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**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

## Washington place

Hurley, UK

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## Washington Place

The tomatoes were green. This place isn't what it used to be. But the coffee was filled and re-filled until a swarm of caffeine buzzed around us.

*The ice in the water melted. The ice in the street solidified.*

Steam billowed, caught the sun and blinded winter-weary eyes. Sparrows scratched the bone-hard soil in the tiny garden beneath the window.

*Hats set to warm on the air conditioning.*

Bittersweet chords drifted through half-lit rooms, hot needle tears threatened to spill.  
You have fucked up my phone and ruined my holiday.

*All this talk of getting older . . .*

The roses would not open. Already they wilted on the bare pine table. Shabby white walls pulled shadows into their round high vaults.

*Watching snail racing on the Arts Channel.*

Cocaine snow powdered Times Square but the dinosaurs were cosy in their sandstone turrets. The witch hazel exploded, cinnamon tufts spiced the freezing air.

*Nice but you only live twice.*

A pinch of salt in the coffee brought out the hazelnut flavour as we swapped tales of broken hearts. The roach grew stiff on the windowsill.

*Messages split and warped in the ether.*

Far away the webcam spilled its image into a sanitised basement. Wires, complicated as arteries, choked the floor. The time delay made us feel like astronauts.

*Nothing holding us but pixels.*

by Ursula Hurley

### **When Rumi Danced**

When Rumi danced,  
I wonder if he ever imagined that his words  
would leap from his lips to the shelves  
of a corporate bookstore somewhere  
on the corner of Michigan and Pearson Ave  
in the Heartland of America  
seven hundred years later  
to be read by a small boy  
whose parents came over from India  
and wishes to know why he understands Shams  
though he's never seen a Persian Sun.

by Majid Mohiuddi