

# Dan Cullen, Docker

John Seed



The Municipal Dwellings

## DAN CULLEN, DOCKER

*London 1903*

a low-ceilinged hole seven feet by eight  
his home one of the Municipal Dwellings  
not far from Leman Street

bare floor walls covered with blood  
marks of squashed insects  
and cheap pictures of Garibaldi Engels

John Burns in his blue reefer suit  
and white straw hat  
and other labour leaders he knew

Seed 2

his Shakespeare and read  
history sociology economics  
in the watches of the night

and spoke his mind freely  
chosen leader of the fruit porters  
fires of the spirit

and after the Great Dock Strike  
1889 and every day for years  
marked and resolutely disciplined

drilled and starved  
and soul harrowed and  
broken hearted

feet swollen with dropsy he  
sat up on the side of the bed  
all day a thin blanket

on his legs an old coat  
around his shoulders  
penniless demanding his discharge

from Whitechapel Infirmary  
though they told him he'd die  
on the stairs

alone and finally  
gasping for breath  
baffled on a pauper's couch

in a charity ward  
out of the way the poor  
of the earth

hide themselves lonely  
together ungrateful  
remembered