

THE MUSEUM OF LOST SOULS

'It is always rewarding to have your own interests met by enthusiasts anxious to open the secret cabinet for you, to pull back the closed door and reveal the miracle they have been saving for you there, to show you another layer with another voice, to help you answer the simple question with the long answer.'

– Timothy Noel Harris, *Iconoclysms*

Here, closer to that part of the universe with which most are unacquainted, we are speechless before evidence presented as proof: burnt handprints, splinters of the true cross, saints' relics and remains, secret messages from beyond.

It is all convincing until we leave the house of silence and return to the city's bluster and hot streets, where rationality and doubt persuade us to question what was only moments ago true.

We pray to be given suspension of disbelief, conviction, ask to commune with the dead. Send signs, send songs, missives and exhortations, details of death and beyond; we grapple with doubt while walking home.

Connoisseurs of mystery, we seek utopia, knowing it does not exist. Only the sun writing on the water is real, the fluttering wings are simply reflections on the wall, not a doorway to the sky. We pretend this tangled light is ours.

© Rupert M Loydell