

Poems for Lord Hutton



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You can download both from www.nthposition.com, where you also find the free ebooks *100 poets against the war*, *Poètes contre la guerre*, *Gedichte gegen den Krieg* and *Times new Roman*.

Thanks to Bruce Sterling for the image.

Edited by Todd Swift
www.nthposition.com

35,000%! George you made a mistake. You could have charged them 400 million. 600. A whole billion. They'd've still paid. The odds were too good. They have to. It's their job. And furthermore it is their job to increase its buyability.

Never, ever, mention the poor

The machines become more like people and the people become more like machines

America is an Old Testament country

The Roman Empire was famously sold. US democracy very neatly calls for the Roman Empire to be sold every four years.

How will a country resist the impulse to use threateningly their power to destroy any other with impunity? A look at the history of power shows that few powers could ever resist such a pressure.

It is not New Testament. Christ is yet to come

And, even better, they buy it from themselves using other people's money.

Every four years.

Because you have such awesome power it will eventually seem unpatriotic not to use it.

That democracy is sold so relatively cheaply shows how much value is placed upon it

35,000%! The American rich pay 200 million dollars to get George Bush elected.
And in return they get 70 billion dollars in tax cuts.

You fight war by pressing buttons. That very few of you will have any contact
with the people you are killing can only increase your paranoid insularity.
Is it an unparalleled virtuous circle that every tax penny you spend on the vast
and increasingly sophisticated...

The great Soviet Constitution of 1936 in fact meant nothing, and concealed
probably the most repressive regime of all time, because the Communist Party
controlled everything.

In the Land Of The Free, they are fed too fat to walk properly. Like Prize Pigs.
...armed forces further enriches and therefore strengthens the industrial-
military-government complex that you are

Florida was the modern form of ballot stuffing. So, it's official! The world is
run by gangsters!

Or is it 700 billion. The noughts get confusing when the money gets virtual
The American Constitution means nothing because there is only one party, The
Money Party, which controls everything.

Is this the last chance to think before thought gets stolen?

The Republican Party and the Democratic Party are two wings of that same
party, the Money Party.

It is not freedom if you are so controlled you get so fat you cannot walk
The Missile Defense Shield is a phenomenon wholly new in all human history.
Never before has one nation, except perhaps the Mongols, been able to destroy
any other with impunity.

A buyable democracy will inevitably be bought by those who do unpopular
things

35,000%! You pay 200 Million, you get back 70 Billion. That is a return of
35,000% on your investment. That is some return.

The tobacco sellers, the polluters, the gun sellers, the arms manufacturers, the
genetic modifiers, sellers, the drug patentees, the health insurers, etc.

The British could and did bomb your ports till you signed the agreement, but
never before has one country been able to destroy any other with impunity
In all of human history freedoms have been hard won. Very rarely has control
voluntarily relinquished power.

It is the explicit duty of the chiefs of those businesses doing unpopular things
to buy that democracy if it can be bought.

10,000 years of culture/ so you can wander brain-dead/ round the mall/ Is
this what all/ the long hard struggles/ for thought and freedom were for?

Introduction

The war on Iraq has progressed through many layers of deception. At the
Hutton Inquiry, Blair denied responsibility for naming Dr Kelly, the weapons
expert who subsequently killed himself. But the Inquiry raised other ques-
tions: was the claim that Iraq could launch a WMD attack in 45 minutes an
exaggeration or a lie? There are mounting casualties in Iraq and a growing
awareness that its people want their country back. Panic may be setting in,
but Bush and Blair still beam with unshakable moral conviction.

nthposition.com produced two previous anti-war collections, *100 poets
against the war* and *Times new Roman; Poems for Lord Hutton*, which makes its
appearance as we wait for his verdict, completes the trilogy. Poems were
gathered over the last six weeks – political poetry is not exhausted, even after
its unexpected flowering earlier in the year.

These poems are from Ireland, the UK, America, Canada and beyond. The
poets range from leading linguistically innovative writers, to popular spoken
word artists, to award-winning new formalists. Most were written specifically
to address the situation in Iraq, the UK and America. I wish to thank the poets
for permission to reprint their work. This book is copyleft: please copy, share
and host it.

Peace.

Todd Swift

Editor

London, October 2003

Annie McGann

The serpent and the tree of knowledge

It seems that part of the world is spitting and fizzing with insane rantings; nonsensical messages framed as logic. I have unplugged the tormentors; blocked communications from certain addresses; thrown open doors and windows to allow the atmosphere to change; fresh air, a breath of which I shall take into my body through to the tattered ends of my alveoli and exhale to feed the trees who breathe back oxygen from deep in their green. Sap pulsing through cells; the benevolence of plant life as technology's wires hiss with information; a virus sleeping in its gut; snakes coiled around the earth. This is the worm. This is the quick tongue – flick of a word - sting of a bite. Take the snake and clasp it; milk its venom. Knowledge is powerful medicine. Think carefully.

Catherine Daly

Internet plagiarism

not David E Kelley

Ally could sure "sex up" law *those skirts!*
yet, after all, it all came down to the dancing baby
bombs

Dr David Kelly

not the dodgy dossier
didn't he dodge anyway?

fan fiction is more often inspired
than not

any back teeth lying to the
last breath the sun was
shrouded in mist
as eyes as a world of
straightforward facts

even in the clearest
weather failing
vowels falling
further and farther

until every word was like
another word inside
soft walls and nothing but

Jem Rolls

A meaning of American power

Like all countries in a condition of high empire, America worships the cult of
itself

Americans got sold four cars each, so they bought four cars each.
They elect the figure who most wholly incarnates their current view of their
deity

In terms of paranoid insularity, their closest neighbour is North Korea. Even
Iran feels more at terms with the world.

35,000%! The return on the best investment of all time.
For this self-worship Hollywood creates the ever-changing pantheon of
American gods and goddesses

They got sold four stomachs each, so they bought four stomachs each.
The Constitution of the United States is, with the Soviet 1936 constitution, very
probably the most democratic document ever written.

The origin of the word "gangsters" comes from 1890s Chicago and originally
denoted "groups of men who stuff ballot boxes".

Ian Davidson and Zoe Skoulding

Stereotype

between a hollow body
and its mirror image

imagine the setting
fonts of all knowledge
the chill of inaccurate data

pointedly blurring edges
repeated letters without
wishing to question

stereotype as shadowy ciphers
bodies in relief all ground across
an unmarked desert stop

and into the future
to trip up or encounter from
time to time the open lines
stop the way a petal stop
with dog-eared folds
or the war words

are puffs of air stop
the smoking gun
you stumble into
evidence fell
in pools of oil spilling
mackerel-backed

hot metal. milk and honey.
one eye shut over the Euphrates
the records of countless decisions
slip past soft lips behind

by shows that "break reality"

how to conceal weaponry
destruction, not deconstruction
mass, not construct

cadged info from Monterey
<http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2002/issue3/jv6n3a1.html>
like a bullet, death, identity
1 x
x 0

of the author
Ibrahim al-Marashi

of the non-author 0
and his belief 1

The Three Little Heretics (cris cheek, Bill Howe and Keith Tuma)

From Part 2 of Critical Path

VII. DEMOCRACY RESTS ITS CASE

Below the headlines, a navigation bar: KURDISH CULTURE & ART. Two entries:

LESBIAN ROAD PIC WINS AT ISTANBUL FEST
ART IN THE HOOD

Adjusting his rabbit-ears, Paralysis tunes in the meeting of captains of theory at the University of Chicago, aka Schloss of Strauss. "We were the Starship Enterprise," Captain O Captain exclaims, "and our show is cancelled." Paralysis is disheartened; this same effete crew stimulated his ephebe self in romper room. I am all grown up now, he avers to no one in particular, and understand it was somebody else invented the "think-tank".

and let them bells ring
 no need to gloss that
 victory of which men sing
 through a clover leaf squat

pierced gas to the root
 breath from new barrow crops
 along coast of all right
 eye trapped on flaming ropes

won horseback dinging through ferns
 of merriment bewigged hooded place
 keeping a look out profile
 challenger in hand-held light duck

this is the unkind lace
 where people sleep at night
 through pickled orders rifled dreams
 hopeless vocabulary and silly phrases

a whistle-stop that's called town
 have you got a gun
 what form of crack's thought
 underpaid insignias know about duty

and who have their methods
 carved with a blunt spade
 looking at a bruised world
 from a dead sitting position

so when they do pass
 through they don't see anything
 in shadows by the door
 stone from the old bend

Paralysis stood in that doorway handing out buttons. They read
 GEORGE BUSH LOVES ME THIS I KNOW
 CUZ THE SHIA CLERICS TOLD ME SO

Steve Tasane

Document

the normal rigour over language is thrown out of the window
 like a witness in a gangster trial
 like an activist in a fascist regime
 like a rulebook

the evidence is over-egged
 like a cholesterol-heavy heart
 like a gung-ho tabloid headline
 like a hard-line crucifixion

the line management has a communication breakdown
 like a drunken conga line
 like a tank blast on a hospital
 like a voter and an elected representative

the facts are not attributable
 like soundbite and spin
 like hearsay and leak
 like oil and blood

truth belongs to the big guns
 lies stick to the dead

Robert Sheppard

From the war had ended; it had not ended

self empty victims shimmy to
the umbrella skeleton weepings
of Mars

 'regret' the ancient
wheeled ordure spilling sewage spice
where they gnaw gnats' gristle
on a rubbished ground plan

sex down the tar on sparrows before
a dodgy House

 law games shake
depleted prayers to your stump
the gazelle's eyes have it
clearly somebody's brother's
missing in a ghazal of mass ifs

the direct cost of life in a hit
single radio vomit over reach
over Babel's Tower blowing the
red caps scorches a French
veto

 a horlicks of humans
and freedom fries

It's not surprising, Paralysis mused, that they were talking at first about cleaning up the Ba'athists and putting them to work in the new government. There's nothing threatening about a Sunni if you call him "Sunny" on Japanese radios. Shiite, on the other foot, is only too familiar in Texas. We developed the two-step to shake them off.

Eva Salzman

Kelly for telly

It's a tangled web that's spun, of lies and media insurgence.
The wigs and worthies deftly spin around where Lords do sit.
By the time we've heard the endless variants and sordid versions
We'll be stuck like flies, unable to make head or tails of it.
How convenient.

Fadel K Jabr

The question tree

My neighbor,
Whom I haven't known
For twenty silences,
Reported me
For the question tree
That I planted on the borders
Between his heart and mine.

The policeman,
Who watched

Our entangled emotions, said:
 It is a strange tree, indeed.
 But we have to catch it in the act
 Therefore, I myself
 Will take the job of an observer.

The judge,
 Who studied the case carefully, decreed:
 Question trees
 Shall be planted
 In every spot of the earth.

Frances Presley

From Post scriptorum

“US says Iraq is in breach of resolution”
 – *Financial Times*, 20/12

Sad-	The
weapons	dence
threat-	better
orally	securing
scientists	tary
Blix	include
Bush	Other
repre-	nothing
US	but
pushed	hindered

I'll sing a psalm.

Who'll toll the bell?
 I, said Standard Oil,
 Because I can toil,
 So Cock Robin, farewell.

All the clubs of St James's
 Went on gossiping and jobbing
 When they heard the bell toll
 For poor Cock Robin.
 5 September 2003

Ruth Fainlight

Listening to Blair

If he's as sincere as he sounds
 and believes what he says –
 he's a fool. If
 he doesn't believe it but used it –
 then he's a villain.
 Would you rather be ruled
 by a fool or a villain?

Who'll dig his grave?
I, said the Soldier,
Through rock and through boulder,
I'll dig his grave.

Who'll be the parson?
I, said the BBC,
With my hypocrisy
I've got to be the parson.

Who'll be the clerk?
I, said Lord Hutton,
Porkies, gammon, or mutton,
I'll be the clerk.

Who'll carry the link?
I, said the Internet,
To everywhere on the planet,
I'll carry the link.

Who'll be chief mourner?
I, said the President,
I'm darned good at sentiment,
I'll be chief mourner.

Who'll carry the coffin?
We, said the City,
With our good works committee,
We'll carry the coffin.

Who'll bear the pall?
We, said the Paparazzi,
The angle's fantastic,
So we'll bear the pall.

Who'll sing a psalm?
I, said the Poet,
After clearing his throat,

Fred Johnston

X-File

"If you are touching, you are also being touched..."
– Medbh McGuckian, *The Colony Room*.

In a Dublin restaurant,
Self-service, hot light,
A bald man like any other
Said he fixed small countries.

He said this like you would
Say: I work in a garage –
That was what he did,
In his grey raincoat he looked

Like a businessman
Caught between flights,
His accent polite Mid-West
Campus American.

He was hungry, we both
Were: comparing the prices
Of café breakfasts here
And in Belfast, started it.

He knew that city,
He mentioned a good hotel;
Balancing a full tray while
Holding a briefcase isn't easy.

Do you think we need
Fixing? I said. You'd know better
Than me, he answered,
Knifing up two squares of butter.

H Masud Taj

Truth without sex

The Liar and his Committee
Of Liars and the Ministry
Of Defence of the Lie
Collectively deny that the lies
In the Dossier Of Lies are lies.
Instead they hunt down
The mild mannered man who said
Truth can do without sex.

The hyperactive Liar
Leaves his house
Crosses the ocean
Strides, live on TV, into the House
Of White Lies, to a standing ovation
That he hopes will never die.

The quite whistleblower
Leaves his home
Crosses the field
Sits by a tree and slits his wrist.
The grass turns red and the whistling
Of breeze dies in his ears.

He strides, once more across
Our TV screen where dead do not die,
Briefcase in hand, replays
A turn of the head, re-enters
The Hall of Liars where all
The king's horses
And all the king's men
Cannot put together a decent lie.

like good and evil
become interchangeable
their dreams will live on
I am rescuing the dead

Rip Bulkeley

The Ballad of Cock Robin

Who killed Cock Robin?
I, said the Spinner,
Between lunchtime and dinner,
I killed Cock Robin.

Who watched him die?
I, said the Spy,
With my one-sided eye,
I watched him die.

Who caught his blood?
I, said the State,
With my greasy plate,
I caught his blood.

Who'll censor the obit?
I, said the Press,
It's what I do best,
I'll censor the obit.

Who'll sew the shroud?
I, said the People,
With my thread and needle,
I'll sew the shroud.

Richard Peabody

The untimely death

“When I hear the word Security, I reach for my shotgun.” – Robyn Hitchcock

I am rescuing the dead
dipping deep into their sleep
returning them whole in dreams

Dreams of revenge
truth
freedom

When good men die
from painkillers and slit wrists
the punishing kiss

And liars propagate
I think 007
and Eton Rifles

THEY will stop at nothing
to silence truth
to spin their lies

I am rescuing the dead
from the Haruspex
from the spies

from the world leaders
who believe blood is truth
my country right or wrong

I am rescuing the dead
the holy blameless dead
so that when words

Hal Sirowitz

The benefits of ignorance

If ignorance is bliss, Father said,
shouldn't you be looking happy?
You should check to see if you have
the right kind of ignorance. If you're
not getting the benefits that most people
get from acting stupid, then you should
go back to what you always were –
being too smart for yourself.

Attila the Stockbroker

New World Order rap

“We will not let the mechanisms of death fall into the hands of men with no respect for life” – ‘President’ Bush, 12/3/02

Change the names and fudge the dates
For United Nations read United States
They're coming soon over your border
One World Nightmare – New World Order...
Yes, they talk of Jesus Christ: Self Righteous Brothers all
And every television screen is at their beck and call
So here's a public service broadcast: he who lives, obeys
and the moral of this story is just what the dollar says.
There's no debate there's just G8 and a global mafia superstate
Policed by thugs, awash with drugs and kept in place by Murdoch's mugs
And Sheriff USA is there to turn you into fries

Yes, you can bank on a Yank in a tank 'cos he who argues, dies!
 Change the names and fudge the dates
 For United Nations read United States
 They're coming soon over your border
 One World Nightmare – New World Order...
 If you TRY to play the game you're sure to get it wrong
 'cos the New World Order makes the rules up as it goes along
 One minute you're its bosom pal and general factotum
 The next its high technology is aimed straight at your ...head
 Said sell you arms, said bomb you flat.
 Said sell you arms, said bomb you flat.
 Said sell you arms, then bomb you flat.
 Then sell you more arms... fancy that!
 You want to join another gang? Hey look, your country just went bang!
 Change the names and fudge the dates
 For United Nations read United States
 Fundamentalists were their friends
 Are they still? Well, that depends...
 Al Qa'eda – now they'll bleed ya!
 You'll end up just like roast pork.
 They paid you to murder kids
 in Commie countries, not New York!
 Hey Assad, you made 'em mad
 Lockerbie bomb was really bad
 but now they want you on their side
 So they'll forget the ones who died
 Hey Saddam, time for bam-bam
 They backed you against Iran
 But Saudi oil is looking dodgy
 So they're gonna waste ya, podgy!
 Change the names and fudge the dates
 For United Nations read United States...
 They're coming soon over the border
 One World Nightmare – New World Order...
 Hail Humanitarian Nato – thats not a bomb, it's a potato!
 Just behave or dig your grave: they've got some refugees to save
 It's pick and choose, some win, some lose – yes, they're in Kosovo
 But Palestine, Timor, Rwanda, sorry, man, no go

Philip Metres

History lesson Pt 3

Never again!
 Again: never again.
 It's over. Ever over.
 Again: ever over,
 ever never over over
 again. We're even.
 Even forever. Over
 and even never again.
 Again and a gain, never
 a gain. No. Over for
 never, ever for over.
 No. Novacaine. It's over,
 Cain. Cain/Abel, Cane
 Hobble, Can't-Able.
 Cannibal. Camp Bull.
 Can. Unable. No!
 Never again. Ever'n'over,
 again. Again. Again.

Rachel Bentham

News from Iraq

Mars' bloodshot gaze
 considers the 'peace' –
 more soldiers killed
 than during the war.

will they open the field of animate rocks
acting above their paygrade

a sort of lower class job hosing ants
readers led to the conclusion themselves

people are more different when they are kids
new pages not quite full texts

tranquilla e discreta cabinet
whose aim is to convey the impression owns people

eligible mansions of poetry about the altogether
brutally pursuing acronyms

spicy notes atrium
p bush condemning the which bombing

this is a matter of truth and credit
and the export of liberty is expected to rise

an occus with pinakes and carpets
not says the iraqi like the americans they don't shoot us

suppose we should surface really
at the end of every day in all the emails, memos, and powers

lust to win the very near future
whose questioning is no indication of final judgement

after another examination dream quiz from the enquiry
con grandi portici

the latest twist the firestorm wringer
stop me if you've heard all this before

Listen, it's not that they don't care, but there aren't points to score down there

The message is to Moscow, large – shut up and put up, they're in charge
and they don't want to lose contacts for banking loans and arms contracts
For every psychopath they bomb there are two more they buy stuff from
and sell stuff to and arm and train and arm again and arm again

Said arm again said Armageddon

Said arm again said Armageddon

Said evil thug – said trusted friend

said evil thug – said trusted friend. Huh!

Change the names and fudge the dates

For United Nations read United States

for NATO read the Pentagon

They rule the world: the reds are gone

Now Mary had a little lamb: its fleece was white as snow

But when the CIA found out that lamb was sure to go

There was a Grand Old Duke of York, he had ten thousand men

But the New World Order carpet bombed them till he had just ten

And then they signed a big arms deal – now he's got lots again.....

The Serbs the Serbs have funny verbs and don't use vowels in their words...

Change the names and fudge the dates

For United Nations read United States

Said G8, IMF, World Bank.

Put a fascist in your tank.

Get a loan then starve the poor

Then they'll let you have some more.

That's the way the world is run.

Gorbachov – what have you done?

Helên Thomas

Come on baby light my fire

OUTLAWED WMDs AIMED DIRECTLY AT THE INNOCENT MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE CIVILISED WESTERN WORLD, UP AND READY TO GO IN JUST 45 MINUTES!/: SEXY.

A diligent team of experts from the United Nations adhere to the rule of international law whilst seeking evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Saddam Hussein's Iraq: UN-sexy

Sex?

Isn't that something to do with love?

Harriet Zinnes

Who is behind the war?
 What war?
 War is?
 War is what?
 What is war?
 And American soldiers are there.
 Where is there?
 And Iraqi soldiers are there?
 Where?
 And where is there?
 And is there a plan
 after where?
 With what infrastructure?
 How?
 Where?
For and by the people of Iraq.

a ramification must be taken
 forty-five minutes before the weapon is activated

yellow, hard, wet, greased newspaper
 lying on presentational grounds

domus to dust and miles romani
 bargain empire

diwych area is alarmed
 and whatever caused it is something
 no stop on the steps to war without train in station
 the noun accused of attempting to tell

dream of a bill clinton exhibition of ready-mades
 email priming, back office proportions

gospel pass is busy with humvees
 why is it so impossible to exaggerate

in front of your very ears
 reconstruction and level threats

coke mouths
 dossier lips

stop diving in front of me our path is the path
 no doubt of the sincerity of this none at all

off message in dick togs
 slyly disclaim hardening up

the fourth style given over to prosy fantasies
 sad in may, kelly in june, bushwhacked in time

talk to the words cadwer dan glo
 cadavers damn glow in the headlines thinks t b

Patrick Chapman

Turing's apple

It was only after he had shared
His knowledge that he bit the poisoned fruit.
The garden, having no more use for him,
Killed the one who made the weapon sharp,
Broke the bond of love that spoke in code,
Denied the secret namer of the world.

Peter Middleton

Tons of huts

this il porcorso cultural excursion
does not offer any comment

lines on the dotted sign
play no part in their preparation

the thinking subject is the subject matter
as a short hand low slung stiff neck gaffe

ancient nucleus of the inhabited
temporary accommodation for camp bells

warm powdery scent of opoPONax
why s hussein and why now

built to end the great bacteriologist
I don't remember using that language

Jeffrey Mackie

The view from over here (Madonna kisses Britney)

In a world of War and Celebrity/ Celebrity Wars
I am searching for truth:
Among the obsessions for My Reality Show
Now that Iraq is just a regular soundbite
 No one talks about it
In a world of
 New School Old School
 School Shootings
In a world where even cars can talk I am listening
Because I can have a discussion about nothing
I can have everything and nothing at all
I can watch lies become excuses
 Lies get excused
Issues become stories become nothing at all
I can click on and find out
Who loves who! Who hates who!
I can Log Off but never tune out
I can watch emptiness drag on and on
Until nothing becomes something becomes controversy
Becomes nothing again
What am I?
But attracted to: Curious about:
Every bit of information
 The reek of gossip
The shock of controversy
The mundane and the vacuous become important
I am human/ I am a consumer
I am not a saint
The headlines the commercials are calling my name
I am one of them
The nameless the anonymous the crowd

One of us is becoming famous every week
 One week that's a lot of fifteen minutes!
 From the backwoods to Iraq to movie of the week
 While Action Hero declares political candidacy
 On a talk show!
 With lines from famous films
 Says "Let's make California great again!"

State of the Union
 Its a Reality Show not a documentary
 But they are saying the time is up
 For Reality Shows.
 It may be an action film or irony
 That you seek.
 There will be a made for TV film about Pvt Lynch
 Played by a Canadian
 And Canada didn't even go to war!

Jim Thomas

This be his verse

They sex you up, the BBC
 They do not mean to but they do
 They take the sense of what you meant
 And add some more that wasn't you.
 But they were sexed up in their turn
 By Campbell, Hoon and Blair and so
 The world descends to war then more
 Each half at one another's throats
 Man hands on misery to man
 Blame deepens like a coastal shelf
 You are the grass they fight upon
 Crushed only to remove your self.

and it would be odd if the secret services
 were less discreet than a performance poet.

I was a child but my dad was the innocent,
 amazed that politicians might lie.

The grown-ups are in their offices
 trying to make another Vietnam
 sound like another Spain.
 They used to be in the CND
 but there weren't any votes.
 Still, they wanted to disarm somebody
 so they said they'd fight Terror.
 But they only fought the radio
 in khaki leather-effect plastic.

Reg Waywell

In the old days the liars worked safely.
 Communication was grim.
 Now what do they say
 As the whole world goes mad?
 "It wasn't me. It was him!"

Mr Social Control

I love the Hutton Inquiry

In the Seventies
the khaki leather-effect plastic radio
stopped my dad in mid-sentence
with the *Today Programme's* latest shock from Watergate.
I thought when I grew up
I'd have a huge steaming cup of tea like him
and I'd be getting ready for work,
able to understand about those mysterious tapes.

In the Eighties
I went leafleting for Michael Foot
with a lad who told me "I like it in the CND,
I used to be in t'Front, like, but there weren't any birds."

In the Nineties
I saw a speech in front of Hackney Town Hall.
The man said "It's only fifty odd years
since I went to Spain to fight Franco
so do they really think I'll surrender
to a Poll Tax form in me own front room?"

And now it's now.
I'm all grown up.
I can read the Prime Minister's secretary's assistant's memos.
I can see right out of my office
into theirs.
I love the Hutton Inquiry.
I gives me a feeling of being included
in the discussions of the mighty.

Yet nothing in all this bland documentation
has stopped me in mid-sentence.
I'm careful what I say by e-mail at work

Kevin Higgins

No such republic

Socialism, like the buses, is running late.
Your days as an agent of Goldstein finally over;
you're no longer a danger to NATO expansion
or Alan Greenspan's latest plan.
The Secret Police leave you in peace.
And you always pictured an ice-pick
or a Czarist Prison at least;
something more than simply
being crossed off the wanted list;
exiled to that country where resistance
is a thing of the past:
where, when you tell them
where you're from, neighbours snigger
and say, "But, Comrade,
no such Republic ever existed!"

Michael Standaert

In 45 minutes

The truth,
what a freeze-dried and fretful phrase
in 45 minutes you will die
but do not despair, sudden illness
appears suddenly, like children
fallen from trees in jungles, whom you've met
along the way, in 45 minutes you could meet
one of these children
from Sierra Leone

no longer a child
 he's eaten countrymen's hearts and livers,
 watched his pregnant mother
 zipped open with machete,
 they were guessing the sex for bets
 it was his brother, would have been
 not so strange, that
 in 45 minutes
 you could conceive a child
 brush past kleptomaniacs in the market
 barter modus operandi in the underground
 start to thin on top, feel the ozone in your toes
 in 45 minutes your heart
 will beat
 nearly 4,000 times
 you will wear out your socks,
 and your plenary,
 and your repercussions
 which is a strange dilemma
 but do not fear, enjoy
 for in 45 minutes you could die
 in a jacuzzi, in Brighton
 with your girl on your arm
 gazing over the Channel
 that you can't cross in 45 minutes
 by ferry, crowded to Calais
 you can make a good sauce
 in 45 minutes
 and sex it up with a splash of Chianti
 in less than that
 debate the syllogism
 of whether a red sky at night
 means rain
 at night
 or in the morning
 or not at all
 maybe even, in 45 minutes
 you can treadle together

statements, facts, figures
 remarks from passers by
 and burn your good sauce
 five minutes overcooked
 because you forgot the time
 you've been into the
 sauce, on the rocks
 in 45 minutes you will die
 suffocate beneath the voile
 patterns of conclusions,
 reached 45 minutes ago, 45 days
 45 years
 we will yin our yin-ness
 while you wank the yang
 the beacon is ablaze to the East
 but don't cower,
 don't run and stick it in the sand
 it's just a silly cassowary
 caught frying in the wires
 and much further than 45 minutes away
 the .45 in the hand of the mugger, closer
 with the steel at your temple
 or the crucifix in that woman's hand
 placed against your chest
 just a mirage, that blaze
 the waters between
 mirror the funeral fire
 as it cries beneath the rain
 in 45 minutes it will extinguish
 the pattern etched
 on all of our eyes