

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PEN

Well 'T'

Well, I am a poet and it is my life.
I would slit my wrist with a pen not a knife.
Well, I am a poet from now until then.
My life is my paper, my knife is my pen.

Mother

Mother, what will I say to you?
Will I tell you about what I've been through?
Mother, will you criticise?
Mother, will you see it through my eyes?

Mother, what will you say to me?
It's through your eyes I'd like to see.
Mother, will you criticise?
Mother, will you see it through my eyes?

Mother, what will you say to me?
Mother, will you read my poetry?
Am I just what you want me to be?
Mother, will you see it through my eyes?

Mother, what will you say to me?
Am I just what you want me to be,
Or, Mother, will you criticise?
Mother, will you see it through my eyes?

Ain't No

Ain't no clothes to wear, no
Ain't nobody to know
Ain't nowhere to come, nowhere to go
Ain't no belongings that last
Ain't no reminder of no past
Ain't no reason to give
Ain't no reason to live
Ain't no love to take
Ain't no love to fake
Ain't no reason to cheat
Ain't no body to beat
Ain't no body to belong
Ain't no one heard this song
Ain't even got a tune
Ain't even got a bloom
Ain't no mother
Ain't no father
Ain't no sister
Ain't no brother
Ain't no light for my cigarette

Ain't no cigarette . . .

Scream

Don't take what I have because what I have is me.
Don't steal my mind because it's nearly free.
How can I stay unpolluted,
Live in this world and still keep my head?

The things that I'm seeing is mind-blowing insight,
And the war that I'm fighting is a mind-blowing fight.
And the love that I'm feeling is less than a drip in a stream.
And the feel that I'm feeling is scream . . .

So Near and yet So Near

There's a man who lives in a London apartment,
And he's really blowing his mind,
Says it's the fault of the government.
And he thinks he's going blind,
Because all he sees is darkness,
But he says it's all a lark, yes.

There's a beggar who lives on his weak, so weak, knees
And he says he's losing his head,
Claims it's the fault of the zombies,
And the people in power are the living dead.
Says he thinks he's going to die,
But he knows it's the living dead who lie.

There's a teacher who lives in a school,
And he says he's going wild.
He says he knows what they are doing,
And everybody is filed.
He says he's going to learn
What the children should know,
Says he's started to burn,
But he cannot melt the snow.

There's a policeman who lives in a cell,
Says his job's like living in hell.
Says he must be heaven sent,
'Cause he's the only one who knows it's bent.
Yes, he wishes he could fly
So he could leave and live in the sky.

There's the old man who sits on the shelf,
Says he's losing his wealth,
And he could really care about his health,
And he couldn't really care about his health,
Just wealth . . .

There's the young boy who sits on the fence,
Says sitting on the fence don't make no sense,
Says he's going to have a child by a wife,
Cut the fraction with a knife.
There's always enough, but no one will explore
The shadow behind the door,
So near and yet so far . . .

As Is Life

The kingfisher plummets into the river
And captures the winding fish.
As is life . . .

The birdwatcher slowly gropes the ground for his binoculars,
Not daring to move his eyes from what he sees.
It could be fear in his eyes, it could be compassion.
His hands begin to get agitated
And so does he.

His eyes cringe as he cautiously looks for his binoculars,
His head turns to his binoculars, and he slowly reaches for them.
And a rustle of wings, a shimmer in the silent air,
The kingfisher in full flight,
Sinks into the silence of the mere.
The birdwatcher cocks his head to the side in an angry but what
Could have been a mellow moment.
As is life . . .

TENDER FINGERS IN A
CLENCHED FIST

African Metaphor

You can't sweep dust under the rug any more.
You can't keep hiding bodies under the boards of the floor.

You can't sanction the hearts of an African race.
You can't hide a man from his very own face.
You can never be a king if you elect yourself the crown.
You cannot perceive the suffering if you've never been down.

You're on the great white colonial ego trip,
But soon you will be penned into your own township.
Your tables of justice will be turned until they fall upon
your knees.

Our cries of injustice will drown your pathetic pleas.

You can't remember the Sharpeville massacre.
Do you remember the exploitation of Namibia?
You can't remember Mangaliso Sobukwe.
Do you remember the name Azania?

You can't sweep dust under the rug any more.
You can't keep hiding bodies under the boards of the floor.

You can't hear the trickle of blood that will stick your lips
together.
You can close the curtains but you can't hide the weather.
You cannot smell the smoke while it is twisting in the air.
You can't feel the fire though it is singeing your hair.

You can't arrest the soul of an African revolutionary.
You can't meter the reaction of a reactionary.
You cannot hold an African metaphor.

You can't sweep dust under the rug any more.
You can't keep hiding bodies under the boards of the floor.

Your graves . . . your graves are already being dug by the
gardeners of my country.

Your coffins are cut to measure by my sisters of carpentry.
If you cannot feel the illness then you'll never find the cure,
And you'll never be prepared for the African metaphor.

When mother delved the kitchen knife into the heart of the
white beast
She closed her eyes tightly in the ecstasy of release.

You will feel the flames of vengeance in the deep heat of
the night,
And the stench of scorching flesh will make you wish you'd
seen the light.
You will hear the warrior cry, bang fiercely on your door.
You will see the horrifying death-defying anger of the African
metaphor.

You can't sweep dust under the rug any more.
You can't keep hiding bodies under the boards of the floor.

Listening

Listening, and we're listening
To the ones who scream,
Hidden by the pounding sounds of the traffic.

We're listening
To the Blackness in the dream,
Hidden by the screams of this nightmare.
And it's getting louder.
People, we're getting louder.
People, we're turning round,
Crumbling the buildings to the very ground.

And we're feeling
The unsteady feel,
The breaking of the seal of unconsciousness.
Listening.

And we're breaking the dawn,
For this morning there's a different sound.
Keeping our ears to the well-trodden ground,
We're angry with the pain we hear.
There's an insecure feel in the air.

Because we're listening,
Like wolves in the dark,
Eagles in the sky.
Driven like cattle,
Ears to the ground.

We can hear the water.
We need water.
We need to quench our thirst.
But we're listening first.

Cautious as cats,
Punished as dogs,
We can hear the water.

The priest chants.
The congregation turn their heads.
The politician rants.
The people turn their heads.
Muffled screams and whispers,
Pointing fingers,
While the silence crawls from the inner city towns
And holds them in the fist of suspense,
And holds them

waiting

waiting

waiting

For the gutters to run with blood
And the sweet taste of victory in the mouths of the
downtrodden.
And if you don't keep listening
You'll be caught unawares.
We're listening.
We're listening.
We're listening.

Nursery Rhyme

Humpty Dumpty was pushed,
But propaganda played its part.
And Little Jack Horner was paranoid,
One word would lose his heart.
So he pulled out a plum instead
To save his self from winding up dead.
He knew all the king's horses and all the king's men
Would never put Humpty together again.

Some Quotes from Neather-ton Man
Found in Deepest England Somewhere
between 1974 and 1980

All the same.
Wogs go home.
Chalky, living in a blackboard.
Golly, it's a jam.
Toby, your name is Toby.
Monkey, lamppost swinger,
Hair like a sponge.

For breakfast
A bowl of coonflakes.
For tea
Coon on the cob.

Wipe off the coondensation.
Paki.
You're all right, but the other niggers . . .
Wog. Stay at home.
Nigger, wog, nigger.
Stab a nigger.
Rubber lips.

Splatted noses.
You can't give a black eye
To a black bastard.
Jungle bunny, go home.
Black girls are prostitutes.

Pakis smell of shit.
Get a wash, Paki.
NF. Wogs go home.
BNP. Give them a whitewash.

All good cricketers,
All fast runners.
It's because they run through the jungle.
As thin as an Ethiopian,
Poor as a Cambodian.
Kunta.
Your name is Toby.

Pink tongues, bright pink.
They've got white hands.
Big Black ugly nigger feet.
Tell us the one about the sambo.
Haven't I seen you on a jam jar?
Light his hair, it won't hurt his head.
Throw stones at his hair, it won't hurt.

Wipe fingers on coon's face.
Does it come off?
It's stuck on.
They take our jobs,
They take our women,
Send them home.
Wogs, go home.
Coons, go home.

Negotiations

For the radical faction to change the constitution
They should take their allegations to the institution.
So we took our allegations with a big bag of patience
Before we even met we felt the pain of prejudgement.
So we set up a meeting and gave the standard greeting
And if vibes could harm us we'd have got a good beating.
But the minutes were restricted and the picture they depicted
Was nothing but a smutter of the things we had presented.

But onward we went with constructive intention,
Keeping our strengths from personal friction.
But keeping the prevention of personal pretension
Was keeping construction in total detention,
Resulting in destruction and bad vibrations.

And a cut in the bag that was holding the patience,
And a cut in the bag that was holding the patience,
And a cut in the bag that was holding the patience.

Englabetween

Between the empty cans and dustbin lids,
Between the eyes of cats and tramps,
Incubated drunks mumbling incomprehensible bids,
Crashed out under yellow water lamps.
This is England, I said, on a soap box in the street.

What Have We Got

We've got a mountain on the horizon,
A sun on the floor,
The sea in the sky,
And the devil behind the door.

We've got a desert in a lake,
Islands in the city.
We've got the moon which is a fake,
And a bomb which is a pity.

We've got the stars when it's light,
Silence when it's not.
We've got friends, but they fight,
And what have we got?

We've got brother in the sky,
Sister in the sun.
Everybody's getting high
Yet no one's having fun.

We've got the rainfall,
We've got the snow.
Our sisters and brothers we call
And what do we know?

We've got a mountain on the horizon,
A sun on the floor,
The sea in the sky,
And the devil behind the door.

Moods of Rain

Rain twisting down the air poles
Like a broken river.
Slicing through the air. Cold
Biting me, I shiver.
Get your *Manchester Evening News*.
Soggy paper, running print,
I've got those winter dark blues.
Wet, cold, and skint.

The rip in the side of my pocket
Lets trickles of rain tickle the palm of my hand,
The picture distorted and wet in its locket.
Give me sunshine and sweet golden sand.

I'm giving up dodging glassy-eyed puddles,
My feet like the kitchen cloth,
Face screwed up, no time for scruples.
Head down, walk straight and cough,
And silver speckled my licks are crowned.
Melting Black faces drip and shine,
No smile but an unsatisfied frown,
Same goes, I think, for mine.

Stepping through mirrored streets,
Reflections of the dirty skies,
Soaked from my head to my feet,
Drips from my lashes sting in my eye.

It is raining, and I give way,
Soaking and cold I should smile.
What the hell I'm wet for today
And there's no use in getting so riled.

So kick the water, run down the road,
Hold your head up to the rain.

I was only feeling the cold,
Mind over matter over pain.

Soon I'll be home throwing off my coat,
Wrestling with my hair,
Warm and hungry for curried goat,
And the windows haze in the air.

My merry moods
Change like the weather.