

## **Walking to Wapping/Walking with Angels**

What follows is the written script of a 3 hour walk I conducted to Wapping commissioned by Jules Wright of the Wapping Project in April 2001.

### **Angels**

Anna (character in Patrick Marber, *Closer*)

Walter Benjamin

Jorge Luis Borges

Italo Calvino

Michel de Certeau

HD

Luce Irigaray

Larry (character in Patrick Marber, *Closer*)

Kabakov

Patrick Marber

George Perec

Jane Rendell

Michel Serres

Patrick Susskind

### **prologue: the passing place of angels**

**Jane Rendell:** My interests are located at the cross roads of disciplines where certain ways of doing things get called into question, and a change of direction is called for. This is a place where messengers meet, and where their messages are welcomed, ignored or distained.

Within angelology, the angel is 'a spirit or heavenly being who mediates between the human and divine realms'. Put simply, angels are messengers. They shuttle in-between. Referencing the figure of the angel as a messenger moving back and forth between worlds, allows me to articulate various aspects of the angelic as they emerge between everyday life and critical reflection from prepositions to perfume.

Angels are figures of transformation. In their status as flux, as spirit and matter, they challenge traditional modes of representation and offer opportunities to think space and time differently.

In the walk to follow, the angel provides an emancipatory impulse, allowing movement 'between' places, times, people, things and ideas. As a creative tool, the angel works as a metaphoric device for moving between across disciplinary boundaries such as architecture, art, critical theory, feminism. My interest in angels does not really deal with angel scholarship but rather the role of angels as messengers and ability to negotiate in-between-ness. The angel is for me a mode of writing and of story telling.

The angel has appeared in the work of a number of philosophers, namely Luce Irigaray, Walter Benjamin and Michel Serres, and we shall be encountering their version of the angelic as we make our way to Wapping. Each one raises a different aspect of 'between-ness' where the figure of the 'angel' as a metaphor allows ways of imagining new spatialities, temporalities and socialities.

Thinking space through the figure of the angel or the between suggests a number of possibilities. First that our focus on architecture should be towards building types where exchange takes place in the form of words, money, items, letters – such as banks, pubs, libraries, shops, post offices, shops, as well as the figures associated with exchange such as couriers, vehicles, guards. Second that we should consider the kind of architectural elements associated with facilitating and/or blocking movement, most obviously paths, stairs, doors, walls, ceilings and windows.

Thinking time in terms of the angel presents another series of possibilities. First that certain kinds of places have, at special moments in history and according to seasonal and diurnal changes, a kind of 'charge' or an atmosphere. This is also true of materials, particularly at times of transformation due to temperature change, and of the four elements of earth, fire, water and air. Second, it is worth looking out for places where various kinds of time meet. These might be crossroads or interchanges where past, present and future come together, or places where we are presented with a choice about the way forward, such as a fork in the path, or even where a newer intervention creates an interesting juxtaposition with its historical context. Third, and in terms of history, an angelic history is not a one-dimensional observation of the material qualities of the objects and architecture we observe, instead everyday fragments and places operate as prompts to take us into parallel worlds of ideas and emotions.

Finally, in terms of the social, angels are about relationships, between people, objects and places. First, these might be the ways in which people make the places around them, and how, in equal measure, they are created by those places. Second, these might also be about the kind of relationships we make with one another, as well as interface our inner and outer worlds. Third, the role of objects in making relationships between people should not be underestimated. Objects can facilitate our ability to access the imaginative space of play. This makes me wonder whether some kinds of objects operate as messengers and could be described as angelic.

Being angelic, or being 'between', is not about being nowhere but about being somewhere in transit – this is very much the condition of walking. Walking with angels, is a navigation of an angelic topography. It involves making our way between places, between times and also between states of mind. We will pause at places where messages from angels increase in number and intensity: such as spaces of flux, transition, passage, interchange, exchange, transit and connection. At these 'passing places of angels' we will hear various angelic voices. Our path will wend its way between different ways of thinking: between objective and subjective modes of observation, empirical and theoretical commentary, as well as the parallel worlds of the imaginary and the real.

## itinerary

[Exit the Angel Tube Station and stand inside the foyer at the top of the escalators]

### act 1: the angel

**Jane Rendell:** The Angel is located on an institutional boundary, between parish boundaries of Clerkenwell (EC2) and Islington (N1) but from where we are standing, we can see that the Angel is also a meeting point. It is the crossing point of many lines of transportation. This was the final staging post on the New North Road, where it met the Goswell Road to the city, St. John's Street to Smithfield, as well as Pentonville Road, built in 1757, and the City Road, built in 1761. The Angel is located on the underground transit network as well, on the Northern line, an amalgamation of Hampstead Tube and City & South London Railway, which used to run from King William Street to Stockwell in 1890, which still lies beneath us at a very deep level of 40 ft.

In June 2000, as part of *Art in Sacred Spaces*, Mark Wallinger made a piece of work called 'Angel'. The video work shows the artist as a blind man with a white stick walking up the down escalator, then down the up escalator, at Angel Tube, reciting the first chapter of St. John's Gospel backwards.

**Walter Benjamin:** *Underground Works:* I saw in a dream a barren terrain. It was the market-place at Weimer. Excavations were in progress. I too scraped about in the sand. Then the tip of a church steeple came to light. Delighted, I thought to myself: a Mexican shrine from the time of pre-animism, from the Anaquitzli. I awoke laughing. (Ana= ; vi= vie; witz [joke]= Mexican church[!].) (*One Way Street*, p. 60.)

**Jane Rendell:** The Angel Islington has also been the site of many different places of exchanges and meeting places. The *Encyclopedia of London* tells us that in 1819 the New Inn was located on this site, this as replaced by 1899 by the Lyons Corner House. Today we have Angelo's, Bliss, the Angel, Angel Corner House and the Blue Angel. More recently other kinds of exchange have migrated to the Angel and the surrounding area, for example, a number of headquarters for telecommunications, as well as banks, tax, custom and excise.

Michel Serres suggests that there are certain places where messages from angels increase in number and intensity; he calls these 'passing places of angels', these are spaces of transition or interchange, such as airports, places of mass transit and new technologies.

[Move round to the side of the station, to the steps in front of ventilation shaft, pause here for a moment listening to the wind in the shaft and looking up to the sky]

**Michel Serres:** Planet Earth is solid but viscous; its structure is created by the movement of tectonic plates; submarine currents, swirl in the depths of our oceans; the atmosphere derives its stability or instability from the corresponding stability of the winds. More or less slowly, fluxes of every kind transform and conserve the universal order of elements. Might we think of our planet as an immense interconnecting system of messages?

**Jane Rendell:** Gazing at 'Black Shoals Stock Market Planeterium' (2001) by Lisa Autogena and Joshua Portway is like staring up at the night sky - a velvet blackness shot through with a constellation of remote stars. Except that what you are looking at is a computer generated image of stock market data fed live from Reuters.

**Michel Serres** A chart of the winds over the Pacific on September 14, 1978, based on data supplied by satellite. The arrows indicate their direction, and colors show their speed. Blue, 0-14 km per hour; purple and pink, 15-43 km per hour; orange, 44-72 km per hour. These speeds increase in storms occurring in the southern roaring forties and towards the Aleutian Islands. (*Angels; A Modern Myth*, p. 29).

**Walter Benjamin:** Sky. As I stepped from a house in a dream the night sky met my eyes. It shed intense radiance. For in this plenitude of stars the images of the constellations stood sensuously present. A Lion, a Maiden, a Scale and many others shone lividly down, dense clusters of stars, upon the earth. No moon was to be seen. (p. 83).

**Jane Rendell:** 'Angels in Fall' (2000) are a series of photographs of Los Angeles taken from the air by German artist Karin Apollonia Müller. Like many others, this angel is physically detached, his/her position is one of displacement and marginalisation. What this angel sees is an urban landscape of alienation and neglect.

**Michel Serres:** *An angel passes.* . . . A long exposure photograph of the constellation Orion as it moves across the sky: three blue stars form the famous hunter's belt; the red super-giant above the belt is Betelgeuse (meaning shoulder or armpit in Arabic); beneath the belt, Rigel (foot, also in Arabic) shines, white and stelly-blue; not far from the sword, the nebulous patch; and finally the pink center. The constellation of Orion, situated close to the celestial equator, can be seen from almost everywhere in the world. (p. 46).

**Jane Rendell:** Serres emphasises the unstable nature of angels and their dual role as verbal messengers and elemental fluxes: they are 'Neither positioned, nor opposed, unceasingly exposed. Always deviating from the place, wandering with no fixed habitat'. This focus on flux is particularly pertinent.

[Turn to your left, enter Angel Square up the steps, walk to your left until you are confronted by a locked metal gate looking into an empty courtyard]

**Jane Rendell:** The threshold is considered by Yuri Lotman in 'Universe of the Mind' as a place of 'increased semiotic activity', palindromes are used in incantations and on gate-inscriptions because they work in both directions and are points of transition between the profane and sacred.

**Luce Irigaray:** The angel is that which unceasingly *passes through the envelope(s) or container(s)*, goes from one side to the other, reworking every deadline, changing every decision, thwarting all repetition. Angels destroy the monstrous, that which hampers the possibility of a new age; they come to herald the arrival of a new birth, a new morning.

[...] These swift angelic messengers, who transgress all enclosures in their speed, tell of the passage between the envelope of God and that of the world as micro- or macrocosm, They proclaim that such a journey can be made by the body of man, and above all the body of woman. They represent and tell of another incarnation, another parousia of the body. Irreducible to philosophy, theology, morality, angels as the messengers of ethics evoked by art - sculpture, painting, or music - without its being possible to say anything more than the gesture that represents them.

They speak like messengers, but gesture seems to be their "nature". Movement, posture, the coming-and-going between the two. They move- or stir up?- the paralysis or *apatheia* of the body, or the soul, or the world. They set trances or convulsions to music, or give them harmony. (*Ethics*, pp. 15-6).

**Jane Rendell:** Female movement, both conceptual and physical, is important to Lucy Irigaray. She has argued that it is women's connection with nomadism that has caused their confinement within the 'prison-house' of the male symbolic order. She suggests an alternative and celebratory way of conceptualising women's relation to movement through the figure of the angel. The angel circulates as a mediator, an alternative to the phallus, who rather than cutting through, goes between and bridges. The angel cannot be represented in patriarchal terms since she rethinks the organisation of patriarchal space and time. It is difficult I think to generalise the connection between movement and sex, to suggest that all women would like to, or are equally capable of moving. But in my opinion, this is not what Irigaray is about, rather her mode of operation is suggestive, she is providing us with the opportunity to imagine new possible relations that women might have with space.

[Turn around and walk back down the stairs, turning left at the bottom, and going towards the alley behind Angel Square, and facing the Candid Café, start to read the signs along the south side of the alley from the west to the east]

*'Yoga Classes: for all ages and levels of fitness in a relaxing, non competitive environment. Phone Angela.'*

**Jane Rendell:** To consider the passage or alley as a place of transition, a place where we might pass from one state to another, allows us to bring in Walter Benjamin. In 1924, an epistemological shift, one frequently referred to, occurred in his work. This was the year in which he met Asja Lacis. Lacis was a Bolshevik, an actress and director active in post revolutionary Russia who saw her own work as integral to revolutionary transformation of society. Just as the passage cuts through the surrounding urban fabric, starting at one point and ending at another, so too can we consider changes in epistemological status in terms of space. It is clear that Lacis's passage through him, reminiscent of the penetrative act of the penis and of masculine phallic knowledge, radically altered the course of Benjamin's work.

[Turn to the left and walk to the east end of the alley and read from the texts pasted on walls in the alley]

*'These premises are protected by a security surveillance system'*

'Razor barb. Danger'.

'Sprinkler Stop Valve Inside. Grinnell Firekill. Hemel Hempstead, Herts'.

**Walter Benjamin:** Ordnance. I had arrived in Riga to visit a woman friend. Her house, the town, the language were unfamiliar to me. Nobody was expecting me, no one knew me. For two hours I walked the streets in solitude. Never again have I seen them so. From every gate a flame darted. Each cornerstone sprayed sparks, and every streetcar came toward me like a fire engine. For she might have stepped out of the gateway, around the corner, been sitting in the streetcar. But of the two of us I had to be, at any price, the first to see the other. For had she touched me with the match of her eyes, I should have gone up like a magazine. (*One Way Street*, p. 68).

[Turn to the right and walk to the entrance to the alley, stand beneath the sign of the 'Blue Angel']

**Walter Benjamin:** A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise: it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (*Illuminations*, p. 249.)

**Jane Rendell:** The image of the angel in Benjamin's work mediates space and time. At different stages in his writing, Benjamin explored the figure of the angel in various positions at the threshold of past and present. For Benjamin, the angel is a feminine dialectical image who guards the threshold between past and present, who opens the approach to the past, allows the reoccurrence of what has been – 'the present that has been shall eternally be again'. The angel is dialectics at a stand-still. At this moment, the present is allowed access to the past. It is the coming together of history and the future, the 'has been' and the 'not yet' in one instant. The angel as a figure of the threshold, is for Benjamin, an Ariadne figure, a figure of 'the beloved woman'. Benjamin was rather unlucky in love. He had a number of unrequited relationships with women, including Asja Lacis. He connected this with his extraordinary patience, and with having been born under 'the sign of saturn' – the slowest revolving planet.

**Walter Benjamin:** Yet in no way is this name an enrichment of the one it names. On the contrary, much of his image falls away when that name becomes audible. He loses above all the gift of appearing anthropomorphous. In the room I occupied in Berlin the latter, before he stepped out of my name, armored and encased, into the light, put up his picture on the wall: New Angel. The *kabbalah* relates that in every instant God creates an immense number of new angels, all of whom only have the purpose, before they dissolve into naught, of singing the praise of God before His throne for a moment. The new angel passed himself off as one of these before he was prepared to name himself. I only fear that I took him away from his hymn unduly long. As for the rest, he made me pay for that. For taking advantage of the circumstance that I came into the world under the sign of Saturn – the star of the slowest revolution, the planet of detours and delays – he sent his feminine form after the masculine one reproduced in the picture by way of the

longest, most fatal detour, even though both happened to be – only they did not know each other – most intimately adjacent to each other.

[...]

The angel, however, resembles all from which I have had to part: persons and above all things. In the things I no longer have, he resides. He makes them transparent, and behind all of them there appears to me the one from whom they are intended. (Ibiza, August 13, 1933, Gary Smith, (ed.), p. 59).

### **interlude 1: no. 4/no. 56**

**Michel de Certeau:** In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called *metaphorai*. To go to work or come home, one takes a 'metaphor' – a bus or train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories. (p. 115).

[Wait for a no. 4/no. 56. You will need to get off at Postman's Park, just behind St. Paul's.]

### **act 2: angel street**

[Cross the road and head north, turning left along Angel Street. Pause at the bus-stop on the north side of Angel Street, looking towards St. Paul's]

**Jane Rendell:** The Post Office railway runs under here. It was started in 1913, but halted by the First World War, the tunnels were only completed by 1926, and opened in 1927. Thirty four new trains were added in 1981. The railway is six miles long and runs from Paddington to Whitechapel, with six sorting offices, plus the main sorting office at Mount Pleasant. The trains are 27 foot long and consist of 4 containers, each carrying 15 bags of letters in 6 bag panels. Trains run in each direction every four minutes at peak times, moving 50,000 bags of mail per day. The GPO Headquarters is under the King Edward Building, where there is a maze of tunnels in a figure of eight shape. These include two twin blind tunnels under Angel Street. Here the shaft connections to the deep level post office tunnels stop abruptly. There were to be extensions to the south east to Elephant & Castle/Waterloo and to Victoria.

The first post was established by the King in 1526. Foreign mail began in 1616 and in 1635, the Royal Post went public. From 1680 through the Penny Post private deliveries began through seven sorting offices and between four and five hundred receiving offices. Each sender was required to make a payment of one penny or 1d. The adhesive Penny Black was introduced on 6 May 1840, with the value to be paid decided by weight. Rowland Hill whose statue we can see at the end of the street set up a uniform Penny Post.

**Michel Serres:** *Préposer*: to put somebody in a position to carry out a function by giving them the means or the authority to fulfil it. The term *préposé* in French may refer to an agent or clerk, and is commonly used to refer to a postman. When messengers are commissioned to transport messages through message-bearing systems, they require some means of transport: Hermes and the myriad angels travel on wings; the postman carries his bicycle- or is it the other way around? (Jacques Tati (1908-82), *Jour de Fete*, Michel Serres: *Angels; A Modern Myth*, p. 139).

[Carry on to the end of Angel Street, turn right heading north and observe the statue on the left hand side of the road, pause by the entrance to the park a little further on, on the right. read the plaque at the entrance to the park]

*'Postman's Park opened in 1880, made up of Churchyard of St. Leonards, Foster lan, St. Botolphs, Aldersgate and the Graveyard of Christ Church Newgate St. In 1887 Mr. G F Watts conceived the idea of a natural memorial to heroic men and women and dedicated a wall to this cause in 1900'.*

Memorials are intended to talk explicitly of history. The histories they tell are usually of great events rather than day to day life. As objects designed to 'tell us', they can be didactic, patronising, aggrandising. But it is also possible for memorials to talk of what has been forgotten or missed out in the chronicles of history, and to talk to us in a more personal and intimate mode.

[Walk along the path through the park and pause under the loggia, first looking at the fork in the path]

**Italo Calvino:** I am the angel who dwells in the point where the lines fork. Whoever retraces the way of divided things encounters me, whoever descends to the bottom of contradictions runs into me, whoever mingles again what was separated feels my membraned wing brush his cheek.(p. 61).

**Jane Rendell:** Engaging with 'littleangelwingything', a site specific installation by Monika Dutta, is an irritating experience. Unlike much of the virtual world, the place you enter is beyond uncontrollable, for me it brings on the anger and frustration I feel when my computer 'has a fit' or breaks down. But if you relax, let go and relinquish control, the barely perceptible images and peripheral sounds you are presented with brush past you soft, yet teasing, like an invisible angel's wing.

**Jorge Luis Borges:** 'Precisely', said Albert, *The Garden of Forking Paths* is an enormous riddle, whose theme is time; this recondite cause prohibits its mention. To omit a word always, to resort to inept metaphors and obvious periphrases, is perhaps the most emphatic way of stressing it. That is the tortuous method preferred, in each of the meanderings of his indefatigable novel, by the oblique Ts'ui Pên. I have compared hundreds of manuscripts, I have corrected the errors that the negligence of the copyists has introduced, I have guessed the plan of this chaos, I have re-established - I believe I have re-established - the primordial organization, I have translated the entire work: it is clear to me that not once does he employ the word "time". The explanation is obvious: *The Garden of Forking Paths* is an incomplete, but not false, image of the universe as Ts'ui Pên conceived it. In contrast to Newton and Schopenhauer, your ancestor did not believe in a uniform, absolute time. He believed in a infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times. This network of times which approached one another, forked, broke off, or were unaware of each other for centuries, embraces *all* possibilities of time. We do not exist in the majority of these times; in some you exist, and not I; in others I, and not you; in others, both of us. In the present one, which a favourable fate has granted me, you have arrived at my house; in another, while crossing the garden, you found me dead; in still another, I utter these same words, but I am a mistake, a ghost. (p. 53).

[Turn to look at the plaques on the wall under the loggia]

**Walter Benjamin:** Loggia: Forget-me-not - Memory always sees the loved one smaller. (*One Way Street*, p. 77).

**Georges Perec:** We could write on our walls (as we sometimes write on the fronts of houses, on fences around building sites and on the walls of prisons), but we do it only very rarely. (p. 39)

**Jane Rendell:** Mat Collishaw's ethereal 'Ultraviolet Angel', (1997) is a ghostly image of an angel, printed in ultra-violet sensitive ink, radiating divine light. It was shown at 'Little Angels', Houldsworth Fine Art, London in 2000 as part of a group of artists exploring connections between the child-like innocence associated with angels, and the angelic, but often deceiving, appearance of children.

[stop and read when you have found the one to Alice Ayres].

**Jane Rendell:** Patrick Marber's play, *Closer*, (Royal National Theatre, London, 1997) makes a number of references to Postman's Park. The version I saw used a view of gravestones at Postman's Park as the on-going backdrop. The play opens in a hospital nearby, reference is made to the remnants of an egg sandwich eaten in this park. The final scene, where it is discovered that Alice, one of the four characters, named herself after one of the heroines on the plaques, takes place in front of this memorial. *Closer* is an emotionally dense and complex play, but the script is raw and sparse. Each scene involves an encounter between only two, or sometimes three, of the four characters. In any one scene, the emotional charge of their exchanges somehow gets embedded in an object that is placed at the back of the set. As the lights went up in the last scene, a pile of debris appeared in front of the gravestones. This was emotional litter: a memorial to the feelings that these four people shared with one another at a moment in time.

**Patrick Marber:** Pause. Anna reads her guide book, looks up.

**Anna:** Who put these here?

**Larry:** G. F. Watts.

**Anna:** The artist?

**Larry:** Yeah, it's the Watts Memorial.

**Anna:** No, I mean do you think the families arranged them?

**Larry:** I suppose. It's like putting flowers at the roadside. people need to remember. It makes things seem less. . .

**Patrick Marber:** Pause

Actually I hate this memorial.

**Anna:** Why?

**Larry:** It's the sentimental act of a Victorian philanthropist. We remember the dead and forget the living.

**Anna:** You're a pompous bastard.

**Patrick Marber:** Beat

**Larry:** And you are an incurable romantic

**Patrick Marber:** Pause

Have a look for Alice Ayres.

**Anna:** Larry, that's horrible.

**Patrick Marber:** Larry takes the book, He finds the page.

**Larry** (reading) 'Alice Ayres, daughter of a bricklayer's labourer, who by intrepid conduct saved three children from a burning house in Union Street, Borough, at the cost of her own young life. April 24 1885'.

**Patrick Marber:** Pause

She made herself up.

**Anna** (reading) 'She rescued the three children and then stood at the window of the burning building. . . "the crowd implored her to jump. . . dazed and enfeebled she missed her leap and struck some railings". She was impaled.

**Patrick Marber:** Beat.

'Proposing a national monument to ordinary civilians. Watts cited the example of Alice Ayres. . . "These deeds, happily far from uncommon, will more than anything constitute in the far future out claim to be considered noble people. The national prosperity, the deeds of its people are."

**Larry:** He was inspired by her. . . the girl in the burning building. . . romantic death. Was he a good artist?

**Anna:** Not really.

**Larry:** I'm not being callous but I've got a lot of patients to see. Give my apologies to Dan. I'm not good at grief.

**Anna:** You're a coward.

**Larry:** I know.

**Anna** (reading) 'Watts wanted other cities to build similar memorials but none did. This is the only one. There are still ninety spaces left'.

[On leaving the park, cross the street and head south, turning left into Gresham Street. Stop at the sign to Angel Court].

**Jane Rendell:** Stories *take place*. Narrative can be used loosely as a device for making connections between often disparate spaces. In the context of 'the city', the 'spatial story' is a way of understanding the urban fabric in terms of the relationships that can be made between people, things and places. An emerging aspect of the 'spatial story' in contemporary art practice is the artist's walk, composed of a route or journey, exposing the audience to series of encounters with differing aspects of place. In some cases, the work itself takes the form of a narrative - an unfolding of space through time and vice-versa, an unfolding of time in space. This walk is part of a new programme for 'Wapping', 'Walking to Wapping', that involves making a number of journeys to 'Wapping'. The walks are led by various story tellers, from politicians to novelists, who devise their point of departure and route according to personal history and interest. These walks position 'Wapping' in new ways, locating the physical space in a number of private and public narratives.

### **act 3: angel court**

**Jane Rendell:** We are now in the heart of the city of London, right at the centre of a number of networks and markets of exchange - physical and social gatherings of those involved in finance, transactions of money and commodities taking place in real and virtual space, as well as the buying and selling of urban futures.

Deborah Warner's contribution to London International Festival of Theatre in July 2000, was a piece of work that could be equally described as theatre, performance or installation art. 'The Towers Project' took members of the audience, one at a time, through the abandoned spaces of an speculative office block, high above London, between the silence of heaven and the sprawling, noisy metropolis below. Religious iconography was juxtapositioned with the mundane relics of office life. Angels, real ones with feathered wings, hovered staring out over the city while a redundant fax machine printed out Milton's 'Paradise Lost'.

Two streams, the two sides of the Walbrook, join at Draper Hall and run under Angel Court. One has journeyed from Islington along the City Road; the other has followed a path from Hoxton, down Waterson Street, Curtain Road, past the National Safe Deposit Co., Bethlehem Hospital and London Wall. Together they will join the Thames at Cannon Street.

[head out of Angel Alley, back onto Gresham Street, turn left and follow the outline of the Stock Exchange, round the eastern and southern boundary, crossing the back entrance of the Royal Exchange and ending up reading from a plaque on the well]

*'The well was discovered much enlarged and this pump erected in the year 1799. by the contributors of the Bank of England, the East India Company, the neighbourly Fire Offices together with the Bankers and Traders of the Ward of Cornhill'.*

[Continue along to *Penhaligans*, stopping to read the signs in the window]

*'Blue Bell, Elizabethan Rose, Lily of the Valley, English Fern, Quercus, Lavandula Officinalis'*

*'Elizabethan Rose: The beautiful, mysterious aroma of the old English Rose is deliciously intoxicating and captures the scent of high summer.'*

**Jane Rendell:** Sharon Kivland's 'La Bonheur des Femmes' (2000) consists of twenty four photographs hung low on the gallery wall. Above them float the names of various famous perfumes: 'allure', 'fantasme', 'knowing', 'fragile', 'dazzling', 'sublime'. The images all show women's feet and legs clad in black from the knees down. [...] All the photographs were taken in the same kind of place - at the perfume counters of various shopping venues in Paris: La Samaritaine, Galeries Lafayette, Au Printemps, Bazaar de l'Hotel de Ville. [...] To be at the perfume counter is to be between. To be in a liminal state, a magical space of enchantment where the air is dense with imaginings of who you might become. The anticipated application of a certain scent, the possibilities inherent in its purchase, is a dance between being somewhere and imagining many elsewheres. At the perfume counter, this dance is played out again and again at the very point the scents are allowed to breath, to escape into the air. The juxtaposition of the names of perfumes - all words which suggest desire - hovering just above the images of the grounded feet produces a place between, a gap between two signifiers, between earth and air, flesh and breath, between who we are and who might become.

Relief was expressed that the London Underground did not emulate the Paris Metro whose trains at one time sprayed scent as they ran into a station.

[Walk further along and stop to read a plaque in the window of *Hermés*]

*'Hapi bracelet*

*Torsade*

*Silver Lock*

*Shoes*

*Bowl'*

**Jane Rendell:**In the Kabakov's 'Palace of the Projects', commissioned by Art Angel, at Camden's Roundhouse (1999), the hundreds of embryonic projects housed in a plywood copy of the Tatlin Tower are either impossibilities or so simply executed that they seem rather naïve and not very worldly in their intentions. My favourite is a pair of angel wings ready to strap on with instructions for use.

**Kabakov:** How can one change oneself?

1. Make two wings. First make two frames of wire and attach to them the 'wings' made of white gauze. The frames should first be attached to two oval boards of plywood.
2. Make leather straps from belts which can attach to the shoulders, chest and waist. Attach the 'wings' which have already been attached to the 'boards' to the straps.
3. For the exposition, both the wings and the straps should hang freely on the wall on a nail, as though it were an ordinary harness in a horse stable.
5. The length of each 'wing' is 140cm, the width from the center support is 40cm.

**Walter Benjamin:** Fancy Goods. [...] Gifts must affect the receiver to the point of shock.[...] ('Fancy Goods', *One Way Street*, p. 71).

**Jane Rendell:** Elizabeth LeMoine is currently resident at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. She makes tiny replicas of everyday things, usually objects that are ignored or considered insignificant. Delicately crafted at a miniature scale, she has produced 'Fairy Suit' (1997), complete and perfect, with a translucent bodice and dragon-fly wings.

[Continue west, halting to read the plaque of the statue in the middle of the road and to your left]

**Jane Rendell** (reading from a plaque on the statue to JH Greathead)

*'JH Greathead Chief Engineer*

*City and South London Railway*

*Inventor of the Travelling Shield that made possible the cutting of the tunnels of London's deep level tube system.'*

**Jane Rendell:** The first deep level railway was the City and South London Line, running from King William Street to Stockwell, later called the City Branch of the Northern Line. Originally there were a pair of tunnels crossing the Thames obliquely, later the line was straightened. The original tunnel, used as an Air Raid shelter in the first World War, can be seen at King William Street.

**Walter Benjamin:**

This street is named

Asja Lacis Street

after her who

as an engineer

cut it through the author.

('Dedication', *One Way Street*, p. 45).

**Jane Rendell:** *One Way Street* is dedicated to Asja Lacis. Whether the 'cutting through' refers to Lacis's effect on Benjamin emotionally – he fell in love with her – or whether it describes the influence of her marxist ideas of historical materialism on his own mysticism remains ambiguous.

[Walk across the front of the Royal Exchange to the War Memorial]

**Jane Rendell** (reading from a plaque on the monument to the Great War)

*'We honour and remember men and women who served in all the units of the city and country of London in the War 1939-45'.*

**H.D. :**

Still the walls do not fall,

I do not know why:

there is zrr-hiss,

lightning in a not-known,

unregistered dimension;

we are powerless,

dust and powder fill our lungs

our bodies blunder

through doors twisted on hinges,

and the lintels slant

cross-wise;

we walk continually

on thin air

that thickens to a blind fog,

then step swifty aside,

for even the air

is independable,

thick where it should be fine

and tenuous

where wings separate and open,

and the ether

is heavier than the floor,

and the floor sags

like a ship floundering;

we know no rule  
of procedure,

we are voyagers, discovers  
of the not-known,

the unrecorded;  
we have no map;

possibly we will reach haven,  
heaven.

(p. 43.)

[Cross into King William Street and head towards the exit to Bank station on your left. In front of you is the entrance to a church, walk through the gates and stop in front of a door to the left of the main entrance.]

**Jane Rendell:** Richard Trench and Ellis Hillman tell us in *London under London* that 'The straightened line (of the City and South London Railway) almost caused the demolition of Nicholas Hawksmoor's St. Mary Woolholt. Indeed the company obtained parliamentary sanction to knock down the church. So great was the public outcry that the City and South London Railway was obliged to underpin the church's foundations, while it constructed Bank Station directly underneath the church. The entrance to the station to King William Street is marked, appropriately, by the head of an angel'. Ned Ward in the *English Spy* gives a definition of an angel. 'Angel: an old English coin (6s 8d) used as a touch piece to bring good health'.

**epilogue: wapping pump station: the mechanics of fluids**

[Exit the tube station and turn right, after about 5 minutes, turn right again into Wapping Wall, the Wapping Pump Station is on your left. Stop in the courtyard]

**Luce Irigaray:** Philosophy, as the discourse on discourse, has also largely governed the discourse of science. From this viewpoint, *the historical lag in the mathematization of fluids as compared to solids* leads back to the same type of problem: why has solid mechanics prevailed over fluid mechanics, and what complicity does that order of things maintain with rationality. (*This Sex which is not One*, p. 169).

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