

Classic Poetry Series

Adrian Henri
- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Adrian Henri(10 April 1932 - 20 December 2000)

Adrian Henri was a British poet and painter, best remembered as the founder of poetry-rock group The Liverpool Scene and as one of three poets in the best-selling anthology *The Mersey Sound*, along with

Adrian Henri's grandfather was a seaman from Mauritius who settled in Birkenhead, Cheshire, where Henri was born. In 1938, at the age of 6, Henri moved to Rhyll. Henri studied art at Newcastle and for a short time taught art at Preston Catholic College before going on later to lecture in art at both Manchester and Liverpool Colleges of Art. He was closely associated with other artists of the area and the era including the Pop artist Neville Weston and the conceptual artist Keith Arnatt. In 1972 he won a major prize for his painting in the John Moores competition. He was president of the Merseyside Arts Association and Liverpool Academy of the Arts in the 1970s and was an honorary professor of the city's John Moores University. He married twice, but had no children.

His career spanned everything from artist and poet to teacher, rock-and-roll performer, playwright and librettist. He could name among his friends John Lennon, George Melly,

His numerous publications include *The Mersey Sound*, with McGough and Patten—a best-selling poetry anthology that brought all three of them to wider attention—*Wish You Were Here and Not Fade Away*.

He was the leading light of a band, The Liverpool Scene, which released four LPs of poetry and music. Earlier, in 1955, he played washboard in the King's College, Newcastle Skiffle Group. He was a firm believer in live poetry reading, and read his poetry at many and varied venues as well as holding poetry workshops at schools and colleges. One of his last major poetry readings was at the launch of *The Argotist* magazine in 1996.

He died in Liverpool aged 68 following a long illness. Shortly before his death, he was awarded the Freedom of the City of Liverpool in recognition of his contribution to Liverpool's cultural scene. He also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Liverpool.

He described his early philosophy as, "If you think you can do it and you want to do it — then do it."

Adrian Henri's Talking After Christmas Blues

Well I woke up this mornin' it was Christmas Day
And the birds were singing the night away
I saw my stocking lying on the chair
Looked right to the bottom but you weren't there
there was
apples
oranges
chocolates
. . . aftershave
but no you.

So I went downstairs and the dinner was fine
There was pudding and turkey and lots of wine
And I pulled those crackers with a laughing face
Till I saw there was no one in your place
there was
mincepies
brandy
nuts and raisins
. . . mashed potato
but no you.

Now it's New Year and it's Auld Lang Syne
And it's 1 2 o'clock and I'm feeling fine
Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot?
I don't know girl, but it hurts a lot
there was
whisky
vodka dry Martini (stirred
but not shaken)
.... and 12 New Year resolutions
all of them about you.

So it's all the best for the year ahead

As I stagger upstairs and into bed
Then I looked at the pillow by my side

. . .I tell you baby I almost cried

there'll be

Autumn

Summer

Spring

. . . . and Winter

all of them without you.

Adrian Henri

Adrian Henri's Last Will And Testament

'No one owns life, but anyone who can pick up a Fryingpan owns death.'
William Burroughs

To whom it may concern:

As my imminent death is hourly expected these days/ carbrakes screaming on East Lancs tarmac/trapped in the blazing cinema/mutely screaming I TOLD YOU SO from melting eyeballs as the whitehot fireball dissolves the Cathedral/being the first human being to die of a hangover/ dying of over-emotion after seeing 20 schoolgirls waiting at a zebracrossing.

I appoint Messrs Bakunin and Kropotkin my executors and make the following provisions:

1. I leave my priceless collections of Victorian Oil Lamps, photographs of Hayley Mills, brass fenders and Charlie Mingus records to all Liverpool poets under 23 who are also blues singers and failed sociology students.
2. I leave the entire East Lancs Road with all its landscapes to the British people.
3. I hereby appoint Wm. Burroughs my literary executor, instructing him to cut up my collected works and distribute them through the public lavatories of the world.
4. Proceeds from the sale of relics: locks of hair, pieces of floorboards I have stood on, fragments of bone flesh teeth bits of old underwear etc. to be given to my widow.
5. I leave my paintings to the Nation with the stipulation that they must be exhibited in Public Houses, Chip Shops, Coffee Bars and the Cellar Clubs throughout the country.
6. Proceeds from the sale of my other effects to be divided equally amongst the 20 most beautiful schoolgirls in England (these to be chosen after due deliberation and exhaustive tests by an informal committee of my friends).

Adrian Henri

Jan. '64

Witnessed this day by:

James Ensor

Charlie `Bird' Parker.

Adrian Henri

Any Prince To Any Princess

August is coming
and the goose, I'm afraid,
is getting fat.
There have been
no golden eggs for some months now.
Straw has fallen well below market price
despite my frantic spinning
and the sedge is,
as you rightly point out,
withered.

I can't imagine how the pea
got under your mattress. I apologize
humbly. The chambermaid has, of course,
been sacked. As has the frog footman.
I understand that, during my recent fact-finding tour of the
 Golden River,
despite your nightly unavailing efforts,
he remained obstinately
froggish.

I hope that the Three Wishes granted by the General
 Assembly
will go some way towards redressing
this unfortunate recent sequence of events.
The fall in output from the shoe-factory, for example:
no one could have foreseen the work-to-rule
by the National Union of Elves. Not to mention the fact
that the court has been fast asleep
for the last six and a half years.

The matter of the poisoned apple has been taken up
by the Board of Trade: I think I can assure you
the incident will not be
repeated.

I can quite understand, in the circumstances,
your reluctance to let down

your golden tresses. However
I feel I must point out
that the weather isn't getting any better
and I already have a nasty chill
from waiting at the base
of the White Tower. You must see
the absurdity of the
situation.

Some of the courtiers are beginning to talk,
not to mention the humble villagers.
It's been three weeks now, and not even
a word.

Princess,
a cold, black wind
howls through our empty palace.
Dead leaves litter the bedchamber;
the mirror on the wall hasn't said a thing
since you left. I can only ask,
bearing all this in mind,
that you think again,

let down your hair,

reconsider.

Adrian Henri

Country Song

'Lily of the Valley (Convallaria Majalis, fam. Lilliaceae). Grows wild in N. England. Commonly cultivated. Flowers in May. Berries red when ripe. Leaves particularly poisonous because three constituents depress the heart, like Foxglove.'

What are the constituents that depress the heart?
the scent of lilies in dark green silences under trees
milkweed and ragwort and sunshine in hedges
small flowers picked amongst trees when it's raining

A year ago
You planted lilies in the valley of my mind
There were lilies at the bottom of my garden
And ferrys at the bottom of my street

Now
I sit here in sunlight with the smell of wild garlic
Trying to tape record the sound of windflowers and
celandines

Wondering What are the three constituents that depress the heart Without you
here in the country?

Adrian Henri

Don'T Worry/Everything's Going To Be All Right

Don't worry

If your boyfriend doesn't treat you right

baby

Everything's going to be all right

come with me

And every poem I write will have your name in it

Don't worry

If the factories and villas cover the countryside

Everything's going to be all right

England will be given back to the animals

and we'll find a home under fern leaves known only to foxes

Don't worry

If I can't afford to buy you coffee after school

Everything's going to be all right

Soon the poem will replace the pound sterling as
international currency

and Britain Will get on the poem standard again

Don't worry

About those lunatics in the government

Everything's going to be all right

The country will be governed by beautiful girls under 18

(and you will let me carry your portfolio home from the
House)

Don't worry About what happened the other night

Everything's going to be all right

They'll give you contraceptive pills shaped like jellybabies
with your milk at playtime

Don't worry about what your Dad says about the younger generation

Everything's going to be all right

There'll be involuntary euthanasia for everyone over 30
not a poet painter or musician.

Don't worry

About the rain

Everything's going to be all right

The streets will be covered with tiny pink flowers

like the ones on your suspender belt

Bathing suits will be banned from beaches

School uniforms will be the only kind allowed in public

Your end-of-term report will be marked out of 100 for sex

appeal (and you will be Top of the Form)
Policemen will be beaten up by poets
Trade Unions will be taken over by workers
There'll be 24-hour licensing
And everything will be on the National Drink Service
your parents will wake us every morning with breakfast
Your teacher will smile at notes saying we stayed in bed late
Your face will be in every art gallery
Your name in every book of poetry
So Don't
worry Everything's going to be all right.

Adrian Henri

Galactic Lovepoem

Warm your feet at the sunset
Before we go to bed
Read your book by the light of Orion
With Sirius guarding your head
Then reach out and switch off the planets
We'll watch them go out one by one
You kiss me and tell me you love me
By the light of the last setting sun
We'll both be up early tomorrow
A new universe has begun

Adrian Henri

Great War Poems

1.

The same old soldiers walking along the same old skyline

2.

Dead hand through the sandbags reaching out for the cream-and -white butterfly

3

mud/water under duckboards/mud/rats scamper in starshell darkness/mud/smell of shit and rotting bodies/mud/resting your sweaty forehead on the sandbags
OVER THE TOP the first men in the lunar landscape.

4.

What did you do to the Great Whore, Daddy?'

5.

Poppies slightly out-of-focus and farmcarts bringing in the peaceful dead.

6.

The ghost of Wilfred Owen selling matches outside the Burlington Arcade.

7.

Seafog. Red flaring lights from the shore batteries. The roar of shells rattle of machineguns. Water running in the bilges. My feet slipping on the damp cobbles of the quayside.

8.

DON'T BE VAGUE - BLAME GENERAL HAIG.

9.

four white feathers clutched in a blood-stained envelope

10.

a skull nestling in a bed of wild strawberries/boots mouldering green with
fungus/saplings thrusting through rusting helmets/sunken barges drifting full of
leaves down autumn rivers.

Adrian Henri

Holcombe Poem/Poem For A Girl I Didn'T Meet

walking on the moors thinking about how I didn't meet you yesterday
heather underfoot and mist over Pendle
the moor changing like an animal/brown to green grey to
purple with the weather
sky blue at the edges
like a letter that came too late .
. . . Undine rising from the waters her golden hair
dripping in the moonlight . . . dead bird on a fence blood
dripping from its neck . . . Isis ,searching the rushes
for her murdered lover . . . small girl with a fishing rod
in a rushing valley full of ferns . . . the last .supper
followed by the Four lust Desserts . . . watching the
white mocking figure at the edge of the DarkForest
. . . beating naked blond haired girls with
long stemmed purple flowers . . . Osiris judging
the dead mist rising up the valley seaweed tangled
in her moonlight hair . . .

trains
moving through valleys
chimneys
springing from hillsides
streams
tumbling through boulders
clouds
tilting from the horizon
and
me
on the moors thinking about the girl I never met.

Adrian Henri

I Want To Paint

I

I want to paint

2000 dead birds crucified on a background of night

Thoughts that lie too deep for tears

Thoughts that lie too deep for queers

Thoughts that move at 186,000 miles/second

The Entry of Christ into Liverpool in 1966

The installation of Roger McGough in the Chair of Poetry at Oxford

Francis Bacon making the President's Speech at the Royal Academy dinner

I want to paint

50 life-sized nudes of Marianne Faithfull

(all of them painted from life)

Welsh Maids by Welsh Waterfalls

Heather Holden as Our Lady of Haslingden

A painting as big as Piccadilly full of neon signs and buses

Christmas decorations and beautiful girls with dark blonde hair shading their faces

I want to paint

The assassination of the entire Royal Family

Enormous pictures of every pavingstone in Canning Street

The Beatles composing a new national anthem

Brian Patten writing poems with a flamethrower on disused ferry boats

A new cathedral 50 miles high made entirely of pram wheels

An empty Woodbine packet covered in kisses

I want to paint

A picture made from the tears of dirty-faced children in Chatham Street

I want to paint

I LOVE YOU across the steps of St. George's hall

I want to paint

Pictures

II

I want to paint

The Simultaneous and Historical Faces of Death

10,000 shocking pink hearts with your name on
The phantom negro postmen who bring me money in my dreams
The first plastic daffodil of spring pushing its way
Through the OMO packets in the supermarket
The portrait of every sixth-form schoolgirl in the country
A full-scale map of the world with YOU at the centre
An enormous lily-of-the-valley with every flower on a separate canvas

Life-sized jelly babies shaped like Hayley Mills
A black-and-red flag flying over Parliament
I want to paint
Every car crash on all the motorways of England
Pere Ubu at 11 o'clock at night in Lime Street
A SYSTEMATIC DERANGEMENT OF ALL THE SENSES
in black running letters 50 miles high over Liverpool

I want to paint
Pictures that children play hopscotch on
Pictures that can be used as evidence at murder trials
Pictures that can be used to advertise cornflakes
Pictures that can be used to frighten naughty children
Pictures worth their weight in money
Pictures that tramps can live in
Pictures that children would find in their stockings on Christmas morning
Pictures that teenage lovers can send each other
I want to paint

pictures

Adrian Henri

In The Midnight Hour

When we meet
in the midnight hour
country girl
I will bring you night flowers
coloured like your eyes
in the moonlight
in the midnight
hour

I remember

Your cold hand
held for a moment among strangers
held for a moment among dripping trees
in the midnight hour

I remember

Your eyes coloured like the autumn landscape
walking down muddy lanes
watching sheep eating yellow roses
walking in city squares in winter rain
kissing in darkened hallways
walking in empty suburban streets
saying goodnight in deserted alleyways

in the midnight hour

Andy Williams singing 'We'll keep a Welcome in the
Hillsides' for us
When I meet you at the station
The Beatles singing 'We Can Work it Out' with James
Enser at the harmonium
Rita Hayworth in a nightclub singing 'Arcade Mia'

I will send you armadas
of love vast argosies of flowers
in the midnight hour
country girl

when we meet

in the moonlight

midnight

hour

country girl

I will bring you

yellow

white

eyes

bright

moon

light

mid

night

flowers

in the midnight hour.

Adrian Henri

Liverpool Poems

1

GO TO WORK ON A BRAQUE!

2

Youths disguised as stockbrokers
Sitting on the grass eating the Sacred Mushroom.

3

Liverpool I love your horny-handed tons of soil.

4

PRAYER FROM A PAINTER TO ALL CAPITALISTS:
Open your wallets and repeat after me
'HELP YOURSELF!'

5

There's one way of being sure of keeping fresh
LIFEBUOY helps you rise again on the 3rd day
after smelling something that smelt like other peoples' socks.

6

Note for a definition of optimism:
A man trying the door of Yates Wine Lodge
At quarter past four in the afternoon.

7

I have seen Pare UBU walking across Lime St
And Alfred Jarry cycling down Elliott Street.

8

And I Saw DEATH in Upper Duke St

Cloak flapping black tall Batman collar

Striding tall shoulders down the hill past the Cathedral brown shoes slightly down
at the heel

9

Unfrosted Chinese mandarins holding lonely feasts in
Falkner Sq gardens to enjoy the snow.

10

Prostitutes in the snow in Canning St like strange erotic
snowmen

And Marcel Proust in the Kardomah eating Madeleine
butties dipped in tea.

II

Wyatt James Virgil and Morgan Earp with Doc Holliday
Shooting it out with the Liver Birds at the Pier Head.

12

And a Polish gunman young beautiful dark glasses
combatjacket/staggers down Little St Bride St blood
dripping moaning clutches/collapses down a back jigger
coughing/falls in a wilderness of Dazwhite washing

Adrian Henri

Love Is...

Love is...

Love is feeling cold in the back of vans

Love is a fanclub with only two fans

Love is walking holding paintstained hands

Love is.

Love is fish and chips on winter nights

Love is blankets full of strange delights

Love is when you don't put out the light

Love is

Love is the presents in Christmas shops

Love is when you're feeling Top of the Pops

Love is what happens when the music stops

Love is

Love is white panties lying all forlorn

Love is pink nightdresses still slightly warm

Love is when you have to leave at dawn

Love is

Love is you and love is me

Love is prison and love is free

Love's what's there when you are away from me

Love is...

Adrian Henri

Love Poem/Colour Supplement

It was our first great war
And after the first successful sortie
Into the no-mans-land between her thighs
We waited anxiously every month
for poppy-sellers to appear in her streets

Adrian Henri

Me

if you weren't you, who would you like to be?

Paul McCartney Gustav Mahler
Alfred Jarry John Coltrane
Charlie Mingus Claude Debussy
Wordsworth Monet Bach and Blake

Charlie Parker Pierre Bonnard
Leonardo Bessie Smith
Fidel Castro Jackson Pollock
Gaudi Milton Munch and Berg

Belà Bartók Henri Rousseau
Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns
Lukas Cranach Shostakovich
Kropotkin Ringo George and John

William Burroughs Francis Bacon
Dylan Thomas Luther King
H. P. Lovecraft T. S. Eliot
D. H. Lawrence Roland Kirk

Salvatore Giuliano
Andy Warhol Paul Uzanne
Kafka Camus Ensor Rothko
Jacques Prévert and Manfred Mann

Marx Dostoevsky
Bakunin Ray Bradbury
Miles Davis Trotsky
Stravinsky and Poe

Danilo Dolci Napoleon Solo
St John of the Cross and
The Marquis de Sade

Charles Rennie Mackintosh
Rimbaud Claes Oldenburg
Adrian Mitchell and Marcel Duchamp

James Joyce and Hemingway
Hitchcock and Bunuel
Donald McKinlay Thelonus Monk

Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Matthias Grunewald
Philip Jones Griffiths and Roger McGough

Guillaume Apollinaire
Cannonball Adderley
René Magritte
Hieronymus Bosch

Stéphane Mallarmé and Alfred de Vigny
Ernst Mayakovsky and Nicolas de Stael
Hindemith Mick Jagger Durer and Schwitters
Garcia Lorca
and
last of all
me.

Adrian Henri

Mrs Albion You've Got A Lovely Daughter (For Allen Ginsberg)

Albion's most lovely daughter sat on the banks of the Mersey dangling her landing stage in the water.

The daughters of Albion
Arriving by underground at Central Station
Eating hot ecclescakes at the Pierhead
Writing 'Billy Blake is fab' on a wall in Mathew St
Taking off their navyblue schooldrawers and
Putting on nylon panties ready for the night

The daughters of Albion
See the moonlight beating down on them in Bebington
Throw away their chewinggum ready for the goodnight kiss
Sleep in the dinnertime sunlight with old men
Looking up their skirts in St Johns Gardens
Comb their darkblonde hair in suburban bedrooms
Powder their delicate little nipples/wondering if tonight will be the night
Their bodies pressed into dresses or sweaters
Lavender at the Cavern or pink at the Sink

The daughters of Albion wondering how to explain why they didn't go home

The daughters of Albion
Taking the dawn ferry to tomorrow
Worrying about what happened
Lacing up blue sneakers over brown ankles
Fastening up brown stockings to blue suspenderbelts

Beautiful boys with bright red guitars
In the spaces between the stars

Reelin' an' a-rockin'
Wishin' an' a-hopin'
Kissin' an' -prayin'
Lovin' an' a-layin'

Mrs Albion you've got a lovely daughter.

Adrian Henri

Nightsong

So we'll go no more a-raving
So late into the night
Though the heart be still as loving
And the neonsigns so bright

Ate my breakfast egg this morning
playing records from last night
woke to hear the front door closing
as the sky was getting light

No more fish-and-chips on corners
Watching traffic going by
No more branches under streetlamps
No more leaves against the sky

No more blues by Otis Redding
No more coffee no more bread
No more dufflecoats for bedding
No more cushions for your head

Though the night is daylight-saving
And the day returns too soon
Still we'll go no more a-raving
By the light of the moon

Adrian Henri

On The Late Late Massachers Stillbirths And Deformed Children A Smoother Lovelier Skin Job

The seven-day beauty plan:

Avenge O Lord thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones

Will cause up to I million deaths from leukaemia

Forget not, in thy book record their groans

Now for the vitally important step.

Cream your face and neck a second time

No American president world-famous for beauty creams

responsible for the freedom and safety of so many young offenders

TODAY'S MEN OF ACTION

The Triple Tyrant Macmillan Kennedy Watkinson

The West governments are satisfied as to the moral

necessity to resume Racing from Newmarket

EXTRA SPECIAL!

Atmospheric testing: A test card is shown

continuously from to a.m. until 15 minutes

before slayn by the bloody Piemontese

why pay higher fares?

There is always trouble when President Kennedy the jovial

gravel-voiced little sailor

defends glamorous Olive Oyl from contamination of the

atmosphere

EXTRA MONEY

their moans The Vales redoubled to the Hills

Another fire blazes in the city of London AND ALL THAT

JAZZ

Do you draw your curtains with a walking-stick?

The mutation was caused by a heavy dose of radiation

received

by the Mother at Hiroshima

This baby's eyes and nose had merged into

one misshapen feature in the middle of its

forehead, lost 6' from Hips

sufferers can now wear fashion stockings

Early may fly the Babylonian wo

followed by

TOMORROW'S WEATHER

The Epilogue

close down.

Adrian Henri

Pictures From An Exhibition

(Painting and Sculpture of a Decade 54-G4 Tate Gallery London April-June 1964)

No. 54 Jean Dubuffet 'Déclinaison de la Barbe' 1. 1959

'as-tu cuilli les fleurs de la barbe?'

Jean Dubuffet I wander the dark pebbles of your mind
picking beardflowers.

No. 73 Joseph Cornell 'Hotel de l'Etoile'

cool pillars of the hotel/in the
night outside the stars are always
so white/the sky is always so
blue/silver moon waiting patiently.

No. 84 Mark Rothko 'Reds - No. 229 x957

SCARLET

ORANGE

ORANGE

ORANGE

SCARLET

CRIMSON

SCARLET

No. 291 Robert Rauschenberg 'windward' 1963

printed oranges are painted

painted oranges are painted

Angry skyline over the gasworks

A Hawk sits brooding inside a painted rainbow.

Nos. 10-13 Josef Albers, Studies for 'Homage to the Square' 1961 – 2

look.

see.

long ago.

now.

No. 314 Bernard Requichot 'Sans Titre - Chasse de papiers choisis'

chasse aux papillons:

`Here Be Tygers' –

the fruit in the tin has a thousand eyes.

No. 349 Jim Dine 'Black Bathroom No. 2' 1962

black splashes on the white walls

interrupting the commercials

TURN ON THE GLEAMING WHITE SINK

AND POEMS COME OUT OF THE TAPS!

No. 139 Victor Vasarely 'Supernovae' 1959 - 61

No. So Louise Nevelson 'Sky Cathedral III' 1960

Black

Black

Black

Boxes

Black

Light

Black

Moonlight

Black

Emptiness

Black

Dust

Black

Boxes

Black

Black

Black

No. 247 Richard Diebenkorn 'Ingleside' 1963

Look through the Supermarket window/up the highway

the hill rises steeply/hoardings and magnolias bright

in the sunlight/white walls black freeways traffic signs

at intersections/green lawns dark hedges/colours

clear and bright as the packets in your wire basket.

Adrian Henri

Poem For Roger MCGough

A nun in a supermarket
Standing in the queue
Wondering what its like
To buy groceries for two.

Adrian Henri

Poem In Memoriam T. S. Eliot

I'd been out the night before & hadn't seen the papers or the telly
& the next day in a café someone told me you were dead
And it was as if a favourite distant uncle had died
old hands in the big strange room/new shiny presents at Christmas
and I didn't know what to feel.

For years I measured out my life with your coffee spoons

Your poems on the table in dusty bed sitters
Playing an L.P. of you reading on wet interrupted January afternoons

Meanwhile, back at the Wasteland:

Maureen OHara in a lowcut dress staggers across Rhyl sandhills

Lovers in Liverpool pubs eating passion fruit

Reading Alfred de Vigny in the lavatory

Opening an old grand piano and finding it smelling of curry

THE STAR OF INDIA FOUND IN A BUS STATION

Making love in a darkened room hearing an old woman having a fit on the
landing

The first snowflakes of winter falling on her Christmas poem for me in Piccadilly
Gardens

The first signs of spring in plastic daffodils
on city counters

Lovers kissing

Rain fallin

Dogs running

Night falling

And you `familiar compound spirit' moving silently down Canning St in a night of
rain and fog.

Adrian Henri

Song For A Beautiful Girl Petrol-pump Attendant On The Motorway

I wanted your soft verges
But you gave me the hard shoulder..

Adrian Henri

Song Of Affluence Or I Wouldn'T Leave My 8-roomed House For You

I wouldn't leave my little 8-roomed house for you
I've got one missus and I don't want two

I love you baby but you must understand
That feeling you's fine and kissing you's grand
But I wouldn't leave my little wooden wife for you

Water tastes fine but money tastes sweeter
I'd rather have a fire than a paraffin heater
And
I wouldn't change my little 8-roomed life for you.

Adrian Henri

The Blazing Hat, Part Two

This is the morning that we burnt a cardboard hat
flames licking the inside of the brim
This is the morning that the thunder hung like great
black flags over the city
stirred by gusts of wind
This is the morning that they opened a new motorway
leading from my house to yours
This is the morning that I decided I wasn't getting enough
roughage
and went on a diet of broken milk bottles
This is the morning that Death left her cloak behind
after the party
This is the morning that a beautiful schoolgirl woke me
with a cup of coffee
in a vision
This is the morning that we saw
words written on water
This is the morning that beautiful girls with Renaissance
faces played Hindemith records
at dawn
This is the morning after the night
before
This is the morning after the night
had strewn Canning Street with purple toilet rolls
This is the morning that we saw a q.-year-old boy
whipping an imaginary blonde lovely
This is the morning that Death was a letter
that was never scented
This is the morning that the poet reached out for the
rolled-up Financial Times
followed by a dreadful explosion
This is the morning that you woke up 50 miles away
seeing sunlight on the water

and didn't think of me
This is the morning that I bought 16 different kinds of
artificial lilies-of-the-valley
all of them smelling of you
This is the morning that we sat and talked

by the embers of the blazing hat.

Adrian Henri

The New 'Our Times' (For Mix Fénéon)

1

At 3 p.m. yesterday, a Mr Adolphus Edwards, a Jamaican immigrant, was pecked to death by a large Bronze Eagle in Upper Parliament St. A U.S. State Dept. spokesman said later, 'We have no comment to make as of this time.'

2

Police-Constable George Williams, who was partially blinded by a 15 lb. jelly baby thrown at a passing pop singer, is to be retired on half-pension.

3

Bearded Liverpool couple put out of misery in night by drip oil heater, court told.

4

A certain Mrs Elspeth Clout, of Huyton, was killed by an unidentified falling object. It was thought to be a particularly hard stool evacuated from the toilet of a passing aeroplane.

5

2 chip-shop proprietors were today accused of selling human ears fried in batter. One of them said 'We believe there is room for innovation in the trade:

6

Fatality in Kardomah bomb outrage: Waitress buried Alive under two thousand Danish pastries.

*(a free 1960s Liverpool version of Fénéon's great 'Our Times'.)

7

At the inquest on Paul McCartney, aged 21, described as a popular singer and guitarist, P.C. Smith said, in evidence, that he saw one of the accused, Miss Jones, standing waving bloodstained hands shouting 'I got a bit of his liver.'

Tonight At Noon (For Charles Mingus And The Clayton Squares)

Tonight at noon

Supermarkets will advertise 3d EXTRA on everything

Tonight at noon

Children from happy families will be sent to live in a home

Elephants will tell each other human jokes

America will declare peace on Russia

World War I generals will sell poppies in the streets on November 11th

The first daffodils of autumn will appear

When the leaves fall upwards to the trees

Tonight at noon

Pigeons will hunt cats through city backyards

Hitler will tell us to fight on the beaches and on the landing fields

A tunnel full of water will be built under Liverpool

Pigs will be sighted flying in formation over Woolton and Nelson will
not only get his eye back but his arm as well

White Americans will demonstrate for equal rights in front of the Black House
and the Monster has just created Dr Frankenstein

Girls in bikinis are moonbathing

Folksongs are being sung by real folk

Artgalleries are closed to people over 21

Poets get their poems in the Top 20

Politicians are elected to insane asylums

There's jobs for everyone and nobody wants them

In back alleys everywhere teenage lovers are kissing in broad daylight

In forgotten graveyards everywhere the dead will quietly
bury the living

and

You will tell me you love me

Tonight at noon

Adrian Henri

Where'Er You Walk

`Where'er you walk
Cool gales shall fan that glade'

The Pierhead where you walked will be made a park
restricted to lovers under 27
Peasants will be found merrymaking after the storm in
Canning St where you walked
The station where we first arrived at night
Will be preserved for the nation With the echo of your footsteps still sounding in
the empty
roof

`Where'er you tread
The Blushing flower shall rise'

The alleyway where we read poems to dustbins after closing time
The kitchens where we quarrelled at parties
The kitchen where two strangers first kissed at a party full of strangers
The ticket barrier where we said goodnight so many times
The cobblestones in front of the station
The pub where the kindly old waiter
Always knows what we want to drink -
ALL SHALL BURST INTO BLOOM
SPROUTING FLOWERS BRIGHTER THAN PLASTIC ONES
IN WOOLWORTHS
Daffodils and chrysanthemums, rhododendrons and
snowdrops, tulips and roses
cobblestones bursting with lilies-of-the-valley

`And all things flourish'

Whole streets where you walk are paved with soft grass
so the rain will never go through your shoes again
Zebra crossings made of lilies
Belisha beacons made of orange blossom
Bus stops huge irises
Traffic lights made of snapdragons
`Trees where you sit
Shall crowd into a shade'

even in Piccadilly
stations covered in flowers yellow like the paint you once
got in your hair
Oak trees growing everywhere we've kissed
Will still be there when I've forgotten what you look like
And you don't remember me at all
Copies of your letters to me on blue paper
Written on the sky by an aeroplane over all the cities of
England
Copies of your poems stamped on eggs instead of lions
We will walk forever in the darkness under fern leaves
'Trees where you sit shall crowd into a shade'

Adrian Henri

Wild West Poems

Noon

2 tall gunmen walking slowly towards each other down Mathew St.

And then he grabbed her (for Leiber/Stoller and the Coasters)

And then

He tied her up

And then

He lit the fuse to the dynamite

And then

And then

AND THEN

ALONG CAME JONES . .

William H. Bonney alias Billy the Kid hitches his horse to a parking meter strides through the swing doors into Yates Wine Lodge. Barmaids slowly back away from the counter. Drunks rush out into Charlotte Street. He drinks a glass of Aussie White and strides out, silent as he came.

POEM FOR BLACK BART TO LEAVE BEHIND ON A STAGE COACH

I hope you ladies ain't afraid Of the wicked man who made this raid But I'm like nature quick and cruel Believe me, gals, I need them jewels.

The Daltons riding down Church Street/Bullets ricochet off street signs/windows full of cardboard Walkers bottles shatter/Bob Grat Emmett thunder across traffic lights at red/h hoof beats die away clattering down Lord Street.

Adrian Henri

Without You

Without you every morning would feel like going back to work after a holiday,
Without you I couldn't stand the smell of the East Lancs Road,
Without you ghost ferries would cross the Mersey manned by skeleton crews,
Without you I'd probably feel happy and have more money and time and nothing
to do with it,
Without you I'd have to leave my stillborn poems on other people's doorsteps,
wrapped in brown paper,
Without you there'd never be sauce to put on sausage butties,
Without you plastic flowers in shop windows would just be plastic flowers in shop
windows,
Without you I'd spend my summers picking morosley over the remains of train
crashes,
Without you white birds would wrench themselves free from my paintings and fly
off dripping blood into the night,
Without you green apples wouldn't taste greener,
Without you Mothers wouldn't let their children play out after tea,
Without you every musician in the world would forget how to play the blues,
Without you Public Houses would be public again,
Without you the Sunday Times colour supplement would come out in black-and-
white,
Without you indifferent colonels would shrug their shoulders and press the
button,
Without you they's stop changing the flowers in Piccadilly Gardens,
Without you Clark Kent would forget how to become Superman,
Without you Sunshine Breakfast would only consist of Cornflakes,
Without you there'd be no colour in Magic colouring books,
Without you Mahler's 8th would only be performed by street musicians in derelict
houses,
Without you they'd forget to put the salt in every packet of crisps,
Without you it would be an offence punishable by a fine of up to £200 or two
months' imprisonment to be found in possession of curry powder,
Without you riot police are massing in quiet sidestreets,
Without you all streets would be one-way the other way,
Without you there'd be no one to kiss goodnight when we quarrel,
Without you the first martian to land would turn round and go away again,
Without you they'd forget to change the weather,
Without you blind men would sell unlucky heather,
Without you there would be
no landscapes/no stations/no houses

no chipshops/no quiet villages/no seagulls
on beaches/no hopscotch on pavements/no night/no morning/
there'd be no city no country
Without you.

Adrian Henri