

Cromford



And round it goes top to toe and swinging. As smooth as the shuttle to and fro. Haight as a cart's wheel, cartwheeling over. Back and forth, back and Forth, to chapel and yard to fishing on sat-day Whilst Jenny waits, patient and still. Till the morning Thistle pipes its trill. Then its Sculcher and Carding and the Silver Loo, and Combing and Slubbing and Fine Rowing and Hush now, heads bowed, clean shoes and gloved hands. Hair spit-slicked, eyes down. We plough the fields, and scatter the good seed on the land. Wood and silk rustle as all please stand for the Bare foot brigade. Gap-toothed they come, slip slip down causey way, down deep, to the bottom of moss edged stone, one over t'other roll over. Dangle over the tangled spume coming rip roaring up as eager. School leavers. The batty breeze with its Sunday promise, scattering the bountians top. Flapped cotton on ankles, pink knees and burnt noses. Content to drip from ice-cream to. Wider this world now, with motion and link. Clatter clatter enough to wake the sleepers beneath. Forever more roving through this, our sweet valley with Helios and goodbyes on its permanent way. On't long cobble wobble home, teeth-a-rattling. Glad of the ganzi and battling along. As clever as clogs. Then up, to the cap of the hill, to the dry stone Throve of this kingdom, the park of branch swings and stone seesaws of Palaces, fit for mill-masters of all. Mouths and eyes wide and round as a dome...

A sigh, a pause on the millpond calm, then the chunter and rick of the pea in pod row. Shouting 'dinner' out the open front door. Up with the lark, crunch of grass snort of beast. The morning, all frost stamped and winter keen. Sharp as breath against frozen pane. The skitter and swish of feathers disturbed. As the old mill watches the white paper birds. With a glint and a huff, smooth and fresh-rinsed. Marching through history through maps of the world. Cotton wisps puffs and wheels chatter and grin... No time even for a pint of tea, a thimble full, then gerra whines to Rumpelstiltskin's hidey-hole. Corners crammed with bobbins tall. Bobbins fat, bobbins short and bobbins lean in and listen - to bustling brass with cheeks bulging, to ear ticking drum. Sing along if you know this one. Two one two. Tapping feet heads a-nodding. 'Mornin' then, ty up the duck. Gentle bubble of chitter-chatter. Catch your breath, how's the beer? 'Ee, fast to middlin' And garlic tang snips the air, as buds purse their lips in readiness. And burnt orange falls, whilst with the flurry. Wells are well-dressed in village squares... A roof cathedral high, people shrunk to busy beetle size. Room to scamper free. No sign of dinner, horn, nor mill master. Holding tight to wooden sides. Water full of stars and wobble-edged faces, cotton wool clouds, and cries of careful now. Hot rolled iron, wrought into line, beaded brows and blackened fingers, the Spit, and echo of fire and arm. First to harshly heat and beat then to gently cool and calm. Night. And pavements are lined with melted gold. Malling on, to age-bowed beams in rafters roosting, proud as bridges with clear sunshine painted. Bright as powdered lead. That'll catch they death cloud but on. Come rain, come shine, no time to play, else it'll be the tuppence fine. There's a school beside the high road, where pages did shuffle and Inky fingers follow crooked words, small voices sipped of Wandering sunlight, snipped into pieces and scattered. Alone but for the bending boughs, but for the Bees, who jostle in colourful corners. Pigs in muck and do-lally hens. Back-top deep and white as new lambs. Wet to the bones after the long slide down. Then with sodden mittened hands, haul to the top again. Mule spinning and reeling, winding and doubling, bundling and bleaching. Wind again, weaving. Ducked with the ducks for a moment and then. More to see. Shuttled through stone-edge patchwork fields. Weaving alongside the river and road, as rivers empty and roads fill. The leaves turn, And whisper still. Droplets bounce as baby on knees. Peek-a-boo down at stretched spirals beneath. The charned repeat of long ago prayers. The dip and round of well-trodden stairs, then on with a leap to Likely lads, where laughter pumps. As fire through the heart. To where it begins, with a tickle not a rash. With butterfly wings and thoughts of greater things. Then out. Opening. Wide as the sky... Though the world still spins, now slow, now fast. Here we shall meet and remember the past.

We start with the green and the blue - trees of Derbyshire - birds take centre stage. Kingfishers, wagtails, ducks, and the original water wheel emerges, pushing the mill machines around. Arkwrights mill builds up. The original optimistic industry, symbolised by the kingfisher.

The scene loses greenery- trees fall away as industry increases, then the mills shudder to a halt as the river water dwindles. Troy Laundry emerges as lines of sheets blowing in the wind. The Brewery pumps beer along pipes, river changes to ale.

Cromford Colour company - the walls begin to drip and flow with multicoloured paint, tins spinning and mixing, a vast machine of colour flow. Steam everywhere. But this seeps into stone, as lead builds up, a fish farm is seen in the yard, but the river pollutes and fish leap away

Fire takes hold, burning buildings on all sides, ash flows, colour drains away.

The buildings fall silent, turning to black and white, they shudder like an early film, glitching and pulsing, the projector appearing and turning down, the light fading to a pinprick...

A figure - dusty from pigment, from the 1971 Arkwright Festival emerges. Pan-like, to usher in new growth on all sides, saplings rise, the building fills with foliage. Dirt is swept away. The Arkwright Society emerge as the start of new beginnings.

Brick and window rise up, reforming and rebuilding, as UNESCO's accreditation is referenced through the shadows of key world heritage sites. All is powered by the return of the resurgent water, pouring in on all sides.

Today's businesses and shops are referenced, with the voices of those who work there heard. Each is represented by a bird landing in a new formed bird house, all tessellating across the building as a community of small spaces, weaving threads together.

From this surge comes the designs for a new water wheel, gleaming and evolving from the wooden original, like a butterfly from a chrysalis. Calculations and formulae flow as the new wheel is positioned.

In a flash of sparks and electricity ignited by the flash of a kingfisher, the wheel turns, and the buildings erupt in electric blue, water transforming through to green energy. Surfaces pulse and gleam in light

The Shine a light brass finale fanfare completes the piece, as the building transforms into a whirring mechanism of power and light, pushing us through time. John Flamsteed's Atlas Coelestis and a great orrery of Derbyshire's Shine a Light landmarks spin across the building, bringing together the locations from past, present and future.

