

Two Futures

by Cassandra Parkin

Yes, this is the future

We have little to offer you here;

We were forced to move backwards, not forwards, because

You didn't realise in time that you were shitting where you ate

Yes, that's a road

And yes, those are cars

They're all useless now

Gradually recycled by the rain

And crumbled into absence by the sun

We'll pass many on the way home

Yes, that city is all very green, isn't it?

Did you know, there was once a time

When people poured down those streets just like water,

Thinking they were as unstoppable as the floods that took them?

And all the time, Gaia was begging them to see

That if they didn't live their lives a little differently,

She would drown them all and grow trees on their graves!

She did her best to warn you

Did you see her work in San Juan?

And New Orleans?

And Bangladesh?

If only you had realised in time

The lesson she was teaching you

Oh, please, do eat

There's no meat, of course

We have to do without it most of the time

(Although we do try not to judge

Perhaps, in your situation,

we would have done the same as you)

Yes, of course we miss it
Thanks to the poisons you filled the soil with
There's never enough food.

Well, good, but sorry doesn't really cut it
We came from you, and the choices you made
We are your children
And we weep as we walk on your bones

OR:

Welcome to the future!
We have much to offer you here;
We chose to move forward, not backwards
We realised in time that we need to stop shitting where we eat

Yes, that's a road
And yes, those are cars
They're all auto-guided
Communally-owned
Made of 100% recycled materials
And powered by the sun
Let's take one to my home

Yes, our city is all very green, isn't it?
Did you know, there was once a time
When cladding meant covering your home with
Plastic, chemicals and slabs of dead wood?
And all the time, Gaia was begging us to see
That if we just built our homes a little differently,
She would cover them over with greenery!
She did her best to show us
Did you see her work in Detroit?
And Pripyat?
And Angkor Wat?

Thank goodness we realised in time

The lesson she was teaching us

Oh, please, do eat

There's no meat, of course

We chose to live without it long ago

(Although we do try not to judge

Perhaps, in your situation,

we would have done the same as you)

No, of course we don't miss it

Thanks to the work of our food gurus

There's such abundance!

Thank you, but please, don't be awed

We came from you, and the choices you made

We are your children

And we are proud to stand on your shoulders