

The Substitute's Song



Tom McLennan

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'The Substitute's Song: Tom McLennan
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THE SUBSTITUTE'S SONG

SPECTATORS:

. . . Come on,, Billy. You'll bury him. He's tripping over his own feet. That's it Tommy. Make him feel it. That's it. Link. Link. And again. That's the boy. Jockey. Jo-ckey. Now go go for it. Go for it. Go on Tommy lad.! GO ON, TOMMY. GO ON TO 0 you stupid twat. Come on. On your feet. Come on now, lads, pick it up. Pick it up. Keep it flowing. You can use your left leg, Terry, it's not illegal. . . .

SUB. (*On the sideline*)

What am I doing here, anyway,
In the Park on a Sunday?
Trying to keep fit
Or forget about Monday?

Why am I stood here like a pillock,
Getting drenched to the bone?
Keeping in with the men,
Or out of the home?

SPECTATORS: (*CHORUS*)

O the quiver of flab
And the thud of hard leather
Fat thighs and pot-bellies all
Wobbling together
Spectator or player
Come dry or wet weather
We'll tell you the story
The pain and the glory

SUBSTITUTE

What am I doing here, anyway,
Am I soft in the head?
I could be down at the ale-house
Or tucked up in bed.
Alright, I love the game,
I was good in my time
I could still leave this lot standing
If it wasn't for this leg of mine.

(CHORUS)

What am I doing here, anyway,
Watching this load of dross,
On the bridge of old age,
Still refusing to cross
I should know it by now
That nothing can't last,
You can't stop time passing
By repeating the past.

(CHORUS)

What am I doing here, anyway?
It's not a joke anymore,
Standing here on the sideline
Watching other sides score.
Well I've made up my mind
And I don't give two hoots,
I don't care what they say
I'm hanging up my boots.

**(A WHISTLE BLOWS. CENTRE FORWARD
GETS CARRIED OFF)**

MANAGER: *(To Sub.):*

Right, Billy. You're on. Get out there and show them what it's about.

SUBSTITUTE:
(Running onto Pitch)

Come on, men. Let's get this game on the road, now. They 're only 3 ahead .

SONGS FROM ALLADIN

MARKET SONG

Cockles, mussels, shrimps and prawns
Sweets, cakes, bread and scones
Candles, clobber, toys and clocks
Bog-roll, shampoo, paint and socks ...

If there's anything you fancy
You'll find it in our market
We will satisfy your heart's desire
At our market
We can make you beautiful
Even though you're only plain
If you're feeling sixty-five
We'll make you feel nineteen again
All you have to do is give it a name -
We can make your dreams come true
At our market.

TRADER'S SONG *(To the tune of 'Any Old Iron')*

(LINGERIE)

Come and have a look, love, come and have a look
What d'ya think of these then?

Fifty pence a pair

Do it for a dare

Show your fella that you really care

Never fails with the macho males

Go on be a devil

But don't ever ask me how they came so cheap -

They fell off a lorry.

(PERFUME)

Come and have a look, love, come and have a look

Just flew in from Paris

You look sad

This'll make you glad

One whiff of this will drive the fellas mad

Smells so sweet they'll be buzzing round your feet

like flies round a lump of sugar

But don't ever ask me how it came so cheap -

It fell off a lorry.

(MEAT)

Come and have a look, love, come and have a look

I can see you know the business

Look at this beef

Tender to the teeth

Make a Sunday dinner beyond belief

How about a steak or a ham to bake?

Makes my own mouth water

But don't ever ask me how it came so cheap

It fell off a lorry.

Ist TOWNCRIER

Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear Ye!
Ye scousers gather round
The Sultan of Saudi Arabia
Is parading through the town.

The sad fact of the matter is
His Treasury is broke
So he's come here on a whirlwind tour
To try and raise some poke.

He wants to sell his daughter
The jewel of the Bazaar
They say he'd flog his mother
But she's married to his da.

So if you know some millionaires
Tell them Tintin's up for sale -
And now I've give the broadcast
I'm off to get some ale.

Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear Ye!

OLD ARSES' SONG

(To 'We Three Kings of Orient Are)

We old arses of Liverpool are
See us every night at the bar
Hate the new ways
Give us the old days!
We were here in the war.
THE WAR !

WIDOW TWANKIE'S SONG

This might be my lucky number
This might be my lucky day
Me on the front page of the daily paper
Just think what the neighbours would say
Then I could that house by the river
Where me and my son, Alladin, could stay.

If only that horse would come up
I would laugh In the bookie's face
Do you remember those five bobs I've spent,
all those Miserable yankees from Xmas to Lent
Well, I've finally won a race

This might be my lucky number
This might be my lucky day
Then I can buy that house on the river
Where me and my son, Alladin, can stay.

TINTIN'S SONG

(Twelve Bar Blues)

I don't want to stay in every night
and play the good little wife
While all around I hear the sound
Of people living life
I want to grab life by the balls
like only a young girl can
I want the fire not the ashes
I want a boy, not an old man.

I would only pace the kitchen floor
like a wild beast in a cage
I would throw the knitting on the floor
It doesn't interest girls my age
I want to step out on the town
And get the biggest thrill I can
I want the fire not the ashes
I want a boy, not an old man.

TOWN CRIER 2

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye!
Ye Scousers gather round
The curtains are about to drop
The lights are going down

The Sultan of Arabia
This day has gained a lad
He's also gained a million pounds
And you know that can't be bad

They've all gone off to booze and scoff
And toast the bride and groom
And you and I can do the same
Once we have left this room

For everybody loves romance
Especially when it's young
It makes the world go round they say
But I say so does rum

So good cheer to all and may you find
Your dream comes true like theirs
Thank you all for coming
And mind how you go on the stairs.

FACTORY SONGS

DOWN THE LINE

(Country and Western)

I've been working here for three whole years now
Just getting older and more screwed up
I just can't seem to bury the thought that
Every minute here's like doing time
Faces on the line have changed
They come and go like long lost ghosts
Friends that I have made sometimes
I'll meet them all again I hope
Somewhere down the line

Down the line
Down the line
I'll meet them all again I hope
Somewhere down the line

We've never reached where we were going
Just trading water as the world went by
For all our words and all our actions
In the end our dreams weren't worth a dime
The working classes are not consulted
By those who rule or those who don't
We're just supposed to stand like morons
Watching our lives go slowly down the line.

Down the line
Down the line
Watching our lives go slowly down the line.

ME AND MY OLD MATE BILL
(A la Noel Coward)

Being brought up in a place
That was simply a disgrace
I'm sure you can appreciate
We've had to bob and weave
You see, round here you're either strong
Or weak and therefore wrong
Except for one exception
Which is what ourselves believe ...

Using your head doesn't have to mean
"Stick the nut in!"
Brains are as crucial as is brawn
If you can think your way through life
It's bound to be less strife
Than laying into problems both fists flying
Till they're gone.

Me and my mate Bill
Have said as much and always will
If you want to brave the weather
You've got to duck together
You've got to find a happy medium
Between the hunter and the kill

Being brought up in a slum
Can make you awful dumb
It can also make you sharper than
The sharpest butcher's knife
So sharp indeed that you'll
Be prepared to play the fool
If it means that at the end of it
You'll get to keep your life ...

Using your head doesn't have to mean
"Butt the bastard".
That bastard might be you next time around
If you can solve the bargie
With the minimum of argie
Then that's a better thing to do
Than knocking people down.

Me and my mate Bill
Have said as much and always will
If an end you can't foresee
to the pain and misery
Some friendship and grey matter will
Assist in holding onto what
Remains of sanity -

Me and my old mate, Bill!

GHOST BUS

There's a ghost bus in the city
And it rides a crooked route
Through high roads, down by roads
Down to the river's foot

It halts at every block of flats
Where shapeless shadows wait
To catch the bus, the only bus
That's never, ever late

It's made of ghastly metal
And it's driven by a fiend
The face of the conductor
Is a thing that no-one's seen

At night-time in the stillness
You might hear it from your bed
But you won't hear any voices
'Cause the passengers are dead

So hug your bed and go to sleep
Pretend you cannot hear
The ghostly bus, the only bus
That's never late draw near

But if you hear a whisper
Hope and pray it's just the breeze
Not the voice of the conductor
Saying, "Tickets, please," .

MERSEYSIDE POETRY MINIBOOKS SERIES

TOM McLENNAN was born in Glasgow and is now teaching in Liverpool. He is a member of the L8 Writers Workshop.

The Alladin Songs were part of a pantomime he wrote for the Vauxhall Community Centre; the Factory Songs come from his sketch "The Human Factor", first performed at the Vauxy Theatre.

WINDOWS

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