

[A girl stands underneath the M8 motorway, near the Garscube Link. She wears a stark white dress adorned with red shapes and a pale pink blouse, flared sleeves flapping in the wind. The hips of the dress are exaggerated by large pockets. A vessel made out of her thighs. If a woman is not carrying a baby, she is often carrying something else, perhaps a bag, perhaps someone else's problems. This allows her purpose to move through the city and may be used as a tool of invisibility. But the girl who stops under the road sacrifices any invisibility she may have achieved to stand still in a transient place. She looks mythical and odd; uncertain, yet she stays. She opens her mouth. Her voice is barely audible, only heard intermittently between tooting horns and roaring engines, yet she repeats the following until the sound of her tongue is reduced to a whisper and she disappears entirely. Swallowed whole.]

The road pulls

from the centre of my stomach to my mother's womb.
I cut the chord that holds these two places together,
but my mind is stronger than my flesh and I am still attached
but in more pain than before

The blood flows

through my pale transparent skin I see it running, blue.
But then reaction,
violent oxidation, a mass of red;
the colour of love and hate and rage and passion and anger and seduction.
It tastes metallic on my tongue.

The blood flows

What is louder;
the sound of your heartbeat in your ear or the sound of the cars passing by?

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If you listen for long enough the two will merge into one song, the sound of the birth of the universe.

The blood flows

Bodies contained in steel
hurtle through tubes of concrete,
cells rush through arteries,
planets following ancient celestial paths, spinning, pulling, pushing.
The pace becomes faster and you clench your fists,
teeth grind off one another like the plates of the earth before an earthquake.

My body aches,
with sickness of not being in the right place.
But there is no right place
and there is no home in concrete, only in people.

My head aches,
perhaps it is the fumes, perhaps it is the incomprehensibility of my size.
If i squeeze myself into the space between the ground and the road do I disappear?
Or was I never there in the first place?

The blood flows

As this is a place of transition, no one belongs here.
Amongst the fumes float displaced stories, dissolving, as I do, into polluted air;
nomadic, homeless, lost.

Loss,
like the women who stepped up to the factory line, moulding phallic machines of destruction,
sent to their fathers, brothers and husbands
in dutiful effort for country and Queen.

The blood flows

On battlefields and in homes, men retreat behind enemy lines,
Women forced off the factory line and onto another

The blood flows

Labour,
of love or duty?
There is little choice either way,
the dissolution of one self into another,
loss of identity to the label of 'mother'.

And I exist only as a product of this;
her unwaged work of body and mind.

The blood flows

Yet of this factory line
she is still not foreman.
And her flesh will be governed by man and by state,
the rights of which not fully devolved,
politics played out on her body.

And when this is all done the cycle continues,
The colour drains out of her cheeks
and into her pants. Loss

The blood flows

Lost like the river of metal that now has run dry,
Poured from the crucible into my veins,
down to the centre of the Earth
Red and gold flow in and out,
they are the same as you and me,
there is no him or her.

And the fountain has dried up too.
And so have the conversations.
And in there place a flow of a different kind

The road that pulls

[repeat]

To make this work more accessible and allow wider distribution, a zine was made as additional documentation. The writing below could be found on the back pages, taking on a less poetic, more matter of fact voice, such as that found in a travel pamphlet;

This text was read as a performance exploring personal experience and history of a site underneath the M8 motorway, which was previously home to the Phoenix Iron Foundry. Thomas Edington & Sons built four steam locomotives at their Phoenix Iron Works, between 1840 and 1841 and also cast the gates of the Glasgow Necropolis. In the early 19th century there was a shortage of "small change" for the working people. This was partly due to the reluctance of the Royal Mint to produce coinage in anything other than precious metals. The Phoenix Foundry came up with its own currency to pay its workers and, although not official coinage, the tokens were generally accepted in exchange for goods in the surrounding community. The Phoenix Foundry moved to Garscube Road from Queen Street in 1847. In 1890, it moved again to St Vincent Lane, and Phoenix Park was laid out on the old site. Andrew "Sweetie" Buchanan (a partner in John Buchanan & Bros, confectionary and jam makers in Cowcaddens) commissioned a large fountain to be made in the foundry and gifted it the park. The fountain was demolished in 1959, and later the entire park was cleared to make way for the M8 motorway.

During the First World War, many women in Glasgow (and elsewhere in the country) began working in plane, ship and munitions factories to assist the war effort while the men were away fighting. For many this was their first experience of working in heavy industries (such as steel and iron) and of earning a wage. After the war they returned to the home, but they were not to settle for long and their contribution could not be ignored. At the end of the war 6 million women in the UK got the vote (however it was not until 1928 that this was extended to all women over 21).

All red blooded animals and humans need iron to survive. Iron is, by mass, the most common element on Earth and is also at the core of our planet; as well as inside our bodies. It is lost during menstruation and is vital to healthy pregnancy. It is often thought of as being inorganic, but really it is an active element that links natural and unnatural ecologies.

Air pollution is Scotland's single biggest environmental health threat, in urban centres traffic is the dominant cause of this. It is suggested air pollution causes more than 2,500 early deaths in Scotland each year. The M8 is one of the busiest motorways in the UK.