

## **Room to Read Book Group Report**

### **“If nobody speaks of remarkable things” by Jon McGregor**

Having previously read and discussed McGregor’s *Reservoir 13* for book group we were prepared for an unusual and challenging read.

The novel is set in an ordinary and impoverished street in a northern city and starts with an almost poetic observation of the city noises, their brief night time cessation and the start of a new day. It then develops into an exploration of the lives of the street dwellers. Here we have minute details of the domestic existences of a multi-racial community which also leaves us tantalisingly deprived of certain pieces of information about them. Many things, some of them deeply sad, are hinted at, but not made explicit. There are many loose ends.

Narrated in part by one of these characters, the story slowly comes to a climax in a tragic event involving a child. Even then, the aftermath of this event is shadowy and inexplicable with hints of a miraculous recovery at the expense of another character. There is also a sub-theme, again less than explicit, around parent/child relationships, and about twins (there are 3 sets of twins in the novel).

We all agreed that it was difficult to remember which characters lived at which house and that it needed sustained reading, rather than dipping into.

One group member, having read the book some time ago found it intensely irritating this time round, and we all felt that some of the writing showed too much obvious literary device, but others loved the lyrical style, and the portrayal of the extraordinary within the ordinary, which is there if we choose to see it and have the time to do so.

As a recommendation for another book group we scored it 4 out of 5 and the same for a recommendation for friends.

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