

## Prologue

On this late January morning the air hangs thick with fog  
shrouding the peaks of the tower blocks on the  
peripheries

as they fade into nothing

they seem they could go on forever

I squat down and run the tip of my finger along a crack.  
Its ragged edge is fluid from the water; mossy patches  
feel like soft skin.

Here in the graveyard, last season's bewildered  
hollyhocks bloom and wither together. A chorus of wet  
footsteps glisten on the damp concrete. I'm not sure at  
first if I'm seeing fresh footprints resting on the smooth  
surface, freshly embossed by the rain, or something  
much older, embedded, revealed to me by the rain for  
the first time.

I walk among them to see, and the ground whispers to me as my feet meet it.

My only constant is that every piece is cracked. I trace my many lives in fissures and breaches.

Tread carefully here, observe the changing textures, and walk with me in time. My concrete scars hold secrets that would disturb you.

Tread carefully here, my uneven territory has a certain rhythm. Meet me here, or you'll trip. Walk with me; keep going until you hit something solid. Union awaits.

Today I'm watered, this morning's raindrops sliding down my edges. I let the puddles slip through so the earth could breathe; a trickle of nourishment.

I sigh with wet dust and industrial life. I wheeze through this cavity, brimming with pebbles and shells. Springtime stirs between flushes of debris.

I touch tender green shoots and wonder which are moving with the seasons and which have been here all winter. I wonder if any are disorientated by the change in weather, as the hollyhocks are.

I burst from the seams; life breaks through botched incisions. I put down roots, make a home, rupture.

The ones that must come out, in the end, are those that grow too big; those that threaten to blow this crack open and expose my human kin beneath.