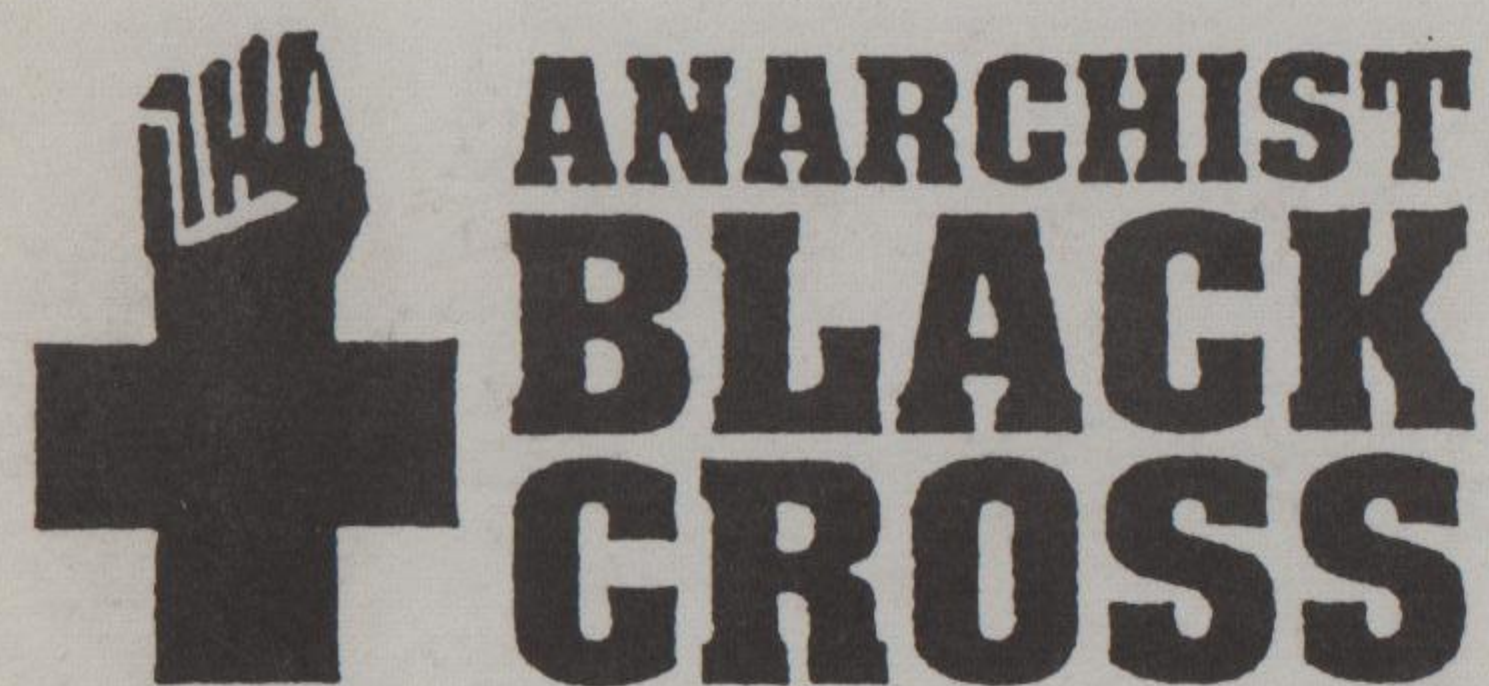


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POETRY

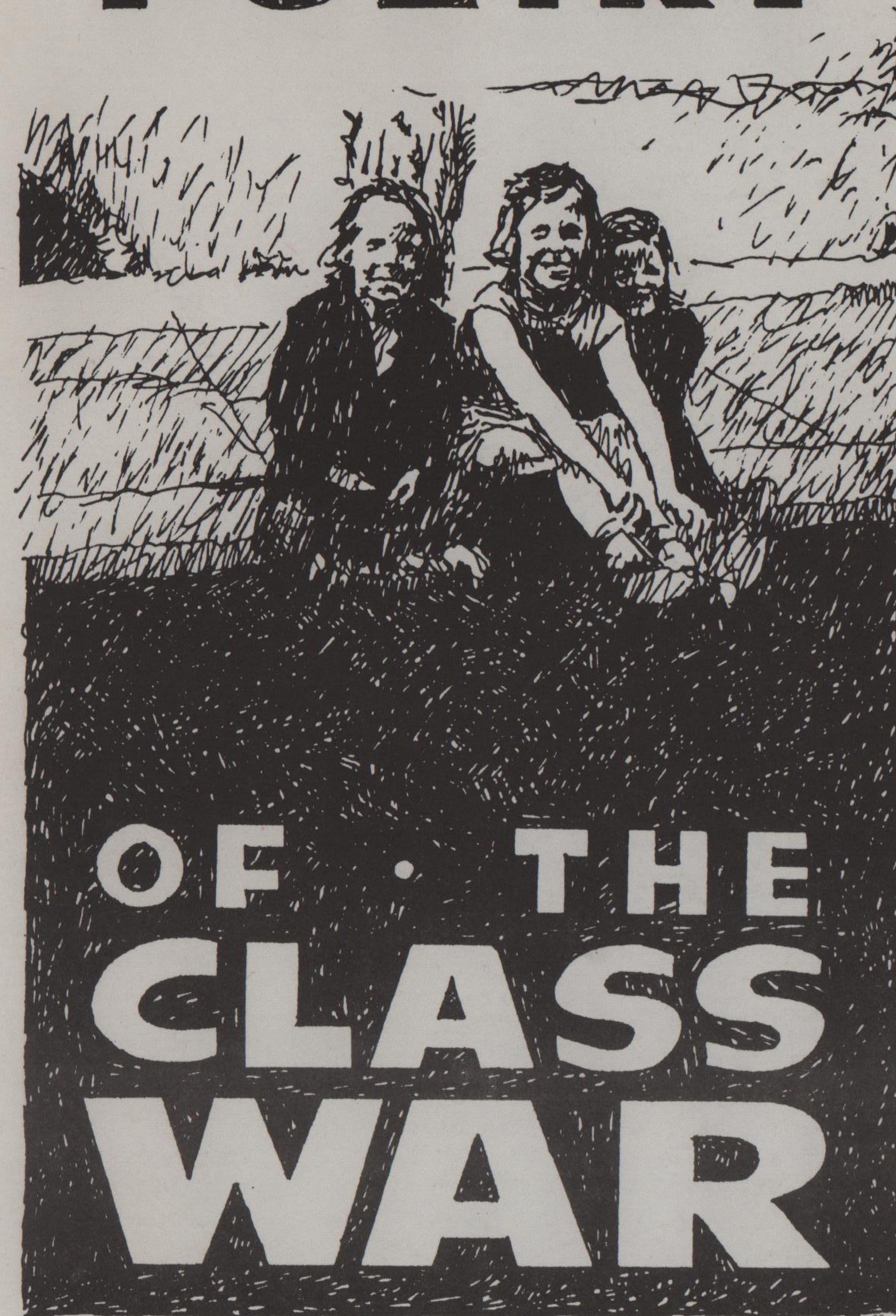
While there is a working class I am of it,
While there is a criminal element,
Then I am in it,
And while there is a soul in prison,
Then I am not free.



s u p p o r t i n g
c l a s s s t r u g g l e / a n a r c h i s t
p r i s o n e r s

50p

LEEDS ABC • BOX JAG • 52 CALL LANE • LEEDS LS1 6DT



introduction

There are two reasons why these poems have been put together; the first is because the A.B.C. is always short of money; and the other reason is that we wanted to read some good poetry.

Before we came across poetry such as this, we used to associate poetry with the flowery rubbish written by the middle classes that was imposed on us at school - the kind of crap that can put you off for life.

We think that this collection contains some good poetry - words carrying the weight of experience, written by real people.

We hope you like them too,
All the best
Leeds ABC,
Box JAG,
52 Call Lane,
LEEDS LS1 6DT

ps/ Another collection of poems is in the pipeline so if anyone out there reading this would like to contribute then get writing and send any work to us at our box address.

The money made from this booklet will benefit Leeds ABC in it's work of supporting anarchist\class struggle prisoners. This work involves letter writing to prisoners, supporting existing campaigns, and helping to set up new campaigns when the need arises. There is a network of ABC\prisoner support groups throughout Britain, so if anyone would like information or would like to get in touch with a group in their area, please write to the above address. Donations are always welcome and should be made payable to 'Leeds ABC'.

————— Until all are free we are all imprisoned —————

UNTITLED

o A. Mitchel

Most people ignore most poetry
because
most poetry ignores most people
●

GUNS

o A. Mitchel

They seem to have all the guns
Most of the guns are
British \ American government property
Police property
Or the property of gentry - gangsters
Who are British \ American government property.

Nobody I love has a gun. Not in Britain.

The rich are rich because they fuck people about.
They call it the Quality of Leadership
And they have special school - machines producing
Leaders to fuck people about.

People with guns
Tend to fuck other people about
The people they tend to fuck about
Are people who don't have guns

None of my friends has a machine - gun ready,
Let alone a tank.

A few yards ahead of us, a row of truncheons.
Behind the truncheons, rifles,

• Behind the rifles, grenades,
Behind the grenades, machine guns,
Behind the machine guns, tanks,
Behind the tanks, bombs,
And behind the bombs - the rich.

The rich are as stupid as guns.
They will be killed with their own guns.

In every capital
The fuckedabout of the world are taking arms.
The people of the world
Want the world.
We are going to take it.

UNTITLED
o P. Rimbaud

My worst moments are destroyed in the gleam of your eye.



THE 1989 BLUES
o Anon.

I'm stuck on the plate machine and the steam's flooding round my head.
It's times like this that I wish that I was dead.
It's a greasy dirty job but it's 1989 and Thatcher's still in power
And that's probably why amug like me gets £2.30 an hour.
My intellect is rotting, my mind is decaying.
And my future looks rather grim.
But mustn't be negative, must be positive
Must try harder to fit in.

I CLOSED THE DOOR
o Anon.

I closed the door to terror
and the terror remained inside

STROLLING
o B. Sands

Reddened, dirty feet pace to and fro
Carrying souls with nowhere to go
Back and forth in endless flight
Like ghosts into the night.

The weary bodies of weary men
That pace three steps and turn again.
Old brown blankets cover naked paling skin
Clinging to bodies, frail and thin.

Journeying endlessly in an endless time
To defeat the enemy that attacks the mind.
In tombs of misery 'midst the shrouding fear
Where the only warmth found is the trickling tear.

Time comes and goes, unseen, unheard, on by
And the darkness cloaks the pain-filled face that never sees the sky.
And somewhere each minute reddened feet pace a lonely tomb-like
cell
The daily stroll in H-Block, or an eternal walk through hell.

NO TAXIS AVAILABLE

o B. Patten

It is absurd not knowing where to go.

You wear the streets like an overcoat.
Certain houses are friends, certain houses
Can no longer be visited.
Old love affairs lurk in doorways, behind windows
People grow older. Neglection blossoms.

You have turned down numerous invitations,
Left the telephone unanswered, said 'No'
To the few that needed you.
Stranded on an island of your own invention
You have thrown out messages, longings.

How useless it is knowing that where you want to go
Is nowhere concrete.

The trains will not take you there,
The red buses glide past without stopping,

No taxis are available.

MANY MANY MANY MANSIONS

o A. Mitchel

This house was built for God.
It looks good.

'You can sit on the toilet and cook your dinner, and you
don't have to stretch out at all,' a pregnant woman told us.

Another house for God,
In case he visits Lancaster University.

He had come home from work to find his flat flooded
with sewage overflowing from upstairs.

Every new house for God
Is a joke by the rich against the poor

'If my baby lives, the welfare may give me a place
with two bedrooms. If it dies, I'll have to stay here.'

Every new house for God
Is blasphemy against humanity.

Christians and others, when you need to pray,
Go to the kitchens of the slums,
Kneel to the mothers of the slums,
Pray to the children of the slums.
The people of the slums will answer your prayers.

UNTITLED

o Y. Fletcher

Rather than walking in the park, thinking out my fears
You'll find me in the pub knocking back the beers.

UNTITLED

o S. Terry

Pushing prams
Up concrete ramps
Men driving busloads
Of women in Leeds

No glamour
In the clamour
Of working life

Sun that shines
Can't be enjoyed
Through the glass
Of the transport
That carries the people
To the
Blocks of flats

Modern man graves
People piled high
One on another
Or
Separate boxes
That pass as homes
You grafitti on.
Take no more
Break down the walls
Find the lively people
Who live next door
Together in the towers
Of the city
Refuse to live
In the cages
Of the so called progressive ages
Let's free ourselves
Know the open life
Claim more space
For the wild.



A PERSON WHO EATS MEAT

o L. Cohen

A person who eats meat
wants to get his teeth into something
A person who does not eat meat
wants to get his teeth into something else
If these thoughts interest you for even a moment
you are lost

BEING\ NOT BEING MARILYN

o Anon.

I'm walking down the street
there are a few whistles
one man makes a lewd
remark and I'm not
beautiful. I'm not a blonde bombshell
like Marilyn.
It's daytime and I'm shopping,
but I'm afraid sometimes
because it isn't safe.
There are men who want us all to be Marilyn
when we rebel it is dangerous for us.
When we comply we die.



SOLID CITIZENS

o A. Mitchel

Let us praise the dead
Snug in their wooden homes
Under the aerals of Christ
Keeping themselves to themselves.

They do not strike or demonstrate;
Should they do so
They would lose the support
Of a sympathetic public.

UNTITLED

o S. Terry

I know a woman
Who'se only desire
In this life is food
She controls her desire
Like the mouthfuls she consumes.

I know a woman
Who provides
Meals for many mouths.
While she dishes out the goodies
She denies herself some food

I know a woman
Who hates
Her stomach full
Hunger makes her feel alive
Other feelings are ignored.

I know a woman
Who'se been told

You're fat', you're ugly, you're worthless
And she's dieted for a lifetime
Wasted so much time.

I know a woman
Who thinks
Her body takes up too much space
So when she has the will
She attempts to shrink it.

I know a woman
Who has blushed
When seen by a man
To eat
A biscuit or a cake.

I know a woman
Who is happy
With her size
Yet others still oppress her
With their fatist tongues.

I know a woman
Who'se name is everywoman.

I knew a woman
Who gradually disappeared
Day by day
She shed some more unsightly flesh
Then, poor love, she died.



UNTITLED

o Anon.

Though I was too young to be
Misunderstood and only knew the you
As Uncle, we were somehow, friends.
Later learning of your funny ways
Only adults understood,
It was not you Uncle
Whose shed with gas mask was my den,
Who never let me win at dominoes.
Death had no dominion for you:
I knew you were down the allotment.

•

UNTITLED

o S. Potter

Did someone try to steal your life or did you give it away?
Buy it back in cans of brew, swallow your desire
Drive off towards heaven in a broken down truck
You'll just be cheap labour, but who gives a fuck?

Did someone steal your language or did you bite off your own tongue?
Learning to keep quiet, not to disturb the peace
You learn how to talk without saying anything
Never disagree too loudly, remember only popstars sing.

Did someone steal your dreams or did you buy them?
So deeply you've forgotten what they were
It's easy to be a victim, there's someone else to blame
Say it's the fault of someone you love, at least you know their name.

•

FREEDOM

o I. Ellis

Totake away one's freedom is such an awful thing.
To take away the beauty of flowers in the spring.
The things we take for granted, like walking in the sun
Are just imagination when you are left with none.

To sit alone within yourself wishing to be free.
Watching ships within your mindthat drift upon the sea.
Wandering over hills and dales, gliding in the sky.
Flying like a bird on wing within your own mind's eye.

But soon you will be wakened by the slamming of the door.
The thudding of the warden's bootthat echoes on the floor.
Your dream world crumbles round you by the ring of the bell
When you awake to find yourself alone with your cell.

•

I CAUGHT A TRAIN THAT PASSED THE TOWN WHERE YOU LIVED

o B. Patten

I caught a train that passed the town where you lived.
On the journey I thought of you.
One evening when the park was soaking
You hid beneath trees, and all around you dimmed itself
as if the earth were lit by gaslight.
We had faith that love would last forever.
I caught a train that passed the town where you lived.

•

APOLITICAL INTELLECTUALS

o Otto

One day
The apolitical
Intellectuals
Of my country
Will be interrogated
By the simplest
Of our people

They will be asked
What they did
When their nation died out
Slowly,
Like a sweet fire
Small and alone

On that day
The simplest people will come,
Those who had no place
In the books and poems
Of the apolitical intellectuals
But daily delivered
Their bread and milk,
Their tortillas and eggs,
Those who mended their clothes,
Those who drove their cars,
Who cared for their dogs and gardens,
And they'll ask:
"What did you do when the poor
suffered, when tenderness
and life
burned out in them?"

No one will ask them
About their dress,

Their long siestas
After lunch,
No one will want to know
About their sterile struggles
With "The idea of the void"
No one will care about the way
They autologically acquired their funds.
They won't be questioned
On Greek mythology
Or about the self disgust they felt
When someone within them
Began to die
The coward's death.
They'll be asked nothing
About their absurd
Justifications
Born in the shadow
Of the total lie.

Apolitical intellectuals
Of my sweet country
You will not be able to answer.

A vulture of silence
Will eat your guts.
Your own misery
Will gnaw at your souls

And you will be mute
In your own shame.

•

THE LETTER

o Anon.

When I took your letter
in my hand, I couldn't tell
whether to read it or not.

THE BACKROOM OF MY MOTHER'S HOUSE

o S. Peaky

The backroom of my mothers house
Here I used to sit when I felt like this.
The chair is different now,
The old one was a bit tatty
And not very comfortable. This one is nice.
It has a footrest attached to it
So you can rest your foot.
The chair is different now, I had hoped I was too.
I didn't ever want to feel like this again.
It's so hard to cry.

POEM WRITTEN IN THE STREET ON A RAINY EVENING

o B. Patten

Everything I lost was found again.
I tasted wine in my mouth.
My heart was like a firefly; it moved
Through the darkest objects laughing.
There were enough reasons why this was happening
But I never stopped to think about them.
I could have said it was your face,

Could have said I'd drunk something idiotic,
But no one reason was sufficient,
No one reason was relevant;
My joy was gobbled up by dull surroundings
But there was enough of it.
A feast was spread; a world was suddenly made edible.
And there was forever to taste it.

UNTITLED

o S. Potter

What do we fear when we run when we hide
not wanting to hear the screams from inside
the dreams now fragmented we cover with pride.

Where can we go if we won't watch the show now?
Who'll walk us home if we can't walk alone now?
Walking down night streets, look over your shoulder
it's getting late now, the night's getting colder.
Walking alone feel the stares that you get it's
a man's world- don't you forget it.

Walk past the shopfronts with plastic displays
we don't bind our feet- ther's a new fashion craze
that's how we should be- mannekin size
we don't fit the clothes so we lower our eyes
shrink even more in our own self- esteem
how could we ever have dared to dream?

I wanted to dance tonight but not with
nazi skinheads watching
and in the bar the men like tomcats
prowl, growl, stalk as they talk
piss up against the wall to mark their territory.
If I was a lioness I'd chew them up and
use their bones as toothpicks.

SO YOU NEVER REPLY

o Anon.

So you never reply to my letters.
I no longer expect or request anything.

At this late stage it would be absurd
to ask the postman if he has for me
an envelope that glimmers
like a tiny star.

UNTITLED

o S. Potter

Dead friends take some of you with them when they go,
Leave an emptiness in your chest the size of a fist
which slowly fills with all the pain of the world.
They leave something of themselves behind
In a tree the colour of their hair
their smile in the crest of a wave
the wind which brings their voice into your dreams.

The old sometimes die too slowly,
the young too fast
and anger at the senseless
blocks our memory of their laughter.

Each death hurts so much,
yet still we destroy each other in the name of civilisation
and the journalists record the grief for us to see
and be glad that it is not us, but someone else
Not here, but somewhere else.

In history only the deaths of the great are remembered
Dead friends take some of the world with them
and leave an emptiness which slowly fills.

SPECTATOR

o Anon.

From now until forever
Flickering images of human beings
Locked in chains
But it's not very funny,
And there are no prizes to be won

'It just doesn't happen,
and the Empire's gone
so it can't be our problem'
On plantation, field, and orange grove
We keep them there in their place.

Choose your channel, shoot the vein
Increase the volume, and feel no pain.

So that when reality threatens
And your offspring, they're embarrassing you
When they embarrass your elusions,
Just remember what the papers say
And shut them out.

Get an alignment to a party.
Taking one from three, what choice is none?
'The power lies within your hands!'
So just switch on, switch off
Every five years

UNTITLED

o Y. Tree

On a nite such as this
When the lites of the town
Are left far behind
All that's left is sea and sand
You wait for moon rise
Still you have a vast blanket of stars
To wrap around your shoulders
If I could grow wings y' know I'd fly
To where I dream you lie asleep
It's only the alcohol in my brain
That's the reason I'm sulking now
Thinking of you far away.

UNTITLED

o S. Terry

COMING HOME

o S. Peaky

Where are you, the faces and the places
I once knew.
I try hard, to imagine you all
Exactly how you were.
Running around in a freedom that was ours.
Nothing to fear, our whole lives in front of us.

I'm coming home, I'm coming home.

Time goes past.
But why does it have to go so fast.
Life goes on, you know it's hard
But still you struggle on.
We shed a skin or two along the way.
We grow with each and every passing day.

I'm coming home, I'm coming home.

If you walk in someone else's shadow
Then you'll disappear,
As surely as the sun sets.

This morning I've seen
Cold black gravestones,
Amongst tall trees.
And grass blown fiercely by the wind.
A church stands deathly in the grounds.
Cold and empty, visible for miles,
There's no sound
It's just there.
Like the kestrel that comes.
The bird circles round, high above
Watching me.
Then it's gone, to return
With news of a place that's no more.

GIRO DAY

o B.L. Akelock

I wait on your letters
I look forward to morning and
Walking through the kitchen
To my front door.

I pick up tour letters
And a rose tint is put on my world.
All the misery in the world
Is for a moment silenced.
I can hear bird song
Where before I heard pneumatic drills.

Today the sun laughed at me,
Stroked me, tripped me

So it could laugh at my humanity.
It laughed warmly
Happily it tripped me again
And I fell down laughing.

My Giro had arrived.

•

THE BIG SELL

o A. Mellor

Yellow lightning heightens tortured grimace.
Piped music mangles, jangled nerves.
Occasionally eyes meet and a glimmer
of silent writhing, passes between women.
We smile while we inwardly scream,
between rows of gaudy big sell products.
I swallow the need to turn wild,
smashing down piles of 'PATTERNED' toilet roll.
I fight down the urge to shout out
"I ONLY WIPE MY ARSE ON IT"
but conditioning quells my outburst.
I want to run my squeaking trolley
into piles of fresh lay eggs,
splatter walls with fresh cream gateau,
daub slogans with blackcurrant jam.
Let loose my pent up anger.
Forget my place on the treadmill.
Demolish their pre-packed crap.
Stuff the frozen turkeys where they belong
and blow their bloody advertising brains out.

•

BITTER

o R. Ash

When it all tastes so bad
Most times I've no choice but to swallow.
I want to bite back hard
For all the reasons that have grown with me.
There's a list so long and another song
For the dead and the lifeless
Who are living.
Then for this wreck - planet, floating
Or wherever it's going
Into the new colonial age.

•

HOPE

o R. Ash

Lead me blindfold to a room.
The room is marked 'life or death'.
As the key turns in the lock
And the handle is turned
I may remove the blindness
Of my own free will.

I may find the voice,
That I knew was always there.
With my dying breath
I may sing to prove that
The voice was not
Lost forever.

•



UNTITLED

o A. Anxiety

When he died, he died like a professional,
Just like a pro, just like the best of them,
Just like the rest of them.

When the bullet soared through the sky,
Like a swallow in flight,
On a bursting summers day,
And it ripped through his chest,
It penetrate his breast, so professional,
It was beautiful,

When it punctured his aorta,
And when the blood spurted out,
Scarlet like, dancing, ballet,
It was technicolor,

cinemascope,
sensesuround,

so beautiful,

and he dropped, just like a professional,
Slumped over, strings cut, broken puppet,
Just like a professional, a real thespian,
To the end, just like the best of them,
just like the rest of them,
Now his career is finished.

McILHATTAN

o B. Sands

In Glenravel's Glen there lived a man whom some would call a God
For he could cure the dead and kill the live for the price of thirty bob.
Come winter, summer, frost all o'er or a jigin spring in the breeze
In the dead of night a man slips by- McIlhattan if you'll please.

chorus:

'McIlhattan, you blirt, where have you gone?' cry a million choking
men.

Where are your sacks of barley? Or will your likes be seen again?
Here's a jig to the man and a reel to the drop and a swing to the girl
he loved.

May your fiddle play and poteen cheer your company up above.

There's a whisp of smoke to the south of Anne and the Poteen's on the
air.

The birds are up and the rabbits are out and there's drunkards
everywhere.

At Skerries Rock the fox is out and be God it's chasing the hounds
And the only thing that's in a decent state is buried beneath the
ground.

chorus:

In McIlhattan's house the faries are out and dancing on the hobs.
The goats have collapsed, the dog's run away, there's salmon in the
bogs.

He has a million gallons of wash they say and the peelers are on the
glen,
But they'll never catch that heckler man 'cause he'll ne'r be back
again!

A TOURIST GUIDE TO ENGLAND

o A. Mitchel

- £ Welcome to England !
England is a happy country.
- £ Here is a happy English business man.
Hating his money, he spends it all
On bibles for Cambodia
And a charity to preserve
The Indian Cobra from extinction.
- £ I'm sorry you can't see our happy coal miners.
Listen hard and you can hear them
Singing Welsh hymns underground.
Oh. The singing seems to have stopped.
- £ No, that is not Saint Francis of Assissi.
That is a happy English policeman.
- £ Here is a happy black man.
No, it is not illegal to be black. Not yet.
- £ Here are the slums.
They are preserved as a tourist attraction.
Here is a happy slum dweller.
Hello, slum dweller !
No, his answer is impossible to translate.
- £ Here are some happy English schoolchildren.
See John. See Susan. See Mike.
They are studying for their examinations.
Study, children, study !
John will get his O-Levels
And an O-Level job and an O-Level house and an O-Level wife.
Susan will get her A-Levels
And an A-Level job and an A-Level house and an A-Level husband.
Mike will fail.
- £ Here are some happy English soldiers.
They are going to make the Irish happy.

LETTER TO A BRITISH SOLDIER ON IRISH SOIL

o Patrick Galvin

Soldier

You did not ask to come here

We know that.

You have a wife

A sweetheart

A mother

We know that .

And you have children

We know that too.

But soldier

Where you stand

There is death.

Where you walk

There is a burning wound,

Where you sleep

There is no peace

And the earth heaves

Through a nightmare of blood.

Soldier

When you die

The dogs will bury you .

When you came to this land

You said you came to understand.

Soldier, we are tired of your understanding,

Tired of British troops on Irish soil

Tired of your knock on the door

Tired of the rifle-butt on the head

Tired of the jails, the gas, the beatings

In dark corners.

Soldier

We are tired of the peace you bring

To Irish Bones.
Tired of the bombs,exploding in our homes
Tired of the rubble,growing in the streets
Tired of the deaths of old friends
Tired of the tears and funerals-
Those endless,endless funerals.

Soldier
When you came to this land
You said you came to understand
Is this your understanding?

We dream here
We dream that this land
Is our land.
That one day
Catholic and Protestant
Believer and non-believer
Will stand here
And dream
As Irish men and women.

We dream
Of a green land
Without death
A new silence descending
A silence of peace.
We dream,soldier,without you.

That is our understanding.

Go home, soldier
Your prescence here
Destroys the air
Your smile disfigures us.
Go home, soldier
Before we send you home
Dead.