadence, thrown to the kerb, they find themselves entranced by reflected surfaces, never realising that their wings have been clipped.