

THE  
RETURN  
OF THE ROSE

*22nd-29th November 1998*

*Being an account of a tour of England  
In the last week of November, 1998*

## MONDAY

*Portsmouth – Chichester*

### THE WELCOMING

These are occasions twyx two kindred minds,  
Whose love of poesia absolute  
Brings those to raptures that in numbers finds  
A marching drummer & a lilting lute

To thee I leave my sonnetries in trust,  
Dear reader, as in these I am alive,  
Tho' most of them may join me in the dust  
I hope, perhaps, a handful will survive  
For who reads Blake & Milton line-on-line?

But still I build a budding Parthenon,  
Being this private pilgrimage of mine  
Before by scourging time 'tis rubble-gone

For tho' my soul in *this* no longer grows  
While we share *this* still lives the *Silver Rose*.

## AVE ENGLAND!

Have you ever seen Cumbria clad in snow  
Or Brighton's beaches been in summer's easy glow  
& have you ever heard the Cambridge matin bells  
Or felt your senses stirr'd when England's anthem swells?

Did you drink the ale brewed for the northern mills  
Or watch seafarers sail from Whitby's salty sills  
& did you ever feed your thirst in Cornish Springs  
Or take the time to read through histories of kings?

Have you ever pass'd an afternoon at Lords  
Or watch'd a happy cast a-tread Adelphi's boards  
& have you ever cheer'd the horses at Aintree  
Or as a bargeman steer'd the waters of the Lea

To a troubador with liberty come range this fabl'd land  
The English call their own, set sail for Portsmouth strand!

## LANDFALL

I am back from long & lonely exiles  
In foreign climes both beautiful & bleak,  
To travel the length of these Western Isles  
A silver sonneteer!

Through one week seek  
Old-fashion'd romantic rebellion  
That last bastion of self-expression

I must quest from this heart of the Solent  
To misty high lakelands, where aching grows,  
A little bloom as yet unpluck'd by hand  
Of silver sonneteer!

Some sister rose  
Mixing ha'pennies of taking life easy  
With music & a modern odyssey!

## MANIFESTO

I am the Silver Rose & in these words confide  
Tis better to have lived than to have died  
& in this life of highlights that we lead  
Preserve them in the poets where poets store their mead

& when their talent turns to focus on the times  
& pattern snow with measure, mood & rhymes  
Stone-jowell'd Gods must guarantee just dues  
O compact curious that is the bardic muse

A bard must praise his land for in him this land lives  
Praise all the best poesis that she gives  
Ere epochfall, as Cornwall lost its tongue

For then, & only then, shall we these words exhume  
Like finding lost papyrus in a tomb  
Where Orpheus had left a mourning song

## 50P BOOKSHOP

In the heart of the Maritime City,  
On Albert Road, still trades the treasure store  
Where first found I those gems of poetry,  
Little jewels of literary lore.

As I disturb the silence of that room  
Bookseller barely glances from the page,  
The musty smell of leather-bound volume  
After volume...

shelf-stack'd, floor-piled...

...the sage

Deems sweeter than perfume of a lover.

I find, buried, a long-forgotten tome,  
Blow off the dust in clouds from its cover,  
To chance on a book on the sonnet form!

'Tis such monumental moments as these  
Which sat my craft drifting on mighty seas.

## MODERN LIFE

At this stage of mankind's evolution,  
We live in an age of air pollution,  
Fat-cats & taxes, taxi fares, faxes,  
Serial killers, silky leg waxes,  
Condoms, modems, gimmicks, gadgets, gizmos  
Two rubber ducks & comic book heroes,  
Football, rock & roll, catwalk, movie stars,  
Recession, depression & wonder bras,  
Four packs & prozac, pylon countryside,  
Anarchist daughter, schoolboy suicide,  
Just-add-water, slaughter of Mother Earth  
Death of religion & occult rebirth,  
Not one inch left of this globe to explore,  
The whole world itchin' for a third world war...

## ON THE DOLE

All the artists would be forced to enrol  
Without those wages the taxpayers share,  
But life sure stinks when you doss on the dole  
Like a whiff of Cherie Blair's underwear.

It's great work if the pride will allow it,  
Eighty pounds sterlin' for signin' your name,  
As an idle hour on state benefit  
Sure beats the dumb humdrum of workin' game.

I wait an hour in the soul-sapping queue,  
Watching the wraiths to while away the while,  
Cruise my way through a stupid interview,  
Then sign on the line, & spurt out, with a smile,

*"Ask not what I can do for my country,  
But what can my countrymen do for me."*

## ME

I love the smell of garlic on mi fingers  
& The Raven by Edgar Allen Poe  
Can't stand a night of karaoke singers  
Or the pain after stubbin' mi big toe

I'm noble when defusing a punch-up  
Or savin' spiders from a water-hole  
I get angry when chippies charge for ketchup  
Or Burnley losing to a stupid goal

It's silly watching synchronised swimmers  
& dafter when we grow a milk moustache  
It's mellow trimming lawns with new strimmers  
& buzzing when pockets cough-up lost cash

'Cos when i'm not writing mi poetry  
The little things in life are what make me!

## PORTSMOUTH & SOUTHSEA

As the Starbird completes his embassy,  
Beneath vibrant horizon she shall nest,  
The sunken copper of a lilac sky  
Dwindles to a band, hued as the harvest.

Lady Moon's silver filters through evening,  
People wait patiently for the late train;  
Up pacing platforms, sat calmly reading,  
Smoking a cigarette, talking of rain.

Over the tannoy a strain'd southern drawl  
Heralds the five forty-five to Brighton,  
Click-clack down the track train rocks to the roll,  
Then slows....

& into its toilet I am gone.

Excellently ticketless & groovy,  
Me in the mirror the in-flight movie!

## THE ANCYENT ART OF MINSTRELSIE

I check the clientele of Chichester;  
Well dress'd, good-manners, in warm harvest health,  
Appearing to me, somewhat, much richer  
Than most in culture, demeanour & wealth.

I beg a lucky penny, set up stall,  
Flagstone the hat as to enthral the coin,  
Tune the guitar so songs shall not appal  
When crooning & psychapiracy join...

*"Scusa... I am a penniless poet!"*  
Showering shuffle-pockets with hot curses,  
*"Hey blondie, hmmm... nice ass... can I touch it?"*  
Deftly loosens the birds' passing purses,

The price of a modern-day troubadour,  
Raking the evening's takings from the floor.

## THE ESOTERIC ART OF BASS GUITAR

My essential thoughts on playin' the bass  
Are explore the depths of your greatest riffs,  
Learn moves, grooves, scales, styles, patterns, chords & grace,  
Tune up before you skin-up pure skunk spliffs,  
It's not the note count that counts it's the space,  
Music must mean more than money & health,  
Root-notes-while-U-wait, Blues, Funk, Slap, Fretless,  
Find the best band (don't be dust on the shelf),  
Embrace the lifestyle of bass to excess,  
To influence be influenced yourself;

Pepperland panache is the purest Paul,  
My Generation's Entwistle solo,  
Jack Bruce on Berlin, MDM-amo,  
Flea's lightning groove & Mani's mellow roll.

## ARRESTED IN CHICHESTER

I gasp to the swish of the golden stream,  
Pissing pretty patterns upon the wall,  
My breath interspersed with the risin' stream,  
I smell another shadow, six feet tall.

*"Whaddaya fink ya bleedin doin mate!"*

I turn...

see a nipple-head pig in blue,  
Piss on his shoes, snake shake & calmly wait  
For the old,

*"Roit son, oim arrestin you,  
Anyfink you say may be...blah, blah, blah..."*

The police don't appreciate the poet,  
Too hot to handle, Tunguskan star.

*"Show some respect!"*

*"Hey Porky go blow it up yer brown bacon ass!"*

My lawlessness

Breeds the glove <ping> & pride in nakedness.

### LINES CARVED INTO A CELL WALL

I shall be true when the land's jurisdiction  
Has shackl'd my liberty, chain'd my free-will  
However they fight me, with famine & friction  
Imprison'd & beaten I'll be myself still

I shall oppose them with all of my beauty  
For while there is beauty then all is not lost  
Tender emotion means more than their mercy  
As liberty onto their conscience is toss'd

I shall stand proud when the soldiers are coming  
Inviting their snipers to aim at my chest  
Play the flute smoothly to sooth the crude drumming  
Notes lulling the rifles, "*Come lay them to rest!*"

Only those who break not the laws of this Queendom  
May truly castigate me & castrate my freedom!

### CONSTABLE CUNT-STUBBLE

The slow, squeaky screech of the door's creaking  
Wakes me from dreaming, my sleepy eyes stare,  
Slowly behold the Duty Sarge sneaking  
To my cell, her Autumnal Auburn hair  
Wild rivers of lusty, flowing l'amore.

There's something so sexy about uniforms,  
Especially when crumpl'd on the floor.

*She is a sea of Venus freed from storms*

Warm flesh arouses is in my cold bed,  
She whispers the sonnet carv'd into wall,

*"I've never been with a poet!"*

she said

As she swarm'd all over me, after all  
I had no courage, nor right, to stop her,  
For who dare risk fucking with a copper.

## TUESDAY

*Chichester- Brighton*

### INCARCERATED

Time has swung swift to this un-noticed hour  
here is a shift in her most dearest care  
now at the dawn of age I am aware  
little of life is truly in our power.  
O for a lizard & a wizard tower!  
to launch a Pegasus on swooning air  
far from parades of this, the daily wear,  
when little lives, in an instant, grow sour  
to give so much, to give & give some more,  
to strive in flux, to strive with writhing soul,  
to banish from the mind the thoughts that gnaw  
to keep the faith when others may lose theirs  
& heed an inner call, however small,  
shall set a person right in life's affairs?

### LAWBREAKER

The bright young thing of the court-room upstood,  
Poised to defend with the best of his charm,  
Rebel eyes burning bright beneath a hood,  
Opens his speech with an elegant

*"Ma'am,*

*'Tis not I who stand on trial here today  
But my mistress muse, temptress dragoness,  
I follow her blind down the poet's way  
& if poetry be crime I confess  
To a life of crime..."*

As penalties fix

The fruit of my minstrelsie pays what Im fined!

The poet survives on the food that he nicks;  
Boots, Tesco's & Woolworths - we slyly wind,  
Lift rum, ham sandwich, grab some pick n mix,  
Bypass the tills...

& leave those crimes behind!

## THE SHORE

How soft the waves break on this golden sand  
Before receding into whispering sea,  
Washing the beach, leave a pink, twinkling band  
Where we stroll in autumn serenity

The sea's salty scent & spray soothe the core  
Through rustic Felpham's marine lanes I make,  
Whose hush'd serendipity by the shore  
Inspired the mystic visionary, Blake.

In the misty distance the salient  
Headlands crown the curvature of the bay,  
The sea rolls away, land stands defiant,  
Shale-splash'd, hay-thatch'd cottages line the way.

Such mellowness descends as white waves roll,  
From sea meadows, murmuring to my soul.

## DAYTRIPPER

I pause in my stroll, roll up a smoke  
& settle these stoned eyes upon the sea,  
Smoking down a joint, drawing the last toke  
I think its time to drop that LSD.

As cellophane unwraps I take great care  
Not to touch the blotting with my fingers  
Holding the edges I bite off my 'dare'  
Remember mad shit this bite must bring us....

*Spinning, staring into abyssal eyes  
Of my fellow man, together we are  
Unity, to see Universal skies  
O'er Astral ocean, 'neath gyring Lodestar*

As the acid dissolves upon my tongue  
I smile miles wide, for real this stuff feels strong!

## PSCYCHE

There are as many fates as living beings  
Kinetic watchwardens of the human soul  
Karmic particles on an atomic plain  
But sometimes flux is ruptured  
Have you ever witnessed destinies colliding  
Or better still been privy to the deed  
Although we all must one day learn our fate  
Very few have secret destinies  
& when, by accident or coincidence,  
They meet head on in a transient place  
It seems as if a Pathe News reporter  
Would film the moment onto grainy cinereel  
& the rest of us sit rooted to our seats  
Pondering on the news & its inevitable effects

## IN THE ZONE

When you're in the zone  
Every second turns to poesy  
Those tramps sat in the park  
Were they discussing Plato?

What is it about life?  
She seems to twist & turn  
Through shadow & sun  
Without a pause, relentless...

There are those who live & those who just exist  
When realizing our natures  
It is the lone individual which moves the age  
Within the solitude of his page

As stones hold the sun's heat long after it is gone  
My poesis here forever shall remain

## TRAINING IN THE ART OF FARE EVASION

Landing in Bognor Regis in a daze  
The time has come for me to make the fade  
East up to Brighton ...

Only a fool pays

The full fare, so in order to evade  
The barrier grunts, I research & buy  
A one-stop single, saving sev'ral pound!

As along the line nine carriages fly  
My conductor is commencing her round.

The ticket is check'd, I move to first class  
Where the face that has jump'd a thousand trains  
Gazes smugly upon me through the glass,

The pane awash with cool November rains.

How life is a rush when lived through one's wits,  
Like catching the Bern-bound train from Colditz!

## BRIGHTON PROMENADE

Less than an hour's ride from London wind the bustling Brighton Lanes,  
On display were T-shirts, vests, oriental eats, florists, flatcaps & funky beats,  
Further still the shlinky streets were laden with bookshops & babes,  
Socks, calendars, creams & rings & everyone flitting around like schmetterlings.

I walked through the exotic Pavilion Gardens deeper into the narrow streets  
Past the vinyl hives & the mopeds, botanical lives & electric threads,  
flea markets, & duvet dappled beds as to my ears swept the sea's dull roar.  
Brighthelmstone - pills, thrills, pubs, clubs, stars, bars, bags, slags, scarves & cars

Onto the beach I tarried where waves crashed in onto the wet, stony sands  
Only the gulls were at play by a grey-haired old geezer with scarf & beret.  
This is why I travel, for moments like these, melodic music & a warm seabreeze,

I glide barefoot along the promenade to a skeletal relic  
Where barefoot on the stones, quaffing beer beside the Pier,  
I watched the gull fleet sail the spangled wave.

## SUNDOWN

As the robes of evenfall wrap around  
I stand by the West Pier of Brighton  
The crystal waters of the Selsey Sound  
Sparkling beneath a gently fading sun

Lady Moon draws in her silver twilight  
Lulls Mother Earth to dream a lullaby  
I sigh, & hear in my own heart's delight  
The song of the silverman'd Prince of Sky;

*"As men bridge mighty rivers, so shall thought  
Build sweeping causeways between lands of gold  
Or crude, hopeful crafts to keep them afloat  
On Unfathomable Oceans of old!"*

How bright beam Pegasi come close of day  
Arcing across a creamy Milky Way.

## THE LAST OF THE GREAT WHITE PEGASI

*"Silvermane, O Silvermane, fly, fly, fly!"*  
There is a sadness mellowing thine eye  
Looking upon the lands thy fathers knew,  
Where once the Gryphons & the Dragons flew.

But now there is a change upon the breeze,  
The heap'd white ice slow-melting into seas,  
Our time on Earth is slipping with the snow  
Upon the slopes of Kilimanjaro!

Her wings are caught upon a sudden gust  
The oil refineries are wrackd with rust  
Man's greed for gold, the brotherhood of trade,  
The need for luxury fore'er displayed,

Bind them together & their driving force  
Has set our planet on a lethal course!

## COMPOSED AT AN OLD BUSKING SPOT

In the year of nineteen-ninety-seven  
I staged my very own Summer of Love  
Valhalla for vagrants...gypsy heaven...  
Conjuring words & music on the move

The south of England play'd mother & host,  
In sand-dunes, communes, woodland would I sleep,  
From town-to-town along sun-kiss'd coast,  
Singing to the people to earn my keep.

A year has pass'd, a year! they were great times,  
But since I have journey'd both wide & far,  
Sweeten'd my tongue in more sensual climes,  
Soften'd my song with accomplish'd guitar –

But no! tonight my thread I shall not spin

So these memories remain...

lingerin'

## THE BIRTH OF BRITPOP - 1994

Far from the electro-pop of the forgettable eighties  
Resin £15 an eighth, pills a tenner in the clubs,  
Acid tabs £2.50 a tab, skunk £25 on yer eighth,  
Scarlet coat in Schindler's, Shawshank's holy wall  
A needle sticking out of Uma Thurman's chest...  
Barbara Windsor became Peggy Mitchell  
Spice girls, Channel Tunnel & the Lottery born,  
Then Kurt Cobain goes & blows his head off  
A few days later Oasis release Supersonic  
So grunge was dead & Britpop had been born  
Blur's new-mod Parklife, Pulp's glitzy-disco wisdom  
Honky-tonk Supergrass, Dodgy's delicious optimism of  
Ride's shoegazing, Prodigy's neo-punk technotronics  
& The Stone Roses, god bless 'em, were recordin'...

## FERN

I took myself to the Sanctuary Cafe  
An open-mike night carves the atmosphere  
Poets & musicians trade riffs, thoughts & tunes

I chill'd at the back with roll-ups & a beer  
Hot goddess takes the stage in a tie-dyed t-shirt  
Alien eyes, beads, necklaces & v-shaped guitar

As she sang my soul & my pants started stirring  
She finished her songs & took her seat alone  
So I joined her with a stack of G&T's

I told her I was into writing poetry  
Y'see, there's something about the 'p' word  
That makes women immediately think about fucking.

*"I've got another guitar back at my pad,  
Do you fancy a naked back-to-back jam?"*

## FUCKING FERN

There is nothing like a writhing woman  
Astride the throbbing member of her man  
When both of them, in panting unison,  
Are climbing to a symbiotic scream,  
& all the florid energies between  
That first flesh-lock & silence satisfied.

Her bosom heaving & in full control  
She rode my member to its pure climax  
O verve of man's first sin, human romance  
Express'd in its most physical conjoin  
With thrusting lust & subtil pleasures both.

Now fuck-by-fuck we learn how to make love  
Until the wondrous woosiness of passion  
Embraced us both in sleeping sweetness sound.

**WEDNESDAY**  
**Brighton – Chelsea**

**THE FADER CODE**

- 1 Remain alert
- 2 Always keep your cool
- 3 Trust your instincts
- 4 Never show your money
- 5 Know your stations
- 6 Another five minutes won't hurt in the loo
- 7 Know your enemy
- 8 Know your postcodes
- 9 The train's going there anyway
- 10 When in doubt, clout
- 11 The train always comes when you're skinnin' up
- 12 It is every Fader's duty to baffle & confuse
- 13 Always remember your free cup of tea
- 14 There's no need to rush - unless you're being chased

**VICTORIA EXPRESS**

I hop on a train  
little fuss  
few passengers  
watch me sit  
a black woman  
a young punk  
old man twiddles his tash  
& in a flash  
the train sets off  
planes wing over gatwick  
& as we reach croydon  
my brain  
pretends to be elsewhere  
dreaming of mysterious fancies

## NORTH PECKHAM ESTATE

Our fore-fathers conquer'd many a land,  
Imperiously ruled the seven seas,  
But when an empire crumbl'd into sand  
She placed her subjects in badlands like these

Inner city boroughs of airless stacks  
Bob Marley booms from a thousand windows,  
Heartless, hopeless & eighty percent blacks,  
Gangs of ragas lurking in the shadows

Old Ford Escorts lie burnt out & rusted,  
I walk down a litter-strewn corridor  
Must use the stairs as the lift is busted  
Graffiti fills the whole of this fifth floor

After rap-rapping on a letter box  
Comes the rat-rattle of numerous locks.

## A LANDAN TING

From Queen Speed-Fiend I score ketamine,  
Snort some upstairs, an empty 63,  
Drop down thro a K-hole...

\* \* \* SPACE \* \* \*

...Dig the din  
Of the last squat rave at Cardboard City.

It kick'd off Friday, still going on strong  
For Sleep seldom visits the Techno Tribe,  
Four days in pills are going for a song,  
I drop eleven for that heaven vibe.

Builders labour by these workshy shirkers,  
Like zombies with meat-cleavers held in hand  
Ravers wave at crazy go-to-workers,  
Rushing to cell-blocks all along the Strand

Charged up by the city that never rests,

We are all as one here, all London's guests.

## **INNER CITY LIFE**

*In London every person is a passing thought...*

In cities every tree is a weeping willow  
Drooping sadly in the poisonous air,  
Airless stacks are the soul-sapping pillow  
Where only money-mongers seem to care.

The M25 means captivity,  
I mean, what is there left to delight us,  
Lust-for-life crush'd through blind servility  
Barely sooth'd by these dance-all-nighters!

Traffic encircles the concrete conurbations,  
Mobiles by the millions melt the mind,  
Germs breed in the underground stations,  
This microcosmic mirror of mankind.

*In London every person is a passing thought...*

## **ROYAL OBSERVATORY**

Cronos must run til this sun sends no fire  
Or fresh, new fertile systems can be found,  
O boundless time, by mortals ye be bound,  
Theatrical arrogance of Empire.

I stand upon the invisible line,  
Gaze down on a dome built by my nation  
For the child of future generation -  
Will he, like me, question it's wyrd design?

To this spot faithless multitudes will come  
Marking their lives with one shared memory -  
Faith-festival of Christianity.

Being mere months from the Millennium  
These amazing days enthuse me with rhyme  
& build my own monument to this time.

## THE TOWER

Upon Tower Hill the angry mob calls  
To the hooded axeman,

*"Off wi' 'is 'ead!"*

Traitors believed they'd be better off dead  
Than a rottin ghoul in these devlish holes...  
Thousands of epitaphs scrawl'd into walls  
Tongue worn by black tongues...

In this clammy dread

A doom-dripping gloom from which all hope hath fled,  
A phantom's tortured wail rises then falls.

Thumbscrews, iron maiden, stretch'd on the rack  
Flailing cat 'o' nine tails raking the back -  
Foul instruments of an inquisition.

What cruel devices have we in their place,  
In this age, to form an equal grimace?

Try sitting thro' a full Eurovision!

## THAMESIDE

Through an empire's heart I walk'd with my muse  
Talking on topics such as history  
Art, architecture & Humanity  
Drinking deep in the riverside views

*The Jubilee flags of an empress queen,  
The rumbling growl of American tanks,  
The fabl'd stand of Cassevillanus,  
Those burning hulks, sad ruins of Medway,*

I stand, inspired, as an English cadence,  
Temper'd in Oxford, refin'd in Richmond,  
Whispers anthemic songs of history.  
Breathing tranquillities & ambience  
I grasp the meaning of this poignant bond –  
We both are drifting seaward steadily!

## POETICUS

### POET'S CORNER

Where art thou now, dead poets, the fine dust  
Of each soul-wrought line by time is scatter'd  
& lies, a thin shroud, oer plaque, tomb & bust,  
Til colomns of church & state lie shatter'd.

My fingertips grace the grooves of the names  
Of those rare few who sought a nobler truth,  
Whose burning thoughts of empyrean flames  
Embark'd on an eminent path of youth.

Chaucer, Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton  
Marvell, Dryden, Pope, Blake, Chatterton, Clare,  
Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron  
Tennysson, Yeats & Hughes,

To thee I swear  
As I am deep in love with poetry  
Your dedicated brethren I shall be.

Mine art asleep, yet she dreams in beauty,  
Paints tangible scenes to adorn the page,  
Aluminous thoughts to milk a mild age  
Of mellowing souls, sing a song freely,  
Triumphant songs draped in resplendency,  
Stars shoot lucid cross an opaque stage,  
Rare spirit released from a mortal cage,  
I have a new song for thee, poetry!

In raptures receiving the sacred states  
Of an enlighten'd mind, virtuous heart  
& resurgent soul, we follow the fates,  
& tis a fine thing to play at an art,  
To champion renaissance, join the brave  
Who sought the greatest glory of the grave.

## COMMUTER LOVE

She shivers in vain under the old clock tower  
Drizzle spate, lover late, fizzling date

*"The 17.17 from Dover Priory  
Has been diverted via Bat & Ball..."*

She walks morbidly into Unwins  
Buys a bottle of cheap red Chianti  
To take home to its depressing glass

Tonight she'll romance Albert Square  
& a fisherman's pie from Tescoes  
Laced with white-hot jallapeno...

Then, the EUREKA knock at the door  
& Terrence will stand there, slick-soaked hair  
& say, *"Sorry, Daphne, I've had a total nightmare!"*

*"Drive next time!"* she'll whisper, kissing him prodigiously.

## ON THE BLAG

I have me a line for a stroll round the town  
A poet's night out, those random & aimless  
Saunters through cities which always roll good

*"Could you spend a day with no money at all  
& still eat well & feel thoroughly entertain'd"*

I found myself at the Queen Elizabeth Hall  
Perched by the river in all it's civic splendour  
Milling with punters – it must be the interval  
I slip in amongst them, flow free to the music  
(well would you buy a half-eaten sandwich)  
Bert Jansch is playing a sublime solo gig  
Five hundred hair-do's & one smiling face  
Picking so haunting with a wild-western tuning  
Applause so astounding as I do one from the building

## WEST END STROLL

Tapestry of light & colour surrounds  
This concrete island of Trafalgar Square  
Intermingl'd with a million sounds  
Merging as one in the cool autumn's air.

In Leicester Square's carnival atmosphere  
Buskers, fire-breathers & living statues,  
Compete for the ear, the coin & the cheer  
Of global tourism by fast-food queues.

I find a jam sesh in a cellar bar,  
Dig the free jazz, down a triple Jack D,  
Borrow a wannabe star's flash guitar,  
Whine an arrangement in the key of E.

Through sleezy Soho flows the Silver Rose -  
I'd rather be me than see shitty shows!

## ARTISTRY OF LUST

A girl I gave a line to caught me up  
Fancy a smoke... that's what I call karma  
She's an artist... Poets & painters  
'Boets & Bainters!' said King George the First  
We catch taxis to Clapham, she cooks up chi  
Post-gig glow, smoking skunk in my kitchen  
She's fit as fuck in an unkempt kinda way  
We chat about life & poetry & music  
Then she sasks me did I wanna do some art  
& strips naked, I guess she meant life drawing  
Elegant & energetic she was my kinda lady  
I start to sketch her tits... thought what the hell  
Am I drawin' em for & pleasantly suggested  
A congress of the Tiger, the Cat or the Deer...

## THURSDAY

### *London Town*

#### LONDON

This is a city of a thousand years  
In every street the feet of history  
Have stepp'd upon a living destiny  
That never was more bullied by its peers  
From winklepickers to the kingly Leers  
That ruddy river roll still sets souls free  
Or is this just a penitentiary  
No more great place than crocodiles have tears

Yes! Find the civic splendour of a state  
& taste the trappings of imperium  
But is this place the pinnacle of fate  
Some sequined seat in a Roman forum

Perhaps tis best to peaceful peaks aspire  
& midst their windy solitude retire.

#### FINSBURY PARK

Shriv'ling blackberries  
Juiceless husks upon the vine  
Leaves shredding daily

On a gusty day  
Leaves go often showering  
Conkers just miss crowns

Family of swans  
Swanlings beak & plumage grey  
Parents stiff & proud

Rustling leaf pile  
Squirrel leaps from winter stores  
Long before the freeze

Though close to concrete London  
What sweet, warm slice of Autumn!



## POCKETS OF NATURE

*Gefrye Herb Garden*

Medicinal myriads

Summer-scented square

Culinary cloves

*Soutwarke Cathedral*

Luncheon by the Thames

Scrawny pigeon pecks my crab

Beggar blags my bread

*Hyde Park*

Eerie noiseless trees

Do cities drown out birdsong

Do birds dwell elsewhere?

*Wormwood scrubs*

Fresh lungs of London

Pigeons perched on crossbar frame

Leaping labradours

*North Acton*

Rush-hour souls splash home through rain

These ten-mile limbs refreshing

## On Being Turn'd Down For a Date By An Ex-Girlfriend Who Preferr'd To Spend The Evening Training For The Forthcoming London Marathon

Since Xerxes time, whence from the Attic shore  
Fair Hermes & forced marches made their way  
Phidippedes, before the throne of war  
Fields Marathon, forever, & its bay.

There is a race, a race so nobly run  
By those daring to fly upon the wing  
Whence from the music of the starters gun  
Pain overwhelms, first dull, then searing sting.

These aching roads I share with thee my sweet  
Toiling today as with the dashing mass  
For thrifty time I deem'd my life complete

But now it seems commingling lives must pass  
Being two runners of different pace  
Should I, perhaps, have settled at thy grace.

## MANUELA

I mingle with a galaxy of stars,  
Down double absinthes at the cocktail bars,  
Strut a sleek swathe through a heaving dance-floor,  
Share what this great feel for rhythm is for.

My god!!

I know her!!

My lime light falls,  
On a long-legged, raven-haired beauty  
Elitely to me, she squeezes my balls,  
The primal sign of promiscuity.

I had to admire her fiery swagger,  
This subtle way she asked me to shag her,  
Ravishing eyes, nice ass & lavish scent,  
Her lips, softened by the Latin accent,  
Gently nibblin the lobes of mine ear,  
Whisp'rin,

*"Signori, I waant you, rrrright here..."*

## THE RIDE

Manuela drags me out into the street  
Outside the club, a long white limo lay  
Some pussy-cat engine purring on heat,  
A whirr of wheels & we roar on our way  
Heading towards the first glimpse of the sun,  
A sense of early morning in the air,  
She unzips my fly, slipping her lips on  
This pleasure, I comb fingers through her hair.

Smokin a cig I think of this England,  
Country of civilised barbarians  
Imprisoned upon one tiny island.

No wonder I like the Italians;  
Easy-going temper, cultured gusto,  
Musical language & great fellatio.

## A SURE THING

Gravel crunches up the hotel driveway,  
Dark shaded chauffeur parks the limosine.

*"What ya doing in London by the way?"*

*"Why, bebbly darleeng, I'm now a Porn Queen!"*

Night Porter winks as he hands me the key

*"Enjoy your stay, sir!"*

Of beer his breath stinks.

We enter the suite, she flicks on Verdi,  
Lights incense sticks, candles, mixes the drinks,  
Straightens cushions upon a king-sized bed.

*"Ey get a leettle charlie, y'wan some?"*

*"Too reyt!"*

She flings me a bag o' Bronson,  
A gold card & fifty - I snort a line.

*"I must change deese clows,"*

She sultrily said  
As the coke kicked in, this Universe mine...

## FOREPLAY

The bright night-lights of the metropolis  
Sprawl away for many a built up mile...

...I hear a voice like a swanling's hungry hiss,  
I turn, my lucky lady stands in style,  
Scantly attired, scarlet negligee -  
Her flashing lashes urge my manhood move.

She strips to my thumb-clicks...

*"Ecchelente!"*

*"We clee ze body before we make love!"*

After the long tenderotic shower  
We lie on a rug by a blazing fire,  
My tongue caresses her quim's deep desire.

Glory-groaning O comes after an hour,  
She lies on satin sheets, legs wide apart,  
Lips sopping,

I'm in,

<Flurp>

a fanny fart.

## POET Vs PORN QUEEN

We embark in slow sensuality,  
I hold her firm in my rhythmic embrace,  
The mystical look of sweet extasi  
Spread musically over her darling face.

Tempo increases, now we are fucking,  
Each thrust fulfilling her lust's willing need  
Biting & rubbing & squeezing & sucking  
Her raking nails making my broad back bleed.

We jockey for position, she's on top  
Of this proud sceptre, buttocks aboundin',  
A climactic shudder, the wild wails stop  
Of a queen impaled on her king within.

I drown in her fragrance, kneading her hips,  
She touches her bosom, sucking her lips.

## PILLOW TALK

She begs me for more, her eyes burning wild,

*"We love again, Si?"*

*"Not tonight my child,  
Great lovers may make love all night with great verve,  
But Poets love beauty but once to preserve."*

Now that the wildfires of passion are gone  
We lie, two lovers, welded into one,  
& pledgde myself 'Cavalier Servente,'  
Whisp'ring the Vita Nuova of Dante  
Fingertips stroking lips, nipples & thighs

*"Bellissimo..."*

She sighs, closes her eyes,  
Capturing moments forever to keep  
Wandering into dream regions of sleep  
Growing a glowing halo,  
I propose  
*'O marry me til morn my Roman rose!'*

## FRIDAY

*London - Barnsley*

### ARRIVEDERCI

Best to begin a day wrapp'd in the arms  
Of some naked angel, her drowsy sleep  
Dreams darling skies, sweet children of my charms.

Through draperies morn's airy beamlets peep,  
Lighting vestal vision in duvet bliss  
I stroke olive skin, soft as springtime snow,  
& on her forehead plant a tender kiss

She stirs! she sleeps...

Alas, tis time to go,  
Leaving her dreaming of stars & comets,  
Shall I be lovely, aye I shall compose  
This heartbreak with a soft parting sonnet

Leaving amid the curls on her cushion  
My mind's immemorial impression.

## AMABANDON

Manuela... as with the sea & the waves & all the oceans  
Once more the tides of time have brought you to my side

From where I now drift sadly  
Floating upon the endless waters of stretching time,  
Pausing to reflect on the light of your face,  
Half-a-light now, then brighter than the evening star.

So let us set adrift for islands of soft extasi,  
Two fine liners fluttering the ocean blue,  
Until the occasion we next dock in the same port,  
Some shanty of Mauritius or the harbors of New York,  
Bobbing together in unison, a special shared tranquility,  
& our essences commingling on many a fine night upstanding!

So, until time & life's pathways converge us once again  
Remember kindly always... you are forever in my heart!



## NOVEMBER NEWS

Hurricane Mitch kills eleven thousand,  
Tory peers block Blair's bill of house reform,  
Future King Charlie knocks up his fifty  
And Saddam weathers the threat of a storm.

Newbury opens, the police guard Swampy,  
British beef is blagged back on the menu,  
Kate 'nice tits' Winslett marries in secret  
And Pinochet waits for his fates review.

Villa claim top-spot, bet they don't keep it?  
Hodde's wing-backs beat the Czechs at Wembley,  
Stewart must be blest, storms save the first Test  
Oh! & how I do bleed for thee, Burnley FC.

But finally...

...don't trust any of it

For the news we read is just biased bullshit.

## RIKKI DEE'S TABLE

Dick needs a table  
Derbyshire & Dronfield  
By Bowshaw & her car boot sale;

Prams \* baby clothes \* jigsaws \* suitcases \* mothball suits  
Settees \* lawnmowers \* crap coats \* comics \* CDs & fish 'n' chips  
& finally a three pound table

On a wood to coinage ratio the real deal  
Made in Czechoslovakia stamped underneath  
Looks a bit like a bench

We set off home, the smash & grab complete  
Low Edge, Meadowhead, down into Woodseats  
Frequently chillin' out, perched upon our 'bench'

*"What's wrong with you people, have you never seen a table before!"*

& finally home to a perfect fit!



## HM PRISON WAKEFIELD

There is a strain of personality  
Surrender'd in the birth realm of the soul  
When grown men cry "*Release the beast in me!*"  
& stranglers do their work behind a wall.

What is this strain, this stigma of the brood?  
So many men may never understand  
How phantasies, so sickening & crude  
Become motives, a guiding higher hand.

From what source does this restless spirit spring?  
When perversion rejoices in killing  
From the whore-rippers of Leeds & London  
To the Son of Sam & Dennis Nielson –

Crimes unknown but a century ago  
What traumas to the world these deeds bestow?

## BURNLEY

You must know Burnley to see it's beauty,  
Twixt Hambledon & Pendle where she lies,  
Thou fertile region of the North contree,  
Of Bingo halls & market stalls & pies,  
Of cobblestones & Bovis Homes & lanes,  
Of working men & the working men's pride  
Of balmy days & snowy greys & rains  
& blatantly the world's best football side.

You must know Burnley to see it's beauty,  
The arches & the chimneys & Turf Moor,  
The stately halls of Gawthorpe & Towneley,  
The station & the bus-stop & mi door -  
You can keep yer New Yorks, Delhis & Rome  
At the end of the day there's no place like home!

## SLUM CLEARANCE

As a poignant time-lapse of the soul,  
Removes my child-hood street-by-street  
I brood upon an artificial meadow  
Where recently dilapidated terraces  
Were brick-by-brick demolish'd, levell'd low,

Once, with life, these districts resounded  
But all are dying now, like falling flies,  
Grandmas, Grandads, old Aunties, bald Uncles  
Now, a generation of old photographs  
Then they laughed & cried like me & you

My own street seems to have survived the cull  
But for how long? if others of its ilk  
Were deemed ungodly, then surely snobbish time  
Will banish mine beneath a grassy mound.

## HOME

I breeze in, kiss mi mam, butter some bread  
*"A phone call, letter, we thought you were dead!"*

*"Mam, chasin' destiny, I do great feats  
But you treat me like Abbey treat Keats!"*

*"Yer no son of mine get a proper job  
Yer nowt but a no-good, bone idle slob!"*

The same old twitterin' in mi ear lobe  
I shit, shower, shave, raid mi dad's wardrobe

In the smoky club where men dodge their wives  
Best bitter's well cheap & smokosphere thrives

*"Oi thats mi shirt!" "Owdo dad? "Owdo son!  
"How was Italy?" "Sunny!" "Here's a ton!"*

Back at the ranch dad snores thro' drunken slumbers  
As mi mam rips up those same old lottery numbers

## FRIDAY NIGHT IN

They sofa-sink into the tee-vee zone,  
Check out the beach-babes of Australia,  
Find our fave Antipodean would own  
Chloe's face, Sally's tits, Sarah's figure.

A pipe mix for the Simpson's double bill,  
Buckets for the cheap thrills of Robot Wars,  
Quick nifty fifty flick thru Digital,  
Switch off the Top of the Plastic Plop stars.

Reefers, Pizzas, two-for-a-fiver wine,  
Waterfalls, Temple-balls, fine hot knife high,  
A tournament of Fifa Ninety-Nine;  
Spliffs, Young Ones, spliffs, Friends, spliffs and T.F.I.

They slap on the Roses, smokin' the score,  
Buzzin' all night on an N-64.

## KARMA SUTRA

I stroll'd along the streets of Stoneyholme,  
I knock'd --- -- answer'd delighted,  
My favourite fuck-buddy back at home,  
Her stairs were excitedly alighted.

She cook'd up a couple of samosas,  
Chappathis, biriyani & paneer,  
Making out to the Stars & the Roses  
Over charas & charlie & cold beer.

She show'd me a book bought in Madurai,  
The Karma Sutra's esoteric scene,  
*"So babe, do you wanna give it a try?"*  
We did & at a later hour serene

As my lover slept on my naked chest  
I felt that special bliss as East meets West.

## SATURDAY

### Burnley – Liverpool

## GAWTHORPE HIGH

Now where are you the class of '92  
More time pass'd by since that day  
Than we ever spent together  
Now life is beginning to gather speed  
& I expect we have all changed, a little  
Different, yet essentially the same  
People, who sped home from school  
To watch Neighbours in its heyday,  
Wondering what a working day entail'd  
& love & kids & all that mad adult stuff

Now shine, sun, shine, on the class of '99  
Riding bareback upon unbridl'd youth  
Just seven years of schooling separates us -  
The strange gulf of nature that parts  
These faculties of the University of Life.

## OVER LANCASHIRE

Mounting the sheerest slope of Demdike's Hill  
Come gaze upon the county palatine  
A view so boundless & a sky so blue

Fair Ribble snakes thro Preston like a vine  
Accrington, there a flash of Morcambe sand,  
The Yorkshire quota of the grand Pennine

The pleasant fold of Barley close at hand  
The rugged range which buries Manchester  
The little snow swept fells of Westmorland

Pendle City's terraces thrown together  
Twixt church & chimney, cluster'd Simonstone  
To Trawden's waters - clutching wylde heather

I head for the neat houses of Hapton  
To claim a fresh vista from Hambledon...

## THE SWOLLEN RIVER

The river flowing by is often wide & high  
Upon a timeless voyage to the sea,

Beside the scene I'm caught, connecting to the thought  
Of nature & her rimless mystery,

Growing after the rains, flowing 'long swelling lanes,  
Upon her banks a special place to be,

Beyond the smoky town that turns the water brown,  
I listen to the special sound she makes,

As lower fall the skies we watch the river rise,  
Up to the trees to seize the branches breaks,

At ever faster pace her swirling foam curls race  
Along the course that she forever takes

For rivers flowing by are often wide & high  
On voyages out to a timeless sea...

## NOW THAT I AM TWENTY TWO

As I wander the back-streets of Burnley  
Subconscious in familiarity  
I take solace in these stark surroundings  
Still hearing my heartbeat & its poundings

This is my land of birth, O rosy town,  
Where over cobblestones the Brun flows brown  
All seasons have I seen here & each June  
Observe the endings of a thirteenth moon

From these hills many rides of mine have sprung  
For footed light go men when they are young  
As Pendle from the deep mists reappears  
I put to bed the ghosts of yester years  
Let cycles olympic psyches renew  
God willing, now that I am twenty-two

## THE BIG MATCH

Robbed o life & lifestyle the yeomen came  
T'worship King Cotton amidst the hills,  
Built terraces & the cathedral mills  
Then demanded sport, the beautiful game.

On a famous site from the Bob Lord Stand  
My brethrn sing their 'arts out fer the boys,

*"COOOOME OOOON YOOOU CLAREEEETS,"*

Tis an awesome noise  
That shakes the cup o Bovril from mi hand.

A Penalty! Up pops Andy Peyton,  
The Padiham predator spots the ball  
A silent prayer, a few strides, the shot – GOAL!  
The crowd erupts in divine elation.

Burnley F.C. are the best at football  
& that's the bee-hole & end of it all.

## HOT-POT PIT-STOP

Up Manchester Road, b' Shanks's Pony,  
Inter Scotts Park, then on up t' Summit  
T'pay mi Grandparents a swift visit  
Fer a bowl o' the best broth in Burnley.

Grampa potters about 'is garden shed,  
Granma slaps th'icin on' slice from market,

Cake crumbs fall on mi old Batman carpet,  
Big piles o' comics & games under' bed.

Wow! Space Marine, Gnasher Badge, Hairy Hand,  
Toy Soldiers, Test Match & mi old Spectrum -

*"What fun," said gramps, "We 'ad back in those days..."*

*"Yer tea's ready!"*

*"Mmmm...them dumplins look grand."*

*"Do you like 'em son?"*

*"Aye Gran, I love 'em."*

& polish seven platefuls in 'er praise.

## GRANDAD'S ARMY

In France, nineteen forty, fought the East Lancs,  
Bully beef'd, armed t' teeth gainst the mighty  
Marauding hordes of Messerschmitz & tanks –  
Grampa's caught as last boat left fer Blighty.

Force marched long corpse-lined roads fer sun-parched miles,  
Fritz kicks water buckets, shoots random fire,  
Til in the bleak Black Forest begin trials –  
The endurance o life behind the wire.

Half starved , worked to death, yet still Gramps stood strong,  
Escapin' 'is duty, sport & order,  
By day sleeps in fields, by night stalks along,  
But each time caught just short o' Swiss border...

After five years the Russkis set Gramps free  
To find a wife & start 'is family.

## BINGO LINGO

*"...Eyes down fer yer full house!"* the camp caller croons,

*"Kelly's Eye, on its own, the number one,  
& its thee & me, two & three, twenty three,  
Heinz varieties, five & seven, fifty-seven..."*

Mary glances nervously at Eileen Pointer's sheet

*"& its Sherwood Forest, all the threes, thirty three,  
You've been & gone at eight & one, eighty one!"*

Tension, frustration, tutting & twitching,

*"A fumph & a duck, five & two, fifty two,  
& its those legs, eleven!"*

The room fills with wolf-whistles

*"Now who didn't flush the toilet, it's a dirty loo, thirty two,  
Ooo! It's the top of the shop, blind ninety..."*

*"EEE-YAAAAA!"* screams Mary Pie, spilling her drink.

*"Buggar,"* puffs Eileen, *"I only needed seventeen."*

## SIR NICKY STOWELL

*Lord of all Barlick, Lancs, MBE, MBO, BO,  
Bachelor of the Farts, Super Chick-in  
Puck-aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!*

Nick, 'diddliddling,' my bestest friend,

Do you remember our eighteenth summer,  
When it felt the good times would never end  
& Barry Island the only bummer.

That Ynnysddu flat, "Weed," birds & wimmin,\*  
*"Blowin' a reefer on Salisbury plain,"*  
Newquay, seven chicks, soap, sun, surf, swimmin'  
Our first Glasto - you gotta go again...

Saw Bjork's debut, Newport's Supersonics,  
Peer Gynt play Stratford, Burnley rule Wembley  
Massive crowd in Brixton for the Manics  
& that mad, May night in Monmouth, where we  
Sat with the Roses and their album new,

*"Don't think it's as good as the first,"* said you.

\* they're good fer nuthin, but maybe one thing –  
to service the needs of my ding-a-ling

## AMSTERDAMINIT

We trawl the long-haul of the motorway  
& pick up more pot-heads past Birmingham  
Jelly wobbles on the waves to Calais,  
Mojo puked in the lowlands near the 'Dam.

We rush'd to relax in the smoky cafes;  
Tried Purple Haze & buy Sensemelia,  
Each coffee & space-cake puff'd up the daze  
Of a mushroom-gilded psychedelia.

We tram'd through 'Dam to the sleezy district,  
Pluck'd up Dutch courage for 'Sucky fucky,'  
Crack head whores begg'd at doors, wink'd to be dicked-  
Its a shame when you pay to get lucky...

Skunked-up, smashed to fuck, zombie bus, bongtubes,  
Grass stashed up Nicky's ass, Richie's itchy pubes.

## COOL AS FUCK OFF MAN U

We park at the Arndale,

*"Owdo lasses!"*

'Free Ian Brown,' daubed all over Manchester,  
Shmoasis blare from the young fool busker.

Floozies ooze by,

*'Hey cuties, nice asses!'*

Down the Oz Bar we bomb paste base Billy  
To sharpen the edge of these smacky E's.

Mojo buys a Big Mac Meal at Mac 'D's,  
Spins round the Big-Wheel of Piccadilly  
& chucks up in the bogs of the Dry Bar.

Live drum & bass brings us up off our face,  
The Superfly Riders funk up the place -  
The Lancashire lad more a superstar.

The room goes bright, a boom of mellow dub  
It's time to take the boys out to a club.

## THE 'POOL

*"Reyt, where next?"*

*"West Bams on at the Orbit..."*

*"...Nah man, too late..."*

*"...The Hac'..."*

*"...Nah, the beers shit..."*

*"...Sankeys..." " ...Nah man, it's closed down..."*

*"...Wigan Pier..."*

*...Nah, everyone in Wigan is a queer..."*

*"...Lets hit Blackpool, find a shit B & B,*

*& pick up fit chicks from some Hen Party..."*

*"...Nah, bin there, worn the crap hat, c'mon team,*

*Let's unleash these libidos down at Cream!"*

Razzin' the freeway, babblin 'bout the Dam,  
With Techno Bangin <Bam-Bam-Bam-Bam-Blam>

*"Mint mix, Funkster," "Yeah, Angels ninety-six!"*

*"...Ee-yar Damo" " ...Ta Mojo, Oos next" ...Nicks!"*

We park, *"Oi! Yoo lot!"* Six pissed pricks to fight  
Nick goes ninja style...Scousers? Soft as shite!

## SATURDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

Often I, an addicted Eastender,  
Love to observe mankind's menagerie,  
Especially the 'Work-for-Weekender'  
Found in Town Zoo or City Safari.

At watering holes or in dog-eared flats  
Snakes, Dinos, Vultures, Rats, Cows, Moles & Sheep,  
Packs of Fox-Hounds & scatty Pussycats,  
Are crammed at Sardine bars, seven ranks deep.

Two-by-two the babbling rabble migrate  
Through Gorilla doors, get tanked up on hooch,  
Drink rats-piss like Fish, ass-wiggle like Bait,  
Their rasion d'etre the ten-to-two smooch.

Then they sing, kiss, spit, piss, shit, fight & feed,  
Before hurry to his or hers to breed.

## CLUBINNIT

Tis High-Midnight, Dirtytheivinscouseland,  
We swagger four abreast, Wild North-West band,  
Slip to the front of the coach-loaded queue...

...*"We're extras in Brookside mate!"*  
We slink through.

Bass boom, big beats, laser lights, nural surge  
A wigglin cutie...Satyrian urge  
Sails me through a sea of juicy bootie.

*"If I said you had a sexy body  
Would you hold it against me?"*  
She turns round...

Fate plays a Soul Mate, his ship runs aground...

Romance awoken, as his life-long trance  
Is broken by beautiful circumstance.

No words spoken, we head for a corner  
Soon steamin hotter than Swedish sauna.

**SUNDAY**  
**Liverpool to Carlisle**

**EXSTASI SPECS**

Nick finds bricks were supporting his car,  
Dj fucks off with a Hollyoakes star,  
Mojo meets his mum back in Manchester,  
& I jump on a coach to Lancaster  
Cruising this most deserted M6  
Oakenfold spinning the Essential Mix  
Turns out this bird is a Classics student  
& says she's got me a little present  
But I'd have to unwrap it at her pad...

Well, man what you gonna do, I aint mad!

Mellow mist blankets Lancaster campus,  
Mi drugs wearin' off, the bird aint gorgeous  
Good ol' Mitsubishi fat ass syndrome!

*"Sorry love – ehm, I've gotta get off home!"*

**FASHIONABLE PLACES TO DIE**

As the old, bald bus driver makes his way  
Through wife, two brats, crap car suburbia,  
The promise of Lakeland panorama  
Tantalises from across Morecambe Bay.

Watching my train rolling through Westmorland.  
A rabbit squats on a smooth grassy dome  
Zippin out the nip up at Oxenholme,  
Chattin to backpackers down to Kirkland.

A parish church chimes forth a ring o' bells  
As I climb up to a ruined castle  
To gaze on a kingdom of craggy fells  
& the auld grey stone homesteads of Kendal.

Munchin mintcake I muse down Stricklandgate  
Musing on Charlie & a rebel's fate.



## CUMBERLAND

Where two chains of fells meet an inverted  
Gateway of such grandiose emperity  
Is formed, as from some Tolkienesque tale.

Through immensual archway I skirted  
Thirlmere's piny side, idyllicity  
Pours from the mountainsides, flows through the vale.

I come by some cascading waterfall  
Kneel next to cool, calm Naiad cadence  
Cup hands, dip the icy waters & sup.

I follow the stream, leap over a wall  
To bask in Aeschylean ambience  
As I, with tremulous ardour, look up

To see spectacular mammoth of stone  
Tis Helvellyn - I shall climb him, alone.

## HELVELELYN

Up stony slopes I huff, puff & scramble,  
All a fluster in the blustery gale,  
Eyes blinded by thick sheets of sleet & hail,  
Clothes torn by the claws of thorny bramble,  
My spirit, 'gainst which angry Zephyrus  
Summons all his strength, calls upon the soul  
Of our being, for being conquers all.

As I reach the epic peak, glorious  
Realm of diety, barren heap of ice,  
A blizzard-swept, Valhallan paradise,  
I see, in the snows, a fresh silver rose  
& wonder how such sweet tenderment grows,  
Like the gorgeous gardens of Shangri-La,  
In this frozen wilderness, like a star.

## LAKELAND SUNSET

Visions of heaven roll out to the west,  
The orb of morning clutching to her chest  
Our Starbird swoops thro burning copper sky  
    Neath lilac bands behued as harvest rye,  
Lands perfectly, & with mystical crow  
Perches her talons high upon Skiddaw,  
Completing ephemeral embassy,  
Nestling for the night, snuggl'd in airy  
Clouds of rosy dusk, moonbeam-dappled hulks,  
    Wearily drifting as the Dark Knight skulks  
Round his coal-charred kingdom, shapeless & starr'd,  
    Where each bright twinklet is a crystal shard  
Studding evening's armour, which when worn brings  
    The stunning universal thing-of-things.

## PURIFICATION

Posions enter me  
Through my hands, through my eyes  
Through my feet, through my lies

*Breathe deep the mountain air....*

Purify my heart  
Purify my body  
Purify my mind

Toxins enter me  
Through my hopes, through my fears,  
Through my words, through my tears

*Breathe deep the mountain air...*

Purify my blood  
Purify my bones  
Purify my soul

## LEAVING THE LAKES

'Tis eventide as an amethyst gloom  
Lulls the mountain steeps to their stony sleep.

I descend through the dwindling light of dusk  
Into Keswick, down its main street, where girls  
Gather outside Ye Olde Friar's Sweet Shop,  
Drinking beer, singing Boyzone, wanting sex  
With the Budweiser Boys in their peugeots.

I'm the only passenger on a bus  
That nips & zips through Threlkeld, then into  
A total blackness, but for the cat's eyes.

I survey some street lamp constellation  
Beyond the M6, tis Penrith, where I  
By these crumbling walls of draughty castle

Listen for the <*shrooo*> of the Glasgow train

## LUGOVALLIUM

Penrith to Carlisle was an easy score  
The total is now six-nil for the tour

Past the King's Head to Jackson's coffee bar  
Watch an old yank play shit hot steel guitar

Beside the Eden's soft & twinkling flow  
Carlisle Castle looms – big block of lego

I could be an invading Highlander  
Or wild-eyed axe-wielding Border Reiver

Psychadelic subways lead to the bridge  
Road, stile, path, steps, church, Stanwyx village square

I could be a roman centurian  
Guarding the great wall of Hadrain

My Sensei's house looks dry out of the rain  
Just a stones throw from being stoned again.

## UNCLE MALCOLM

My mentor leads me to the sacred room  
Most heaven scented of England's attics  
Of quadrophonics & hydraponics  
& twenty female skunk plants all abloom,  
The needle hits the groove of the LP  
Into the air Roy Harper's music leaks  
More marijuana mind-massage soothes me  
Over ornate chessboard my Sensei speaks,

*"Life is like a game of chess after beers  
Push pawns, trust instincts & castlings fer queers!"*

I gambit the knight's pawn, he takes the bait  
Bishop check,  
                    King moves back,  
                                    Queen sac!  
  Check mate

Then the contrees' best homegrown dost bite me

Stoned...

                    Quite stoned...

                            Too stoned...

                                    Very stoned...

  Whitey!

## REFLECTIONS

I sit in a chair in synch to the sound  
Of the crackling coals flame-flickering free  
Grey purring persian curl'd up on my knee  
Paws clutching roses plucked from higher ground

Coming out of the Nineties I have found  
                    Integrity and genuinity,  
                    Labouring, not for the love of money,  
                    But for rewards more nobler & profound.

Treading the treacherous minefields of youth  
To be a growing lad is not easy,  
One drop in the big sea Obscurity,  
Alone in my quest for poetic truth.

Sonnetizing the zeitgeist of this land  
While counting syllables upon my hand.

## LIFE IN THE NINETIES

A puppet monarch, a one party state  
Absorbed by the American Empire,  
Poetry, art, sport & music - once great  
National Assets - lurk in the sinking mire.

But the nineties were times of pure pleasure  
For those who lived on these Isles of the West,  
Of its better memories I treasure  
This little list shall ever claim my best...

... Year fer pop music was Nineteen Ninety,  
Goal was Gazza v Scotland, ninety-six,  
Oz bird Annalise, food mi gran's meat pie,

Band – the Verve, nightclub the Orbit, Morley,  
Schindlers List the classiest of the flicks,  
Marketing Spice Girls & murder - Princess Di.

## EPILOGUE

Provençal buglers spill through morning sky  
With tones of man & all his myriads,  
Stood tip-toe on a nobler watch am I,  
The period of these epylliads,  
Planted within the soil of sonnetry,  
Lore-nurtured, glazed in gloried eaglesong,  
Has rais'd her stakes, chord-scented poetry  
Must play the river card for right or wrong.

Not for prosaic titles do we write,  
Nor flitting fame shall guide our appetite,  
But poets always bow toward their souls,  
& now as topics turn to epic scrolls  
I must invoke the muses in each rose  
As in my mind an Ode to Empire grows.