

RATAE CORITANORUM

by Kate Ruse

Down Vine Street,
unearthed from its grave deep shrine,
names on a tablet of lead found amongst
bitten coins and empty clasps.

Did it rain back then as it does now?

Grey water sliding off roofs.

Did it splash into the muddied grooves?

Forts loomed along the river Soar,
men flinched and hid from the rain
dreaming of a violent sun,
the perfume of lemon groves.

Down Vine Street now
this Roman past sprawls underground,
caught in dust and rubble.

While above layers of touch, movement
and faith blend and separate.

The gods align, eclipse and pass.

A charismatic son plays his part,
a theatre of eccentric stars weave tales

and a minaret of echos drift
across a steel grey sky.