

The City Savage

by [Justin Wong](#) (August 2023)



Self-Portrait, Otto Dix, 1912

Amongst mist-grey growths,
Of bricks and mortar;
Behind the shrouds of stone,
Within urban wilds;
Neath the arch of underpass,
That protect from the element's caprices:
Man.

Here he is:
Primeval and Modern;
Backwards and forwards;
Upwards and down;
In Progress and regress—

The return after progress
Is his Jerusalem after time.

He forms the ranks of a savage gentry,
His is a bourgeoisie primitivism,
Labouring in offices soullessly corporate,
Hiding the signs of a pagan nature,
Under shirt and tie, trousers and jacket.

He establishes ties,
Inscribing names of
his dubious kin,
In a *pen of iron*,
On the book of his flesh.

His beliefs: atavism on the one hand,
And futurism on the other,
One foot in the tropics,
The other in undawned day.

His mind is conflict:
Pantheism and individualism;
Universalism and alienation —

The essence of anti-religion.

Pharmacopoeia is his Eucharist—
Memory and transcendence.
Death is his end,
though the future his salvation —
The donkey's carrot to a Shangri La
One is moving ever nearer to,
Though always the same distance from.

The city savage in the savage city,
The nose-ringed amongst electromagnetic waves,
The bodily adorned that pass through
The acrid fumes of stuck traffic,
The de-civilized amongst extant remnants
of a rescinded history.

This is a renaissance of prehistory
at the end of time,
Savages in the hour pragmatism,
Adamites in their nude communion,
The cannibal in the courts of law.

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Justin Wong is originally from Wembley, though at the moment is based in the West Midlands. He has been passionate about the English language and literature since a young age. Previously, he lived in China working as an English teacher. His novel, *Millie's Dream*, is available [here](#).

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