

**Excerpt from the very last Chapter (No 79), headed simply 'RESURGAM', of Peter Ackroyd's 2001 book 'London: the biography'**



There are different worlds, and times, within the city; Whitehall and West Ham, White City and Streatham, Haringey and Islington, all are separate and unique. Yet in the last years of the twentieth century they participated in the general brightness of London. If light travels in waves it may be described as a rippling effect, as the renovation or rejuvenation of the inner core has spread outwards. London has opened up; there seems to be more space and more air. It has grown in lightness. In the City towers are clad in silver-blue reflective glass, so that the difference between the sky and the building effaced; in Clapton and Shepherd's Bush, houses are being repaired and repainted.

If London were a living thing, we would say that all of its optimism and confidence have returned. It has again become 'the capital of all capitals' in every cultural and social sense. The world flocks to it and once more it has become a youthful city. That is its destiny. *Resurgam*: 'I will arise'. It was the word found upon a stray and broken stone just when Wren began his work upon St Paul's Cathedral; he placed it at the centre of his design.....

These relics of the past now exist as part of the present. It is in the nature of the city to encompass everything. So when it is asked how London can be a triumphant city when it has so many poor, and so many homeless, it can only be suggested that they, too have always been a part of its history. Perhaps they are part of its triumph. If this is a hard saying, then it is only as hard as London itself. London goes beyond any boundary or convention. It contains every wish or word ever spoken, every action or gesture ever made, every harsh or noble statement ever expressed. It is illimitable. It is Infinite London.

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