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WORK PERMIT

The alarm rings. We stand in the cave. Time passes. Certain doors, wheels, passwords are involved. The alarm rings.

Up goes the cry, “Bruise the tulips!” Thereafter we do not desist from our travails until the tulips are well and truly bloodied.

I confess I should like an apple.

The alarm rings. Time passes.

This does not mean I believe an apple will quell my feeling of non-satisfaction.

Word comes from head office: “Don’t fuck with the tulips!” We stop fucking with the tulips. The alarm rings.

On the train, invisible again, I open my notebook and swallow their dirty words.

Home, Room P217, the trainee hearth surgeons scraping their scalpels on the scutcheon. It’s coming, chief. The cash flow. Trust me. There are fights on the ceiling, fights on the floor, a steady percussive fury on each of the four walls. Battered tulips stand shrivelling in a decapitated detergent bottle. The slow gape of kith and kin has locked onto an alien love show on wide-scream TV. This too is called soap.

If this is soap, why are my children dirty?

Listen, there’s a kid here who takes bets for the block. He takes bets on his bike to the bookie shop. Last week he disappeared with the lot. It’s not like this. Back there. It shouldn’t be allowed, no way, boss.