

Appendix

LIVERPOEM... FIVE 'TIL NINE.

Being some versification
By
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PART ONE

What I like about Liverpool is
walking up Park Road 4am.
hearing lark singing,
mid-February thinking
of Spring.

Seeing a ghost see a ghost,
see Chaplin seeing Kerouac,
seeing Dickens see Jung,
see Lennon, Brando and Presley
from a Paradise Street pub get flung.

I like the Old Hall Street
rain,
the soft Saturday afternoon
special summer holiday edition
weather and traffic information
rain.

I like Vauxhall Road's winter razor wind,
all the Granby Street Wunderkind,
going away and coming back
on the next
train.

The city is a Radio.
The city is an Echo.

The city is red sun on red brick
on yellow days,
the City is black rain on black rock on blue nights.
The City is a magnolia tree
in Sefton Park,
and Chinatown Neonlites just after dark.
The city is a woman on Bold Street and you want to
hold her breath.
The city is oceanirishmersey air
she's there again and you stare
to see her standing there,
sorry to digress
but you should have seen her in that dress.

I like the light on the Mersey
from Beresford Road,
light on the Mersey
at Otterspool,
light at the top of the hill
and light at the bottom
by the School.

(Quote:- 'Liverpool and Venice have a relationship in their shared wondrous quality of Light and Water.' G. Melly, 1973.)

Later on,
on my bike,
on the way to the Library
and I'm thinking about
George Melly
lecturing at Hope Street in 1973
when I was a different me.
What was it now.... something
about Liverpool and Venice
and a geographical quirk
of the light.
making both places
particularly atmospheric
even at night.
The factor of water is involved
I reflect
But my reverie is dissolved,
When on my nose
a spot of rain
I detect.
From this daydreaming I must
refrain, this isn't the Piazza San Marco,
Even if the effect of watery light is the same as behind Tesco.

I'll get my head together
and disregard this wet weather.
Well, at least I'm on my bike
and saving shoe leather
or at least I was until later,
much later actually, much
later, in fact, that night.
I went out walking
just after, or just before,
twilight.

When I came back from walking
I couldn't stop talking
to myself and, of course,
my Pet Fish who helps one
to feel less alone
not, mind you, that I
necessarily wish to be
on my own but -
now it's my object
to change the subject
- oh look, it's approaching
the Dawn Zone
hasn't the time flown
I'd no idea.
I'll go to the noveltyagents
and get manipulated
by some media.

Outside I see neighbour's
dog stalking,
I said, 'Boy, for what are
you waiting.'
He said (drumroll) 'The Bone'.
I said, 'Don't do so much talking,
do what you should do

which is mating.
Boy said 'If dog eats dog, soon
only one dog will be left,
of mates bereft,
a final Fido, a last Lassie,
an ex Rex, a canine alone,
the only bone... his own.'
I said 'Boy, your doggerel is vital
but what is the title?'
He said, 'It's called The Dog the Man
was Seen About.'
I said 'Just call it The End.'
Boy said 'Rover and Out.'

Of course, it was still raining
but using my Special Artist
Service training
I got over to the shop
but was ready to drop.
Wet floor, dripping brollys,
wet schoolkids
sucking lollys,
saying yummy,
girls fronts on
fronts of magazines,
girls seem to say come
to mummy.
I say 'The Daily Take please, and
a Tin of Beans.'
I like Mr. Ali and Wife
who are always
quite chummy.

Returning to abode
neighbour seeing me says
'You're up early.'
I said 'No, I'm up late.'
He said, 'Come in, have a cuppa.'
'Thanks a lot mate,
thanks mate,' I said
'but after my supper
it's breakfast and then bed.'
'Okay' neighbour said 'I'll see
you later. Or in your case, soon.'
I said 'Yes, I'll get up
with the moon
or maybe rise
tonight at noon.'
Neighbour said, 'You've stolen that line.'
I said 'Of course it's not mine
but so have a couple of others,
what the heck, we're all brothers.'

I must go to Venice one day
but first the washing-up
I'll get put away.
Then Billy comes round
saying 'What's happening'
I say 'Everything. All the time.'
Bill said 'Oh you're doing another rhyme'
I said 'Well spotted, now Bye Bye Billy
it's well past the Dawn Zone
going on would be silly

in bed I should be laying prone
perchance to dream
Of Merseygondoliers
and for this, Billy,
I need to be alone'
Bill said 'Alright, Greta,
I'll see you later.'
I said 'Right Bill, cheers,
give my love to your Mater.'
He said 'She hasn't been feeling too good.'
I said 'Get her a tonic for her blood.'
He said 'I've tried that
but I think she's allergic to Our Cat.'
I said 'It could be just one
of medicine's riddles,
or failing that try
getting rid of Tiddles.'
'I wouldn't' said Billy 'be all
that fussy about getting rid
Of Mater's pussy
but for that the Old Girl wouldn't stand
even though yesterday it bit her hand.'
I asked 'Was it the hand that feeds it?'
He said 'Yes.'
I said 'Well who needs it?'
He said 'Not me and yet
it's sometimes nice to have a pet.'
'Yes' I said 'and when Horace is fed
I'm definitely off to bed.'
Bill said 'He's a lovely goldfish.'
I said 'Isn't he just,
and he doesn't eat much
just the occasional crust.'
Bill said 'He's asleep, I trust.'
'Yes, he's gone to sleep' I said,
'It looks to me' Bill said,
'like the little chap's dead.'
I shouted 'Horace' and
he started swimming about.
Horace said 'Bye Bye Bill,
close the door on your way out.'
Bill said 'Jings!'
(alluding to his annual Highland flings)
'that fish can speak.'
I shouted 'Billy, go,
before I knock you
into the middle of next week.'

The door slammed but through
the letterbox Billy started to speak
saying 'Sorry Horace,
I didn't mean to shock you.'
I just pretended to be asleep
my temper so as to keep.
Billy called 'I'll see you in a bit,
I've got to take the Kids to school.'
Then without thinking I called
out 'Billy, just what is it
you like about Liverpool?'
Door opened, Bill came back in
so I decided to get up.
I said, 'Some tea I'd be making
but of some things I'm lacking

like, for instance,
another cup.
'I'll have it' Bill said 'in a bottle,
what's that you're reading? Oh,
Aristotle,
I prefer' he said 'Sven Hassel.'
'I like him too' I said
'but not just before bed.'
Bill said, 'I'll come round after,
When I've got the Kids from school.'
I said 'Yes, and then (squeals of laughter)
tell me what you like about Liverpool.'
Billy said 'You'll be just getting up.'
I said 'Yes and bring another cup.'
'Right' Bill said,
'and I'll bring some milk.'
'Okay' I said 'now I'm off to bed
to read some Plato and Rilke.'
'Carpe diem,
William' I said.

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO

...well, about a minute had passed
and I thought great
peace at last
even if a little late
or in my case
soon.

Then guess who came back
through the door,
squelching towards me
across the floor.
Out of his mouth emerged
a large balloon
inside of which was written,
'It's Pissing Down!'
Bill said 'D'ya like it?
I'm pretending to be a Cartoon!'
A smile of course replaced my frown,
'Like it, Billy?' I said, 'I love it.
You're a bloody clown
but I can dig it.
Now look, Billy, you've got me
in a muddle,
I thought we'd already said
our adieus
and why are you taking off
your shoes?'
Bill said, 'I stepped in a
Liverpuddle
while getting the Kids from school
from where, you said, after
I should come to tell you
(squeals of laughter)
What I Like About Liverpool.'
I said, 'But Billy, you've only been
gone a minute'

'No, T. John' he said. 'Now it's T-time.'
I said, 'Time certainly does Fugit,
I must have been enjoying myself,
I must End my Merseyrhyme
and the book I'm writing
I soon must finish it.
Bill, pass my Taperecorder
off the shelf
oh no, put it back,
nine enormous batteries I lack.
I certainly don't feel like I've
been sleeping,
I must be disorientated with these horus
I'm keeping.'
Bill said 'What are you calling
this book you haven't finished yet?'
I said, 'It's provisionally entitled
The Fifth Quartet
and what all day
have you been doing?'
Bill said 'Oh, you know... Staying Alive...
... oh, and I did the I-Ching
and got Hexagram Sixty Five.
Look, T. John, there's something
on my mind
and although you haven't much
in the way of good looks
I know you've read
loads of good books
so I'd like your help,
if you don't mind.'
I said 'Maybe in my Hunk Account
there is a deficit,
but what are looks when you can quote in Sanskrit?'
Bill said 'Nothing,
but what if the lady's
deaf as well as blind?'
I said 'Well at least I'm very fit,
I always run the Mersey Marathon'
Bill said 'Well you've got Good Legs,
T. John,
but look, my problem, I need
to share it.'
I said 'It'll help if I write it
down while you recite it,
pass me my pen, turn on the light
but don't go fast
it's very slowly I write'
Bill said 'I'll tell you what I like
about Liverpool first.'
I said 'That is the information
for which I thirst.'
Bill said 'Okay' and started to recite:
'What I Like About Liverpool
is
waiting for a person and
arranging a meeting on
Monday for Tuesday at Three
and you meet on Wednesday at Four
and it's all on for Thursday at Five
when you arrange Friday at Six
which becomes Saturday at Seven
when who should show but she

who sells seashells on the seashore
and she's soon Letting Her Hair Down
all the way to the Dance Floor
where the Beat wears the Crown.'
I said 'Bill repeat that but go slower
I didn't manage to get it all down.'
Bill said 'But T. John, I can't remember
it. I was doing what you taught
me last week about turning my
stream of Consciousness into a river
and using thoughts
as boats.'
I said 'I can't write that fast,
it's just no good,
the rain has turned your river
into a flood.
Were your boats ferrys,
or gondoliers?
It could tell us much
about your inner fears.'
I said 'I need to turn my pen
into a rocket
on the space of this page
and this thoughtship of yours
we need to dock it.'
Bill said 'My train of thoughts
has left the station.'
I said, 'is it everything you've
forgot
about your previous recitation?'
Bill said 'Under that question mark
you left out the dot,
what you need is a Wodr Prosecser,
Kev'll get you one
for about a tenner.'
I said 'Well for now this pen
will have to do
but this black pen's run out,
Pass me the blue.'
Then again on his tale
Billy set sail,
he said 'I had a pizza once
but it made me sick,
Italian wine my head it makes thick
but I like spaghetti,
that always does the trick.'
I said 'Slow down, Bill,
my hand's not that quick.'
'It's a pity' Bill said 'that Liverpool
hasn't got a plain
where mainly would stay the rain
like the one they have in Spain'
I said 'Repeat what just came out
of your brain.'
He said 'You mean, what I just
said then?'
I said 'Yes.'
He said 'Can't. I've forgotten again.'
I said 'We're not having much success,
I'll have to get some batteries
to record your provincial reveries.'
Bill said 'Provençal's in France
and my memory is bad but at least

I can dance.'

I said 'For that we'll need your video'
Bill said 'I sold it to Kevin ages ago
and provincialism is when an idea
in Idaho is worth not an iota
in Iowa, or even Ottowa.'

I said 'Damn, I missed that as well,
I wish I could write faster, bloody hell!'
I said 'Let's get back to your problem,
sharing 'em usually helps solve 'em.'
Bill said 'Well like I say, you've
read all the books.'

'It's easy' I said
'when you're On Your Tod
and don't spend much time in bed.'
Bill said 'it's not so much a problem
as a question,
what I want to know is, T. John,
do animals believe in God?'

I said 'Do you mean can a
fish be bad?'

He said 'Yes, can a beetle be sad?'

I said 'Can an elephant hate?'

He said 'Do zebras on Sundays
get up late?'

I said 'Is it possible that rodents
experience magic moments?'

He said 'Does a cat love its brother?'

I said 'Does a dog love its mother?'

He said 'Do angry lions count to ten
before they roar again?'

I said 'Do the frog and the newt
discuss the Absolute?'

He said 'Do birds only sing
from nine 'til five?'

I said 'Does work stop for lunch
in busy bees hive?'

He said 'Do geese not take care
of business from five 'til nine?'

I said 'Do horses say that's not
Yours, it's mine?'

He said 'At Xmas, do pheasants
give each other presents?'

I said 'Does a worm in the earth
celebrate its day of birth?'

He said 'Well, what do you think?'

I said 'In deep water, we're about
to sink,
is the Albert open?
Let's go for a drink.'

He said 'It's not usually open
after midnight.'

I said 'Blimey, again Time has
taken a Flight'

Bill said 'It's alright,
I know a late night place.'

I asked 'Does it do a late late breakfast'
He said 'It hasn't in the past
but they might like your face
even though you ain't good looking.
The girl who does the cooking
is called Doreen
and she's a real queen,

by the way, what does
Carpe Diem mean?’
I said ‘It’s something Horace said.’
Bill said ‘Chirpy little chap your
fish, isn’t he?’
I said ‘No, my fish was named
after the Horace who was quite big
in Ancient Philosophy.
I was indulging in some
verbal horseplay,
(not that you’d notice)
and Carpe Diem means
Seize the Day.
It’s something I’ve been pondering
during my late night wandering,
well... that and one other thing.’
Bill said ‘Ah yes, your illustrations
For the I-Ching.’
I said ‘Innovations are being made
all the time,
but no, I’ve been wondering
how to end this rhyme.’
Bill said ‘Ask me if there’s
anything I don’t like about
Liverpool?’
‘Alright’ I said ‘Tell me what
you Don’t like about Liverpool.’
‘Only one thing’ said Bill
‘and that’s Liverpool City Council.
what about you T. John?
Is there anything about the Pool
that you’re not too keen on?’
I said ‘There is one thing that
makes me ill’
Bill said ‘What’s that?’
I said ‘Same as you, Bill’
He said ‘You mean – ’
I said ‘ – yes, Liverpool City Council.’
Bill said ‘Ah, well, you should
end your verse
on a high note,
better not to think of the worse.’
‘Or’ I said ‘best not think
of the worst,
maybe another walk’ and I
reached for my coat.
Bill said ‘Remember what you told
me in our talk,
about writing down what you
think of first.’
I said ‘Yes Bill, I think you’re right,
but remember how slowly I write.’
Bill said ‘Let me help you again,
It is alright, I brought my own pen,’
and he wrote
KARP DAYUM
and we strode off into the night.
Then Horace spoke
to get the Last Line
‘What a lovely bloke,’
he said in his fishy whine.
‘Don’t go changing,
William.’

But I return in black,
Horace said 'Oh, you're back.'
I said 'It doesn't matter what's the day,
it's the way you seize 'em.'
Horace said 'What a thrill...
but the Last Line must go
(even though he karn't spell
... oh, what the hell)
to
Bill.

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