

Three Poems from Mr Fox

- I. Atelier 1*
- II. The Argo*
- III. Bon Chic, Bon Genre*

Atelier 1

I am a lost soul. The last bastion of something that was and never again will be. From whence I came I do not know. O Providence guide me as I go. I walk alone in desolation, a silent slave to lamentation. Wandering aimlessly through this world, a past lives in me I cannot tell. Must life remain forever this way: A whispering wind to tickle the senses? A man, myself, trapped between the fences?

I reach the bank. The tide has turned. Submerging pasts and unveiling futures, time is a fluvial contraction bathed in pewter. This is Kafka's metamorphosis in motion. But my salvation lies across the ocean, in a place where corporeal and wild run together, where ruins call and grand boulevards beckon, where the fading poplars hark of heaven. And when the statues stare and the gargoyles gesture, the waiting river reveals her measure. I catch my breath and make the leap, landing atop the bridge with swollen feet. Pistons fire and engines swell, and the sweet fumes of essence fill my cells. Chatty locusts sway the leaves until the sunrise birdsong morning brings.

At dawn Lutece appears a world apart as Keats' ode to Grecian art. Though no urn compares to the parish Sulpice, its tower undone marks a story unwritten and shows its truth in painted omission. Winding about through street and through *rue*, I am shepherded by an Elysian hue. Mere metres from the Gardens' lawn I cross des Champs and J. Chaplain. I tap the door and ring the bell to pass within a secret well.

A soul once lost but now is found, I bask again on hallowed ground. My youthful eyes rest in sleep whilst counting Alexander's sheep. An old man I can see it still: A candle shining from the sill. In its flame a ballet bright, and at its core a city light. Memories fade but one fragment remains, which Genevieve sings softly a refrain:

*Such is Paris of might unleashed.
Not merely a dream but a moveable feast.*

The Argo

An ancient bridge spans River Cam
Closer still to pool and hollow;
Where waters living flourish land
A song sweeter chirps the swallow.
Right ships at sea leaves float a'breeze
Like waves and odes and auguries.
Their echoes swell through beechwood trees
The truest midnight rosaries.

Within this place of stone and gown
I chart the clouds and think of one:
Who was he that did dream to roam
The undying skies and cosmos?
A scion once to Isaac's crown
And Cambridge's favourite son,
The starry night he calls his home.
His vessel? It was the Argo.

Bon Chic, Bon Genre

I said, « *Bonjour, madame. Ça va?* »
A girl with fine eyes green,
« *Bah ouais,* » through smirk her curt reply.
Deeper pools I've never seen.

In that moment my heart was struck,
Her voice French and low.
« *T'es américain?* » was her demand,
Her skin as white as snow.

« *Texan, en fait,* » my cool return.
A true *bon chic* heiress,
She giggled, stood and walked away.
Still no luck in Paris.