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***METROPOLITAN EGOS:  
VERSIONS OF LONDONNESS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH  
POETRY***

***Abstract:*** *Since modernism, the city has been perceived as a pervasive threat, a site whose indifference and cynicism erase human identity. And yet, it can open great possibilities for the development of the spirit, since a capital city is, by definition, a great opportunity, as its multiple facets mirror the fragmentation of identity – and, simultaneously, allow its recombination into harmonious alterity. In the postmodern quest for self-location, the city is a fascinating place for its ambiguous relationships between displacement and commitment to place. London in particular, as the epitome of sheer cosmopolitanism, has captured the imagination of numerous contemporary English poets, as the locus where conjunctive form dissolves into disjunctive antiform, and then turns again to its original shape in a perpetual game of creation and re-creation. The different patterns continuously making and remaking personal stories point to the illusion that the great city permanently invents itself, as in the poems of either native Londoners like Alan Brownjohn, Thom Gunn, U.A. Fanthorpe and Anna Adams, or adopted metropolitan adventurers such as Grace Nichols and Benjamin Zephaniah.*