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**CITYchromosomes**



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# CITY chromo somes

- story of a city

## contents

preface		8
introduction		12
prologue	The city breathes...	15
chapter 1	επισημο bursts into tears...	23
chapter 2	dragons, mermaids and castles...	49
chapter 3	I saw you drive by on your bike...	65
chapter 4	bustling bussing antwerp...	75
epilogue	it is raining...	87
thanks		92
cc license		95

## preface

between the visit of Guicciardini and CITYchromosomes lies a period of nearly 437 years. Guicciardini immediately fell under the spell of the city which he described as "la preclara et famosa città, la bella, la nobilissima et amplissima città".

It is not known what the average contemporary citizen thought about his city, but you can bet that it would have sounded a lot less euphoric. That is the way it goes between visitors and locals. visitors are less occupied with the problems of the city than those who live in it every day.

It is obvious that this division will be found in CITYchromosomes. We have to admit that visitors sound a bit more lyrical than residents, but in general, even the residents' criticism of their city is mild. And if they lose faith in it now and then, the tone is more sad than angry.

The sms messages constitute an interesting story about how Antwerp inspires literarily. This happens in different ways.

Sometimes, a location in the city inspires a personal emotion and possibly these messages offer the most beautiful literary texts in this publication. They may not make a proper city story, but the important thing, espe-

cially within the framework of Antwerp world book capital, is that they make a lasting impression.

CITYCHROMOSOMES is also an important contribution to the debate about cultural participation. In our country the large scale manifestations of culture in particular are often criticised for being organised and executed over the heads of the people. In some cases, their participation is restricted to passive attendance at what has been thought out and elaborated by the privileged few.

I do not want to question the right to existence and the importance of these manifestations. But if they are the only things organised and subsidised culturally, then the criticism is valid.

With CITYCHROMOSOMES, Antwerp world book capital brushes aside this criticism. Very inventively, a project was thought up that invites everybody to write a new story about this city. The result is intriguing and inspiring.

I wish to thank all the people and the institutions that have collaborated on it, especially VZW C.H.I.P.S., which took the initiative.

eric antonis



## Introduction

The city of Antwerp is full of writers. And many of these writers describe their city, often in splendid stories, novels and poems that gain a wide readership. In this way, they determine a large part of our image of the city.

But what about the people who only read, or even those who do not care for reading, what do they think of the city? And would it not be possible to persuade them to write this down?

This was the point of departure for the city chromosomes project. We got the idea of gathering SMS messages. Nearly everybody has a mobile phone. Everybody has a moment to spare to type in a message. This was the ideal way to make the project accessible to everybody. The people of Antwerp, and anyone else with something to say about city, could submit their impressions anonymously. We established 25 text sites across the city, and the contributors could indicate with a simple code to which part of the city their message applied. By means of posters, flyers and ads, we asked people for their impressions. The only restriction: the messages should not be longer than 160 characters.

It was a success! The messages came pouring in by the hundred. Messages that were almost as diverse as the people living and travelling through Antwerp. Messages with personal impressions, unvarnished opinions, well-turned lyrical phrases, exclamations, curses and declarations of love.



In this book, we have made a story out of these impressions. The messages have been reproduced unchanged and unadulterated. Even the spelling has been kept intact. Messages from the city of Leeds, where the sister project city poems is running, are included in the text and are easily recognisable. They offer interesting material for comparison.

Obviously, this book contains only a small selection from all the messages. You can still read the rest of the story on the website <http://www.stadschromosomen.be>. The complete archive will be donated to the AMVC-Letterenhuis in Antwerp.

We could of course not claim copyright over the voluntary contributions of anonymous Antwerp citizens. And it would not have been decent to claim rights over the editorial contributions and the layout. That is why this book has been published under the Creative Commons licence, which you can read at the back of the book.

And before I let you lose yourself into this city story, one more thing. The project and this book would not have been possible without the express support of Karl Devijver, Roland Gulliver (British Council) and Michael Vandebril (Antwerp World Book Capital).

stefan kolgen

**THE CITY BREATHES,  
BREATHES STRESS,  
BREATHES PARTY,  
BREATHES LOVE,  
BREATHES FEAR.  
THE CITY BREATHES  
BECAUSE IT LIVES.**

**THIS IS THE STORY** the inhabitants tell of their city. The city is Antwerp. A city like all other cities, a city different from all other cities. The city's story about its inhabitants will never be written. It is not necessary. The city has no need for words to express its will.

The city does not care what we think of it. It loves it when its streets are wandered, its alleys are roamed, it is pleased when its houses are lived in and its squares are peopled. It lives on its inhabitants, its passers-by, it uses their energy which it converts into its own power and invincibility, it vibrates and pulsates beneath them and through them. But all those opinions that we daily profess about it, they leave it cold.

There can be no city without people. They build to it, they change the turn of its streets, they draw leien through it and ring roads around it, they drill train tracks through its entrails, they make holes in it and add new buildings to it. They think they control it, govern it, determine it. The city groans and grinds, it thumps and rumbles, it stretches its limbs. It knows that it is always more powerful than the people going through it like blood corpuscles through its veins, like food through its guts.

every morning, the city wakes its inhabitants for a new day (not all of them, for there should always be rest in the city).

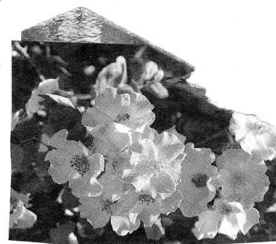
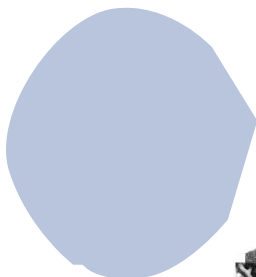
Leeds -----

**CITY MORNING** they say nights a best in cities but I disagree. early mornings a unwritten poems waiting to happen, with the milk's clink, the first bus's cough.

-----

every night, it soothes them to sleep (not all of them, because there should always be life in the city).

The glistening roofs in the expanding twilight night lies down to sleep



*today i got a son. fatih fatih*



it plans their days for them. it gives their comings and goings a destination, their paths an itinerary. Always, it drives them on, towards new deeds, new dreams, new disappointments and new efforts, new successes.

roaming around with a head like a brick and wet with thirst for a pint of beer. angels do exist.

what those **dreams** are, what those deeds are, what disappoints them and what satisfies them, the city does not care. It has its own logic, its own rhythm, its own motives, which it assembles from the movements of its **inhabitants**.

The city feels its history like a sturdy backbone through its ever-growing flesh. underneath its skin bedecked with buildings lie the foundations of much that was lost. It feels the solid buildings in its muscles, it feels the elegant elasticity of the cathedral arcs, the straight grace of the boerentoren, the hard concrete toughness of the oudaan, but it makes **no distinction** between them. It feels the swish through its road and railroad networks, its waterworks, it feels the vibration in its electricity cables, the whoosh in its gas ducts, it feels the links between the people, how they knit its flesh closer together with their love and hate and even with their indifference, with their fears.

some of its roads may clog up, silt up, burst open again. An annoying itch in its side, nothing more. someone or other may try to govern it in this or rather that way, to make it more beautiful, more efficient, more attractive. A contraction in the brow, maybe a slight headache. nothing more.

what we think of the city is important to us, with regard to ourselves, to each other. It is important to write it down and to let others know about it, because otherwise, it could become an obstacle to us or others. It is important to us to keep thinking we are important to the city. That is the reason for this book. But remember, we have written it only for ourselves. The city does not need it. The city can manage very well, thanks or no thanks to us.

**BRABO  
BURSTS  
INTO  
TEARS.**

A souvenir from Antwerp?  
Choose a bottle of murky Scheldt water'  
a can of air from the incinerator  
or a piece of rails from the Leien.

or a tin of canned complaints of the Antwerp citizen, a so-called

# SOUVENIR D'ANVERS:



# A TIN OF BIG NOISE!

although the contributor will certainly have meant something else by that. "cookie town" (one of Antwerp's nicknames) is not always a sweet place. The Antwerp citizen has a unique relationship with his city. He likes nothing better than to complain about it. "zagen", this is called. It is an awkward declaration of love. He expresses his loyalty to the city by complaining about it like he would about no other city. He will never desert it.

you are a bad love. how often have i not begged for your attention. your short laugh chokes me. even if i must share you, you are still the one for me.

city, millstone round my neck... marvellously unmarvellous city... i am a piece of you, you are a piece of me.

you are an ugly broad. a mushy guy. ripped-open carcass. you block the road to the hinterland. your bridges don't reach far enough.

some messages show to what extent complaining has become etiquette in Antwerp. In other cities, a conversation is opened with a remark about the weather; in Antwerp, one starts moaning.

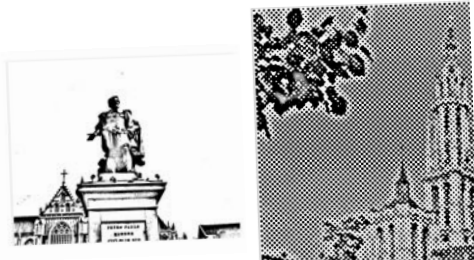
Taintlikeitusedtobe, he complained.  
Nevermind, I said, patting him on the shoulder.

Those who do not complain are self-conscious about it, and almost feel the urge to be ashamed:

Yes I love my city, like so many others.  
No, I am not ashamed to say I would never live anywhere else.

Those born and bred in Antwerp, the "sinjoren", are the only section of the population that does not love Antwerp. For out-of-towners, from Belgium or even from abroad, the city is a

Very great  
beauty  
I wish  
visit it





and even though not everybody from out of town

is equally enthusiastic

*antwerp means jack shit to me  
because i am from limburg.*



people are often lost for words to describe it.

Antwerp, you're so... sorry, give me some  
time, I have to invent new nouns, verbs and  
adjectives for you.



that is why many foreigners settle in Antwerp.  
for the people from Antwerp itself, this is all  
the more reason to complain.

the creativity of the moaning Antwerp citizen  
is unlimited. complaints can be packaged in  
poetic observations.

cola tin dented,  
twigs unstuck in the wind,  
the dismal loose trash.

or in explosions of venom:

f\*ck! f\*ck! f\*cking city.  
you suck me dry.  
you show no pity.  
dismal city.  
easy does it, f\*cking city,  
you smell ratty and shitty.

it can pose as social comment:

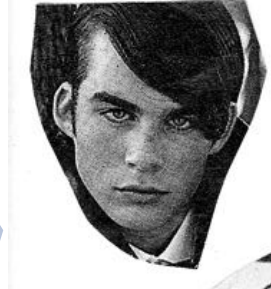
on the meir, parading ladies and gents try  
to outdo each other with sculpted hairdos.  
but in the north, the sun does not rise.  
There is no shampoo for a head full of  
lice.

or as an apocalyptic vision.

The underground stinks,  
it drinks in the smells of the city,  
like a bottomless rotting pit.

The Antwerp citizen uses any and every excuse to  
complain. In days gone by, virtually everything  
was better.

Van Schoonhovenstraat?  
Queens galore! There used to be 20  
bars, loaded. Just 8 to 10 men  
now on a Saturday night. Where is  
all that gorgeous flesh?!  
Sigh...



el Luca Ferruzzi at Bergdo



many complaints are directed against the political world, with which the average citizen feels no connection, against the city council, by which he feels targeted.

**PARKING IN THE CITY. A masterful form of hidden taxes. what makes the electorate so sour-minded, asks the politician.**

once there was a city with a checkbox. Then the checkbox asked: voter, voter, hear my call, who has the longest one of all? and the voter: a pox on you, box.

In 2004, Antwerp was tormented by simultaneous public works on the Leien, the singel (with its temporary bridges) and the ring road, obstructing circulation. They were a nuisance to the inhabitants.

CLOCHARDS OF ALL COUNTRIES,  
ON THE ALERT, ANOTHER FIVE  
TEMPORARY BRIDGES ARE BEING  
PREPARED!

although some people still know how to formulate  
it joyfully:

**hurray, hurray!**  
**which pool on the Leien**  
**will i pick today?!**

but when the work is finished, the Antwerp citizen  
is still not satisfied. The renovation of  
the st. jansplein, which now features the statue  
"pepto bismo" by Panamarenko, cannot please him,  
as appears from this cryptic contribution:

**How square is the square?**  
**Like a French boulevard.**  
**What rose from the excavation?**  
**A parking.**  
**Who is flapping there like mad?**  
**I Panawhatshisname and 7 dealers.**

many hold the mayor personally responsible:

**janssens, dirty flirt,**  
**always chasing skirts,**  
**you cause lines and lines of cars,**  
**Leave the Leien and Singel scarred.**  
**we will tell you how much it hurts.**



when singer Helmut Lotti gives a concert on the great market, on 11 July, on the occasion of "Flanders celebrates", not all those present seem to be equally pleased. Is this because of the attitude of the mayor?

Lotti on the big market. emperor Janssens very pleased with himself. bread and games. He sure knows the tricks of the trade.

or is the rain again to blame?

it is raining cats and dogs. Lotti cackling away on the great market. other chickens fighting for a seat. Flanders celebrates.



The kiel, once an idealistically undertaken social housing project, with its characteristic blocks by Renaat Braem, has become another stumbling block. The inhabitants do not feel at home in the architecture:

kiel concrete obstructs my view.  
in the back yard, the ring road bombards  
the soundscape. over the weekend,  
I get rid of stress at football.

but the foreigners also get the blame:

kiel! its blocks, its moroccans,  
its plebeians, its underprivileged... ugh!

I do not care for kiel. I am living here  
with great aversion. Among other things due  
to too many moroccans. They spoil the  
atmosphere in the neighbourhood.

Leeds -----

GHETTO some say chapelton is a ghetto.  
but them talk what them don't know. because  
chapelton is the right place to go.

-----



The same sort of complaints also surface in the south, although the outsiders are probably tourists and museum visitors here.

**the south: home to others,  
hell for the locals.  
occupied by outsiders,  
inhabitants sidetracked.**

In the end, everybody who does not live in your own street, in your own house, is an outsider.



oh,  
my god!

oh

mm

oh

oh,  
i

oh  
i love  
the south!

oh  
yes

Leeds

HATERZ some people now-dayz luv 2 h8, cuss  
n chat till sumbody breaks. Love to spread  
business but it's neva their own. Y dont u  
haterz jus Leave me alone.

And we come full circle when we start complain-  
ing about complaints:

old antwerp.  
Always nagging and complaining.  
everything is bad, nothing is good.  
The older they get, the worse they fare.  
nasty, sour-minded naggypeople. ugh!

it is true,

bad temper eclipses the sun.

DRAGONS,  
MERMAIDS  
AND  
CASTLES.  
AND  
THEY SAY  
ANTWERP  
IS NOT  
A FAIRY  
TOWN?

Leeds -----

please look to your left. whatever  
you saw makes up 20% of this poem.  
The movement of your head is 65% and  
these words are whatever's left  
over.

-----

and in the same way, the beauty that the people  
of Antwerp see in their city is the beauty in  
themselves. that which you can't recognise, you  
can't name, you don't notice. you miss it.

Leeds -----

nobody noticed it but somewhere  
something wonderful just happened. i  
invite you to applaud this unknown  
event for as long as you see appro-  
priate.

-----

those who are open to the world around them can  
see splendid sights. Their messages go from del-  
icate observations

**The glistening roofs  
in the expanding twilight  
night lies down to sleep.**

and inspired panoramas

**A ladleful of light,  
the streets are luminous!  
over the rails the tram slides.  
just a cloud of dust remains.**

to glorious visions:

**van Dyck and on the roof of the Inno  
a golden lady with lightning bolts.  
passion in the air?**

The city stores the memories of its citizens in  
its houses, on squares, on street corners and at  
street lanterns. The city remembers for them  
what they can't remember themselves, to confront  
them with it when they least expect it, when  
they turn a corner, drive through a street, look  
up to a building they thought had been demol-  
ished for years.

**cross Astridplein and the stone bridge,  
turn left, at the end again left, to the  
omgeganck, look at the derby, across 1, no,  
2, no, 3 squares up to the corner with  
Diksmuidelaan, that is the road to the  
house of my grandfather's.**

**on vogeltjesmarkt, among cauliflower and  
plastic blender, my first football shoes,  
grandma's sleepless nights and Mariken the  
milkman's daughter's first kiss were lying.**

Tram no. 10 with grandmother: Lick the shop displays, the many colours of the people, waffles, veils, working clothes. The world was as large as Turnhoutsebaan.

The city also supplies dreams for the future:

when I grow up, I will go working in the harbour. I will drop in on the girls. I will go and quench my thirst in noisy bars. when I grow up, I will be living in the harbour.

The changes in the city occupy its inhabitants. The reopening of the Roma cinema on Turnhoutsebaan evokes memories and new observations.

I used to go to the Roma with grandma. Now grandma is with the Lord, but the Roma has been restored.

The new courthouse, with its idiosyncratic pointed roofs, even in its unfinished state inspires sky-high ideas and associations:

It's transparent, its brand new but already it has dog's ears, it's fairyland. Guess whatitis?



THIS  
COURT  
WOULD  
A  
AIR

HOUSE  
MAKE  
NICE  
PORT

in the minds of the passers-by, Lodewijk de  
waelplaats turns into a beach

**from the stairs of the museum, we walk over  
fine sand and splattering we enjoy the  
fresh water on the hippodroom beach.**

and wapper into a whole other country:

**sun, panpipes and pavement cafés filled  
with chattering people. no, this is not a  
square in the south, but a place in front  
of the rubenshuis, in april.**

ΜΕΤΡΑΛΕΙΣ (The palace), the concrete theatre  
giant on theaterplein, unexpectedly appears in  
the form of....

**hush! a palace is hidden behind those con-  
crete walls.**

not everybody is equally verbose with his com-  
pliments:

*I think the city hall  
is quite beautiful.*

but that does make them any less heart-felt.

in the previous chapter, it appeared that kiel  
was the quarter of complaints, whereas berchem,  
remarkably, stirs up many positive contributions  
from inhabitants and passers-by. it seems as  
though the sun is always busy in berchem:

**the sun strides solemnly through  
statiestraat. hail mary, full of grace, but  
at ten to seven, i must rise in front of  
the cce.**

**the morning sun is trying hard to pierce  
the clouds in order for berchem to bathe in  
a sea of light and warmth, as if it were  
paradise.**

**the sun brushes the street empty. why does  
nobody lick the bricks of the facades?**

**new library building. soon also a new thea-  
tre programme. berchem the beautiful. a  
place to dream of. thanks to city  
chromosomes.**

even the work on the station, where strange con-  
crete contraptions are being erected, can supply  
people with poetic inspiration:

**the city thinks of everyone! benches for  
the gods on the square in front of berchem  
station.**

but hoboken, less prosperous, less renovated,  
apparently also offers ample reason for adventure and joy.

**I float, I stumble, I dream, I look, I  
enjoy, I am in hoboken!**



nothing is obvious in antwerp. that antwerp was a controversial city to its citizens was already clear from the previous chapter. it takes an effort to appreciate it, one has to contradict others and often suffer ridicule. in that way, antwerp is a city that forces its inhabitants to take position, to form an opinion about it, to speak out for themselves.  
it is striking how many people consciously plead for a colourful antwerp:

**MY COOKIE  
TOWN DOES  
TOLERATE  
COLOUR, DOES  
IT NOT?**





it is raining but all around me,  
a rainbow of people radiates.  
The city makes the sun shine again

---

even when they love their city, the people of  
Antwerp are very conscious of its problems.

In the genome of this city, its future is  
contained. She is destined for prosperity,  
if not by her cancers claimed.

i saw you drive by  
on your bike,  
on your way  
to the station.  
i waved at you,  
but you did not  
look.

people make a city, the city makes its inhabitants. The people of Antwerp form their lives with what the city offers them, with what they offer each other. A city is not only composed of its streets and squares, but also of the web of lines and intersections formed by the relationships between its inhabitants.

**father has mother, sister marries brother-in-law, I marry a stranger.**



people offer each other new opportunities

you fascinate me, make me laugh and cry.  
you go under my skin. or are you just  
play-acting?

where do you come from? you learn my language  
and you live in our city and you laugh  
at my joke. tell me a joke. i want to hear  
your language.

ON THE STROLL with immigrants through my  
city. i guide them through the past.  
they show me the future.



or feel fenced in by each other:

you are too emotional. your mind is not  
smart enough. for us, only rational art and  
please no idealism. shut up and supply,  
than you fit in our tolerant policy.

some people compose a short ode to Antwerp celebrities:

jean is the boss on the noordkasteel. a king on dirty feet. he deserves respect, because he ask for nothing. without jean, it would all have gone to the dogs.

A dangerous fool lives in this city. he writes books with words like lances. watch out! he has been spotted in the golden house. his name is Peter Holvoet-Hanssen.

but unknown people can also inspire admiration or curiosity.

Leeds -----

HAIKU WAITRESS counting syllables on her fingers she drops soup into his pocket

-----

on the bench, a quiet gentleman without pretension. his cane twisted next to thin thighs. his hands marked with honest work and time.

Leeds -----

AS I WALKED I stood on the corner of chapeltown road and watched an old man carrying his load. his head bowed low, his movements slow, it was a pity I had to go

-----

stiff poker nearly ruptures himself cycling on the empty meir. stress galore.

of course, sometimes the admiration is a little  
bit more concrete and purposeful:

He has blond hair and sky blue eyes....  
heavenly to dream away by....

fresh and fruity female beauty. men hop  
behind. bellies of bronze, faces of gold.  
springtime in Antwerp is gorgeous!

Leeds -----

SPARKLES I write your name: in traces in  
the dark; on flat, wet sand; in breath on  
windowpanes.

-----

How beautiful you look, triple chin and  
bald pate. how wonderful you look: how  
tempting to penetrate.



BUSTLI  
NG  
BUSSI  
NG  
ANTWE  
PP

**WE ARE NOW AT THE ROOSEVELTPLAATS IT WAS  
NAMED AFTER PRESEDENT ROOSEVELT OF AMERICA  
IT'S THE MAIN BUS STOP OF ANTWERP**

as a message submitted in english said, largely  
agreeing with the following dutch message:

**rooseveltplaats is a beautiful, centrally  
located square from which you can take the  
bus, the tram, the underground or even a  
cab in all directions.**

Locations where transportation is paramount,  
such as train stations, airports and also bus  
stations, offer an intensified version of the  
city in which they are situated. The circulation  
is faster, the course of time is more important,  
and therefore, everything seems to be going  
faster. In the same way, rooseveltplaats is a  
sharp cross section of antwerp as a whole. by  
means of the different trams and buses, every-  
thing, the people and their ideas about the city  
and its inhabitants, goes on and off  
rooseveltplaats and are confronted with each  
other.

**NOBODY STAYS, LIVES, BELONGS HERE. EVERY-  
BODY COMES AND GOES. GETS ON AND GETS OFF.  
RUMST, TEMSE, BRASSCHAAT. RUSH RUSH**



even at rooseveltplaats, not everything has to do with transportation:

from above, the rooseveltplaats is even more beautiful, a large garden, no question of transportation.

roosveltpl. you said: you might even marry her, i laughed. you stumbled and fell. and there, you became my boyfriend.

but for most people, that is the reason they go there. waiting is an essential part of it.

Leeds -----

THE BUS STOP AT THE BUS STOP RANDOM HOURS  
CROWD IN. THE MIND WANDERS, TO THE WIDE-  
OPEN SPACES OF THE TIMETABLE.

-----

I do not know how many hours of my life I  
have wiled away here but this square has  
become a constant in my life.

not everybody appears to be waiting just for the  
bus:

Leeds -----

ONE FOR THE ROAD IN the station bar gangs  
of girls meet for a night out. men in suits  
head home. they don't notice me in the cor-  
ner missing train after train.

-----

w8ing for the bus. w8ing for nice weather.  
w8ing for pierced bellies. sometimes, w8ing  
hurts.

-----  
people in a hurry get restless with waiting, but  
others use the time get a good look around and  
think about the city they are in.

Like drops, the crowds op people flow  
through the veins of the city. a screaming  
woman breaks through the façade of the  
city's well-oiled machinery. antwerp is  
alive.

-----

waiting makes thoughts roam freer, along the  
corners of the square, between the bus shelters,  
over the refuges. the bus traffic and its pas-  
sengers sometimes take on strange forms under  
the amused eyes of waiting people:

**BUSES UNDER THE TREES. IRON UNDER FRESH  
GREEN. I HEAR THE CITY.**

-----

buses sail across the Leien like ships  
jolting over the sea.

buses grumble like fierce bears fighting

Robots in uncomfortable seats mumble  
bits&bytes. heads of tin shake as one  
single organ to the rhythm of the under-  
ground.

other Antwerp citizens are worried about the  
city:

**All these beautiful,  
colourful people,  
at the tram stop  
in the morning sun...  
It hurts my heart  
that so many  
fellow-citizens voted  
against them.**



most of the time, waiting gets its reward:

rush to the tram. just a test to see who is  
on time. oops. won again.

she is standing right behind me, with her  
pierced bare belly. The better the weather,  
the scantier the clothes. w8ing makes sense  
again.

buses and trams take their passengers away to  
wait once more, for arrival, to wait at home or  
at work, to wait for the city.

softly i glide through the dreary town on  
my way to... to nowhere. and when i arrive  
there, i will depart for somewhere. in this  
dreary weather.

i glide through a city. i look into the  
eyes of its inhabitants and i see the year-  
ning for arms to embrace them. hold me. i  
let you go.

Leeds -----

the girl on the bus has black hair, the  
girl at the stop has blonde hair, but the  
girl of my dreams is mousey brown, and  
knitting her way to heaven.

-----

sometimes it almost seems as if the antwerp citizens are truly satisfied with their public transportation.

The tram in antwerp: securely on time, all smiling faces, comfortably chattering. what dears they are, the people of antwerp.

ring-a-ling! 'good morning, madam, get on carefully. are you well-seated? today it's free, the sun is shining.' ring-a-ling! the antwerp tramway, inestimable!

but maybe that is only make-believe.

IT IS RAINING  
BUT ALL  
AROUND ME,  
A RAINBOW  
OF PEOPLE  
RADIATES.  
THE CITY  
MAKES THE  
SUN SHINE  
AGAIN

whatever we think of it, whatever we tell about it, the city remains true to itself. it needs people, but it does not need you or me. if we chose not to live here, it would find somebody else. it will survive us all.

talk about it. curse it. look at it. enjoy it. walk through it, bike through it, drive through it. trade and work and dwell in it. govern it. develop a vision about it. blow parts of it away. rear parts of it down. build to it, extent it, streamline it, strengthen it, heighten it, live in it. the city is there for you, like it is there for anybody else. it is there without you as well as without anybody else. the city is there for itself.

this is the story of the inhabitants about their city. the story of the city about its inhabitants, is the city itself, as it is today, as it will be tomorrow. it does not need to be written down. it needs be lived in. it will not ask for more. it will not settle for less.



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