

# The High Life

By Neil J Hart

“What’ll it be?” he says, with a smile.

Must I decide straight away? I can’t think what I would like. Sloe Gin, Jameson’s Irish Whisky, Smirnoff or JD? Perhaps a cappuccino, a latte or a triple espresso. Oh, those Danish pastries look fantastic.

“I’ll take a Bud and some of those glazed doughnuts,” I reply finally.

“I’ll bring them out,” he says, gesturing to an empty wrought iron table out by the roadside.

I nod and make my way out through the glass swing door.

It’s a warm evening so I don’t mind sitting out doors. It’s actually very pleasant. The bar is situated on one of the quieter roads in the city and the traffic is beginning to dissipate after the rush hour. The sun is beginning to set as a few taxi’s fly past. I stare around at the buildings opposite and at the skyscrapers that strike upwards towards the sky.

I like to pay attention to those things that are mostly ignored or taken for granted. Being an artist, it pays for me to be attentive to those things that are mostly ignored or taken for granted. I guess it’s like taking on a new perspective of the scenes and people that I see and witness everyday. I like to stand on a chair in the corner of my living room, from time to time, to see what it looks like from there. Kind of like how a spider would view my living space. Or I might lie underneath the bed with my head against the thick

carpet or squatted in the under stairs cupboard. It's amazing how rich these mundane places can be if you really take the time to look.

Right now I'm fixed on the skyscrapers. I wonder what it's like to be a towering pillar of the city. A black shape in the silhouette of this metropolis' history. A mascara-coated eyelash on the eyelid of the world. Do skyscrapers see me the same way I see the spiders running across the carpet in my flat?

Imagine for a moment that skyscrapers can see and hear and smell and touch and taste. What does the world below them appear like from that lofty perch?

Do taxi cabs travel past their toes in the night like bed bugs searching for dead skin cells? Do underground trains rattle their foundations like the noisy neighbour putting up a picture? If skyscrapers believed in God do they feel closer to him? Would it be like Legoland with a pulse?

My Bud and doughnuts arrive.

And what of the air around them, the sun's rays and the storms that beat them savagely in winter months? It must be hugely frustrating to be stuck in one place, with one set of horizons, and a prescribed dose of seasons that are unavoidable. Are skyscrapers more like us than I first thought? Could ignorance be bliss though? I'll bet that skyscrapers are unaware of all inclusive holidays to St.Kitts or Antigua, adventure holidays in the Australian outback or ski trips to the winter wonderlands of the Earth.

Perhaps there is enough in this fair city to engage them. Those drumming bunny rabbits for one. You know, the little pink fluffy rabbits that are stuffed with batteries, pounding on snare drums and marching to and fro on the highstreets. Deli's and other assorted eateries too. The wafting smell of coffee and baked goods from all these outlets

could be a delight to those above and beyond us. Perhaps it's the stars that really dazzle them. Being able to see for miles around must give skyscrapers an amazing sense of perception.

We seem to spend most of our time in relatively tiny spaces, hunched over desks or stretched out in front of TV screens. Being able to see the sun rise and set everyday for the whole of your life must ingrain a sense wonder. Or does it remind them of how small and inconsequential they are? We only seem to appreciate this from time to time when sunning ourselves on distant shores or stealing romantic moments with a new-found love. I don't think it's good to dwell on these things, as they could drive us to despair, but to acknowledge them from time to time and bring us, dare I say it, 'down to earth'. An everyday reminder of this must be a terrible encumbrance to bear. I get to thinking that skyscrapers are probably pretty miserable creatures with no way to express themselves. Perhaps they have an inner voice that no one can hear.

Radio waves fill the skies across this city. It must be hell picking up all those transmissions. There's no way of escaping the breakfast shows, the drive home's, the competitions, jingles, chart countdowns and 80's revival shows.

*"Let's dance to the sound they're playing on the radio...Ebony and Ivory living in perfect harmony, side by side on my piano, keyboard, oh lord, why can't we...Would you believe they put a man on the moon...What if God was one of us...Oops, I did it again!"*

I know that would annoy me.

I wonder what a skyscrapers top five songs of all time are. Perhaps:

*"We built this city on Rock and Roll – Jefferson Starship*

*Up where we Belong – Van Morrison and Jennifer Warnes*

*Reach – S Club 7*

*Stronger than Steel – Five Star*

*New York New York – Frank Sinatra.”*

The smog and pollution of car fumes, energy plants, CFC's and air-borne viruses must be a constant distraction too. Are skyscrapers immune?

But then again do skyscrapers have friends? A big leap but lets take it. There must fifty or so skyscrapers in this city. Some big, some huge. Can I really view them like a family of obelisks or something? Do they look down at us in this way and up at the firmament with a dream of life beyond the realms of nonsense?

By the same rationale, do families of spiders look up at the world and wonder if we are looking down on them or that dead skin cells are looking up? Perhaps a spider is just a spider and a skyscraper is just a skyscraper and it's got nothing to do with me.