

# **19.9a**

## **An Ode To The A14**

**Dylan Harris**





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**Potato Press**

Some of these poems have appeared in *Never Bury Poetry, Island, Subverse, First Tme, Equinox, Page 84* and *Krax*.

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 “19.9a” in the subject line of any email)

*Recitals of some of these poems may be found online*

# Poems

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# Accelerating Is Language English

The fear is not of something new  
but “can the mind absorb it?”.  
Like helpless dreams, a tension bout,  
this fear’s control, to lose it.

Is this where the phobics herd,  
who dare not stand nor face it,  
and call me rude, a geek or nerd,  
if I declare to ride it?

And so I climb the higher path,  
accelerating self.  
Peacock faces worry up,  
huddle. But I’ve done it. I know:

I’ve learnt the new technology,  
uncared those sneering weenies.  
I turn my back and grin the dawn.  
I’m Gawain. They are the was.

# **It Must Be Christmas**

The same repeated, same repeated, same repeated rhythm,  
tunes as sweet as desperately needing a piss,  
the harmony of insincerity,  
the colour of emptiness,  
lyrics too simple for nursery verse.

It must be Christmas.



# The Pub Quiz League

1.

My social life glows momentarily  
on winter Sunday evenings  
in The Pub Quiz league.

2.

The newbie knows the taste of blood  
is not red, but quiets her mouth;  
she feels she lacks “experience”.

A good team needs one who always knows  
who methok’d with Abendigo  
and sunk the Wurble fleet,

but most of us are ballast.  
I’ve got my special anorak  
that is hardly ever asked.

3.

An encompassing taste of flowers,  
wilting in a hop bitter foliage,  
gives gentle colour to the evening.

# Lost Sanctuary

Just now, God knows why,  
I remembered my long dead mother's  
telephone number.

This odd recollection  
gave cold relaxation  
to my tired, snappish mood.

The warm welcome  
she offered me,  
the assurance of food,

the spare bed,  
the familiar disagreements,  
they were always available.

Now, this sanctuary,  
this feel of childhood argument,  
this place of reconciliation,

is lost.

# **An Ode To The A14**

The A14, which runs the hundred miles  
from Leicestershire to Felixstowe, is crossed  
by roads and railway tracks. What truly riles  
is in Northants., the bureaucrats, they botched  
and built no bridge for walking types – not keen  
on those whose journeys don't pollute. So all  
who hike the tourist path along the Nene  
must catapult across the cars – the old,  
the children, everyone. So I propose,  
to take the piss of bureaucratic dross,  
to sculpt gigantic trampolines, and pose  
a granny, flying through in the air, across  
the carriageways. The Angel of the North  
be damned: we'll have The Lady Of The Kilns.

# Tring

*for Kit Fryatt*

In times gone past, it was the norm for men  
of words to hide in lines of heartfelt depth  
a dark delightful lady. Now I pen  
such lines myself, to intimate the breadth  
that can be found in tales of many pubs,  
or riding on the back of bikes—‘ *there’s more,  
much more than this*’. But now she’s left to floods  
of tears, advanced to lordly duties, for  
she won the Tring estate at cards. No cars  
will run the motorway again, replaced  
by fields of black or tannin plants. All bars  
will only serve an Irish pint. If chased,  
her man will face the cad with daggered scorn  
and duel: Mornington Crescent at dawn.

# Old Funeral Music

I heard the music once  
a decade past:  
a hard-paced hysteria

with the darkening of approaching thunder,  
the evermore of unceasing clockwork,  
the difficult peace of restrained tears.

It had me picture a wake at night,  
a burning pyre,  
voices in lament.

The music,  
the full orchestra,  
stopped.

This unfinished silence  
led me.  
My pyre spat,

the lamenters' voices scorched.  
I invented a dead man's face  
and saw his living conflict.

The music started,  
quick marching grief  
into the past.

# Chance Is Such A Scornful God

This morning

I heard the black news  
of a killer crash  
on the main line,

I saw a sweet car  
garrotted under the strangling wheels  
of a red-respecting juggernaut,

I met discordant blue  
flashing alarm  
on someone  
knocked down  
and still.

What should I believe?

That Lady Fate is having  
'a bad hair day',  
so people have to hurt?

Chance is pure,  
a scornful God,  
the God of science,  
the only God to give  
predictable result.

# Of Caroline

Why do I chase the ones who want to be the Taj Mahal:  
distant, magnificent, unreachable;  
and really the Brighton Pavilion?

# The Trumpet Blown

I went to a concert one night—  
the church is across from my house—  
it turned into quite a good fight:  
the horn versus everyone else.

Frank played every note very flat—  
or sharp—he found all of the keys.  
The tones of those sounds he got out?  
You'd think that a foghorn had sneezed.

The orchestra wandered along,  
the chorus was actually good,  
apart from mute cursing of "Wrong!  
I'd staple his lips if I could".

These problems continued for years  
'til concerts in front of a Lord,  
who walked from the music in tears—  
and Frank, he had put to the sword.

Such murder is highly improper;  
the Lord was convicted in court.  
But Judge was a music conductor,  
so fined him a bottle of port.

You'll find, when your life is complete,  
if down to the torment you've fell,  
Frank proving, for Satan's conceit,  
from National Anthems comes Hell.



# Why I Prefer Schoenberg

There once was a simple salesman,  
too crude to sell used cars,  
who won the right, in an unfair fight,  
to buy his own self-portrait  
with violins gleaming grease,  
as sweet as concrete.

# Fenland Sketch

*1.*

Ploughing deep furrows in the black wet earth  
yields mummified branches of ancient trees.

Rivers run straight as the mythical career of heroes;  
old roads meander like comfortable lives.

No hills, nothing for houses to nestle in,  
your every deed is seen by your neighbours' God.

This stark grandeur challenges even self-deception;  
you glare back at the emptiness, or you run.

2.

This busy air is cold and bright,  
rendering the water in the crossing dykes  
a glittering rush of Sharp Blue.

White clouds with the spirit  
of steaming liners sprint above me,  
while I, in my car, run this road

with no boxes alongside imprisoning streets,  
no brick wall bigotry from some chattering suburb;  
no metropolitan clutter, no town crowds, just distance.

The photography is here, but I can't catch it.  
But I will; I'll learn to express my cheer  
at this absence, this emptiness.

3.

Cruising on the Nene,  
knowing that,  
in fifty years time,  
with global warming,  
I'd be sailing a shallow sea.

Incidentally,  
anyone want to buy a house?  
Beautiful garden  
excellent for vegetables,  
prospective fishery rights.

4.

I thank you for your note, in which you write  
about the acts you threaten in a bum  
caprine. I didn't say (I'd thought it trite)  
that I'm a secret agent for The Scum,

for which I dig in bins throughout the night  
(I raid the rich and famous) looking for  
hysteria to push in black and white.  
To you, I shall admit, I've been a bore,

I told my editor the things you say,  
I rue my lack of nous. He's sent a clan  
of journalist to hunt around your neigh-  
bourhood; he hopes to find a fan of Man-

chester United (we've got Beckham un-  
der contract). If you wake to see, one day,  
a chamoise sweetly tempting in the sun,  
resist that goat, for David B, your neigh-

bour's football God, awaits, binoculars  
in hand, to watch. The cameraman will flash  
and snap, the journalist will crawl the bars,  
pretending he was there. A grand, in cash,

will cheer your neighbour's life, and you'd go in  
a chat show agent list of guests, so low  
that all the coucherati sneer your sin;  
hypocrisy is good TV, you know.

Of course, I don't expect all this to make  
a difference, to wit, your acumen  
in publishing my works. I'll have my cake  
and scoff it, for your moment in The Scum.





