

The City

Step out into the rush, hundreds of people heading in two opposing directions, the pavement pedestrian war, the unswerving versus the unyielding, the racers, the dawdlers, the phone-gazers, the overtakers, the undertaken, the distracted, the dodgers, the stoppers, the tap-dancers, the strikers, the strategists. This is the city. No place for country hicks here, and maybe a bit too tough for suburbanites. This is where we live. People don't start or finish sentences with please, it's a dinosaur adverb for the weak and mild. Brevity is cool. It saves energy. No one walks in and says 'may I have a coffee please?' That's five words too many and 'thanks' is pretty much passé around here unless you're begging, but even there a grunt is quite enough. The great thing about a city is that about 36 hours happen in a single day, it's all about legerity and if you can't keep up then we won't hesitate to knock you off the kerb. Are you listening? We talk fast. We eat fast. We walk fast. We're just fast. The higher the buildings, the lower our morals. The wider our streets, the narrower our minds. We're shaped by architecture and traffic, that's about it. Concrete and rubber, the immovable and the fluid. Or maybe it's the transport that's stationary and it's the streets and buildings that are motile. You wanna know how fast we are, we can beat any taxi to any address just by hoofing it. Pedestrians don't have traffic jams 'cause anything in the way just gets pushed out of the way. You can tell an out-of-towner any day, they kind of screw up their faces because of the noise. What noise? Hey, the louder it gets, the more symphonic it feels. We've got the world's greatest orchestra here, eighty six varieties of car horns, screeching violins brakes, vocals by irate drivers, heavy percussion from the building sites, police and ambulance sirens play staccato harmonies, shop alarms break through in high pitch intervals, boom box hip hop pouring out of every other car, and all this stuff bouncing off the glass of the shops and offices and echoing down the side streets. This is one musical metropolis and we all hum along, each and every one of us, one man's cacophony being another man's rhapsody. We specialise in ignoring each other as we storm along looking down at our phones looking for answers unaware of the rest of us staring down at our phones and if we look up we avoid looking at each other, there's not enough time to eye someone you're never gonna see again in your lifetime. We're an army of loners, a crowd of desolates, happy to be not too happy as long as we're not too unhappy, we feed off the famine, drink of the drought. The city makes us and we make the city. That's what we're about. Synergy and energy. The whole world's here, every single nationality, every single race, we don't need travel, this city's got every foreign restaurant we'll ever need, wanna shop exotic foods, it's all here, clothes from all four corners of the world, books in every language, transoceanic music playing every night, forget the travel agent, we've got the world's treasures here in our museums, the world's art in our galleries, that's right, the world has come to this city, so why fly, why sail, why drive, just walk, it's all walking distance, keep up, step out into the rush, the crush, it's all there for the taking. Use the city like it's using us.