

CHRIS HASSIG | Quorim Quorim Walking Tour



Try to imagine this place before the city. The tidal marshes, the gordian willows, archaic trees, the mud wallow openings. Down near the shore was a jungle. White tigers prowled what faint trails existed. The peninsula had three prominent hills, later to be named Eo, Beobiro, and Quorim. The bald impenetrability of the bedrock summits rendered them natural encampments with wide views. Fate settled the first city near Providence Spring on Eo Hill. As the ancient city grew, then the Teshic, then the medieval, then the carbonic, then the Vdyc, and finally the botanical, Quorim Quorim was throughout the province of quarries. A subtractive city emerged. Coming up Lach Street from Pabel via the Old Haymarket, the street becomes a rock canyon, the canyon walls themselves carved into windows, doors, terraces, following the whims of the rock and the craft of Quorin quarriers of old.

Down and down Lach Street cuts, or rather, the hill rises. We find a ramped pathway along a narrow ledge that in time takes us high above the street. A man at the Old Haymarket who claimed to have no name told us that one could find vestiges of the original natural hilltop this way, and we do. Up through a moss garden to a natural stone slab, we are transported to one of those prehistoric camps. We can't help but look across at the apex of the former hill where a carved columnar butte remains: the Quorim Church of the Rosead. Partially broken and eroded with the inevitable weaknesses of the rock, the Quorim Church alternates rubbly indistinctness and fluted crisp carving. We are drawn through the stone labyrinth to it. The dome is partially repaired in timber and the column's crowning angel lost to time, but the church remains a beautiful testament to the rock carving craft. Inside, its amphitheater arrangement places the preacher below his audience in a sort of supplication rather than superiority. Portholes in the massive rock walls illuminate significant carved scenes from the Rosead Hymnal at the equinoxes, winter solstice, and August cusp.

Down below the Quorim Church we find a tomb of saints and sensory-deprivation hermitages. It is a rite of social and religious passage in the neighborhood for adolescents to spend one to two weeks in one of the hermitages here, considering their path in life. Some do not take to the darkness well, but those that find it particularly suitable may be called into the monkhood. Down further we come to the Secret Assembly, a cavernous stope where parishioners gathered in times of siege or crisis or during the equinoctial magnetism. These chambers are connected by secret passages to the rest of the troglodytic city. Some of this underground empire is still inhabited, but much of it is used for storage, given over to transient squatters, or otherwise neglected. Deep deep down one comes to the waterline. The big dim rooms are carved with mythical beasts, gorgons, gremlins and desperate heroines clinging to their stone strings that promise to lead them back to the surface. The slime-black water swallows the rest. It's too treacherous a trip to the mysterious deep bubbles.

The doubling of the neighborhood's name, Quorim Quorim, often comes off as a mantra, a reassurance, even a grinned mockery, a self-affirmation of solidity against an undercurrent of doubt in an ever-uncertain life. These deepest caverns are favored by Quorins as a place to echo their vowel-filled chorales. It's a deeply mournful blues that seems to haunt through the rooms long after a ceremony's end. To haunt through your unlatched moments long through life.