



Challenging ideas in mental health

A quiet night on Roundhay Wing

Angel

The city has as many faces as the sea.

Councillor

It's a modern European city

Housewife

It's a bloody dump, that wall runs with damp in winter.

Poet

It's an owl in sheep's clothing, white lions roaring on the town hall steps.

Pensioner

It's a nightmare on South Parkway after dark.

Motorist

The best thing to come out of Leeds is the M62.

Angel

It's said that Rudolf Steiner came here for a few hours once and left never to return.

Rudolf Steiner

We stayed as short time as possible in this curiously featureless modern city. Its aspect is dour, I doubt it will be possible to base a school here. The river is pestilent with dyes from the mills. There are bad spirits in this place! A deep fog pervaded for several hours which marred our visit to the workhouse

St James

Which later became St James's hospital, now they call it Jimmy's. Bloody heathens.

Angel

As the millennium comes and goes, see Gledhow Wing presenting its facade of red brick and glass to the west. A proud monument to maternity and birth to rebirth and regeneration. But this is Round hay wing, no direct sunlight reaches this place. It nestles between other grander hospital blocks for real medicine, like oncology, cardiology and having a nose that's slightly too big. It's like an old shed that some eccentric has refused to sell so that the red towers have sprung up around it leaving a little island of the past at their feet. It is the year 2000. The cries of those desperate to leave...

(lots of people) Let us out, let us out...

Angel

... are matched by those who are desperate to enter ...

(lots of people) Let us in, let us in...

Angel

... but this is the only service in the world where the customer is always wrong.

The Doctor

Those who want to get into a place like this are obviously suffering from disorders of the personality and are untreatable. So we cannot let them in. Those on the other hand who wish to leave do not yet realise that they are ill which is the first step to recovery, so we cannot let them out.

'Cured' patient

Please let me stay. Please. I like it here, the food's nice, its warm. I want to stay forever, please. I really like it here.

The Doctor

Ah, she's cured. Nurse, discharge the patient.

Nurse O'Render

Come on sunshine.

'Cured' patient

No, I'm not cured. Get off me ... No, no...

Angel

Some people find a way out unexpectedly.

'Discharged' patient

The doctor said to me 'Are you hearing voices?' And the voices said to me 'Say no'. So I said no and then they let me go.

Angel

Now night has fallen like a sedative. Stillness covers the sleepers like a new duvet. The soft heat rises from pipes that were old when spitfires flew over the city and the sweat steam and you wake up full of strange dreams

1st Sleeper

Penalty shoot out in front of the old Cop. Everton, fourth round replay. Bloody awful night, pissing down. I've got to score to keep us in. The goalkeeper's my old French teacher.

2nd Sleeper

Middleton Wood, but it's a jungle. I've been lost for days. Then I come to a clearing and there's Tesco's. I go in to buy some bread and the checkout girl turns into a leopard

3rd Sleeper

Trying to catch a train. A big old steam engine with the name plate William Wordsworth. It's just started to leave and I'm gaining on it until I feel something holding me back. I look down and there's all these daffodils, thousands of them grabbing at me ankles.

Angel

The walls are nailed and painted shut but outside you can sense a raw west Yorkshire night. It's a quiet night down in the doctor's flat where Dr Uberdose fuddles his eiderdown as he dreams of a ward round at the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals on Leyland Street

The Doctor

This dog is much too dozy. I prescribe an antidepressant.

Nurse O'Render

But sir, he's been hyperactive all day and he kept us up half the night.

The Doctor

What, barking?

Nurse O'Render

Yeah

The Doctor

I prescribe cognitive behavioural therapy and 6,000 mg of chlorpromazine!

Nurse O'Render

Right.