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Citation: Green, Michael (2008) Music for a new society. Flash: The International Short-Short Story Magazine, 1 (1). pp. 9-10. ISSN 1756-5200

Published by: University of Chester

URL: <http://www.chester.ac.uk/flash.magazine>
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Music for a New Society

It was as if the wall of glaring whiteness he had thought could never be climbed was suddenly something he could just walk through.

Changes of which he was half-aware - newspaper headline changes, triumphant, distant, changes meaningful for others, not for those like him, but changes nevertheless - made the magic that had kept the wall in its place lose its power, undoing the artifice sustaining it.

Now those once behind the wall stood exposed, quivering in their vulnerability, ordering those who would still serve them to create higher, thicker walls out of the far less effective mediums of concrete, brick, stone, wire, steel.

The things they owned waited for him. Taking them was the revolution that they were told had never happened. Not the things, but the taking.

He could depend upon their lingering sense of invincibility to betray them: dogs, alarms, bars bypassed, he slipped ineffably as the future into their sleep-warm houses. Then he stood above them, breathing in their dreaming before doing whatever it occurred to him to do.

Tonight, not even that much effort: a car pulled over just as the first heavy drops fell from the darkness through which he strode, humming, sure in his own strength. A child, two or three years old, let out to urinate, its mother hovering, irritated. So easy, for the figure coming out of nowhere: the flash in the driver's window, the jerk and spattering too little warning for the stark white face turning at the passenger door. The pale damp vision coming apart, the body folding in slow motion to the scrub and litter that lined the tarmac as it held on grimly to the last of the day's heat.

Easy too the dragging out and tossing of the driver over his mate. The satisfying work finally coming with taking the frozen child from the back seat and placing him next to his brother, short pants still down at his knees. Leaving them standing beside the leaking bundles of smart casual wear as he drove away, letting the play of guilt and blame become stronger than any illusion of a wall.