

19.8a

Darmstadt

Dylan Harris



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Potato Press

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by Dylan Harris

4 anticipating the metaverse, 3 nation six dog, 2 discard

chapbooks

20.0: *r* dye-de-ho, *q* antwerp, *p* tension nitro ego, *o* church is dangerous
vital, *n* tin rush, *m* the A rush, *l* an engineering rush (ii), *k* Miss
Demeanour, *j* flock state, *i* be infinity, *h* Namings, *g* nation six dog, *f*
uncivil law, *e* dead write, *d* chase chase, *c* an engineering rush (i), *b* a
much for we, *a* The Joy Of Tax

19.9: *c* Inn, *b* Swoop, *a* An Ode To The A14

19.8: *c* Rose, *b* Hymnen, *a* Darmstadt

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(Specify “19.8a” in the subject line of any email)
Recitals of some of these poems may be found online

Poems

Nursery Verse For Nursery Heads

Darmstadt

Cheese And Onion Sandwiches

ici, pour les enfants

Sunlit Gloom

North Of Kylesku

Chopin And The Chilli Wars

“Limericks”

Too Fast To Stop

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Guinness

Leicester Square

These Words, They Were Not Said

Working For...

Nursery Verse For Nursery Heads

Hear the twinkles scrambled down for cash alone,
a have-to-scratch, a keeps-on-itching scab of sound,
the lyrics rhyme like *you're a cat*
and someone's stamping on your tail;
nursery verse for nursery heads.

Those sneering noises still fix anger in my thoughts
with junky tunes injected every spin;
emptying souls of sensibility
like ammonia empties eyes of sight:
nursery verse in nursery heads.

Oh, consumer kings, oh how you show respect
to those addicted to your same again:
nursery verse from nursery heads.

Darmstadt

A cold and miserable morning,
with drizzle as fine as flour
drifting through the shop doors
before the crushing hour,
welcomed by the sweet warmth
of heaters on at full power.

Seated in the café
with tongue being brought alive
by coffee as strong as weak chilli.
I see no trams outside;

the rush hour has somehow not started
the square's as empty as night.
A statue gazes forlornly
at Darmstadt's concrete blight.

Cheese And Onion Sandwiches

My contracting job's ironical perk,
from people who laze in permanent work,
is packets of starch, ordered from high,
that only the starved could willingly buy.

The onion is brown, with papery taint,
the bread could be slime, solid with paint.
The cheese, like the beer from north of the Gap,
seems watery, poor, and passed from a cat.

I'll tell you a secret: at three in the morning
the maker goes creeping with miserly daring,
tiptoeing, ferretting, digging in bins,
searching with caution for horrible things

to put between slices the following day
for which I'm expected to bleeding well pay!

Well I won't!

'Cos I will decide when I go for a ride.

ici, pour les enfants

I'll make a little money
selling some simple thing
to be bought, and thrown away,
and bought again another day—
I'll make a little money.

I'll appeal to people's vanity
or maybe make things easier:
a simple thing that's fairly cheap
and can be bought, without a thought—
I'll make a little money.

I'll build it in the cheapest way
and what minor stuff I'll throw away
won't hurt all that very much—
it isn't really worth a fuss—
and I'll make a little money.

I could make things a safer way
but then I'd have more to pay
and my customers would shy away—
and you're the ones who buy, and buy—
and I make a little money.

I'll make a little money
satisfying some daft demand
for plastic cats, or gnomes that talk,
or books about the drunken walk—
I'll make a little money.

Sunlit Gloom

The blue skies are grey,
the warm sun beams thunderclaps,
and the dust sparkling the air
is dark and freezing rain.

She hasn't smiled for a week.

North Of Kylesku

At the Telephone Line Inspectorate
a man whose face was frozen with the taste

of rotten cooking apples looks appalled
at his not-so-shiny ageing tidy table
where lies a photo: Scottish mountainside
a hill with ice where water once had falled,
an open loch with waves which would enable
an early morning mist to softly rise,

a pair of peaks standing strongly over sea
and isles afar: making for a vision
to inspire a photographer's delight;
or thunderstorms punching with the sea
at the stolid, stubborn fixed decision
of cliff to arise from water's darkened might.

He grabs the phone, and, at the third attempt,
gets another sour face little man
sitting in an ageing mourning suit.
saying: "These pictures from the road which you have sent
must be dealt with; now, we have to plan
to wreck the beauty on this fearful route

with pylons for a line to anywhere:
a phone box on a beach that's never used,
a wire to a house that might one day be built.
Where the cables go, I couldn't care
just so long as things outstanding are abused,
and this balance is destroyed with visual silt.

For when there are no good things to describe,
the best is nothing more than mediocre,
and there is no beauty anymore
then there can be no one to deride
us as bureaucratic, as if we ever were.
We'll make all men like us: paper thunder bores.”

Chopin And The Chilli Wars

Smooth piano in a Chinese living room;
someone put Chopin on to smiles
and plays an autumn evening of white silk dresses
with assumptions just back from the cricket wars.

So a rich Victorian hypocrisy only reveals my own
in a belly whore-house, living room,
whose taste is felt by my listening tongue
as ceiling lines run sharp, drinking Chopin.

The Chilli Wars, piano banging on the fritter front,
coffee dreams of softness under silk;
sugar shouts, a cream launched barrage,
the piano sings a flash of river wings.

And behind it all, hope warms the notes,
and sings harmony into the flavour screams,
and Paris dreams right back at me
of my journey there, tomorrow.

“Limericks”

There Was A Young Lady Called Venus

There was a young lady called Venus
who rather liked having a Guinness:
as dark as hard rock
with foam at the top:
it reminded her of ... her Seamus.

There Was A Young Man From Nantucket

There was a young man from Nantucket
whose hermitage was a fire bucket,
'til one day a lady
said "I want", not "maybe",
and he took one look and said "oooooh".

It Wasn't What I Really Expected

It wasn't what I really expected
a life which was—well—quite hectic
in 1903
as a bumbling bee
dying from a knee going septik

Too Fast To Stop

The ache in the eyes after twelve hour days
and weekends too fast to stop:
meetings to be, flats to find,
a world to Green, a poetry do ...

But when I have some unused time
I wander through those empty hours
getting up, sitting down, walking round,
only knowing what not to do.

I think what I need is someone else there,
someone to say: "Sit down! Shut up!
Have a cuddle. I care". Someone else there
to make that empty house a home.

Scenes From A Blackpool Conference

Dog Sea

Lively, frisky, slate-coloured eyes
bounding and bouncing at the hum of the wind,
white like electricity sparking around excited mouths,
roaring forward, desperate to play.

After Eighteen Months

After eighteen months
the ache has subsided to
wishes in the half woken morning.

But plans to search
for a new nervous start
are subdued by a loss of ease.

After Silent Years

After silent years
the dissettled aparachiks
agitate words
conhiding true motives.

Chained from the question,
hollowed of the answer,
they're too wary
to worry beyond.

But train doors
don't wait
for stations to stop.

Guinness

Guinness was discovered
in the eleventh century
when Ireland
was off the coast of Africa.

The English were so jealous
of this Irish discovery
they sent a secret army
to paddle on the South side
and move the island north.

But for all their trickery,
and even invasion,
they never found the secret
of the Guinness brew
because, of course,
Guinness isn't brewed:
it is
(sorry about this)
mined.

Guinness is a hard rock,
rather like coal,
but when it contacts air
chemicals react
making a liquid.
The fossils are born again
as Guinness pigs,
and the occasional lump
is pressed into a disc:
a Guinness record.

Some people
have guessed the secret
and tried to mine Guinness
but,
foolishly,
they search underground
for a black liquid
so,
instead,
they find oil
which doesn't taste as nice,
but,
still,
it makes them rich.

Ah, Guinness.

Leicester Square

Having missed my chance to see the new ballet
because the magic had left the 'Hole In The Wall',
I wandered through still, fuming traffic
under winter trees
full of starlings, sleeping.

I queued for "Highlander",
bumped by the lovers behind
consumed in each other.
An old American man passed through
with many young people dressed for the night:
couples, pairs, trios,
but no singles, like me.

A placard comes
saying protein causes lust
so eat less eggs, cheese, beef.
Underneath, the voice of a satired vicar
speaks from a middle-aged man
dressed in repression.

A tramp frightened him away
with a comment everyone else heard.

I came out of the cinema into a film,
hearing my footsteps echo around the auditorium,
dodging the actors walking slowly across me,
seeing the special effects
of the blue wail
of the flashing siren
edging past.

These Words, They Were Not Said

Your eyes have been singing in my mind
with power, a symphony of possibility,
with light, a full moon dancing brightness around my darkened self,
with depth, showing from afar the murmur of your soul.

I long to hear the warm rhythm of your heart,
to conduct our desires to selfless fulfilment,
to hear your mind sing to me of love.

Working For...

“Show initiative”
you ballyhoo,
like a rapist politician
howling patriotism.

“We do not carry passengers”
you accuse.
Good—
when do you resign?

I see you,
sitting back,
smug,
porridge-eyed,

and you’ll never admit
that the rocket you sought
said “Brockwell’s”
not “NASA”.

So now it goes up,
a lone flame,
a dark night.
That’s orbit?

And when it crashes
on the bottom line,
will it be the cleaner’s fault
for washing out the tea-leaves?

Will it be the receptionist
for picking up the banker’s call?
But, no, not you—
never in a million egos.

