

Victoria League Colonial Students Hostel

What are you looking at? Sitting there, frozen in a silver terror
of uncertain impending events. Uncomfortable in a tattered arm chair,
legs warmed by a fox who has seen better days.

What are you looking at? Anxiously gazing forward in your
oversized mac, was it a gift or a hand me down?
Did it protect you from the ravages of European storms?
Winds rush across the continental face.

What are you looking at? All of you in your ration suits,
and wartime functional finery. Your eyes fixed in fearful attention,
ahead. The lonely ashtray longs for prosperity.

Is it a stern lecture on etiquette? Delivered in clipped
BBC English approved by the officer class.
It's a long way from Jamestown to Nutford House.

Is it the celluloid dominion delivering public
information on the perils of fracturing colonial
identity? Darkness behind you is just a memory.

Is it the sun finally setting? They said it never would.
A dark grey Empire fades into colour.

Fear and anxiety is on *all* your faces,
- is it of the past? - or of the unknown?

Except –

A happy child sat smiling on your lap,
and so comfortable in your arms.
She looks, not sideways but to out here,
and confidently knows there is nothing to fear.
Is her name hope? She *is* the future and understands,
music, love and diversity.
- and she is safe in *your* hands.

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Poet: **Danny Herbert**
(Local Poet of Coppermill Poets)

Piece inspired by The National Archive Image No; [CO 1069 909_0003](#)