

Frogley and Other Observations



R.F. Crawford

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Frogley and Other Observations: R.F. Crawford
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PORTRAIT OF A LADY.

1.

Fitfully from her dragstoked screen
Of fagsmoke she, a gibbous moon
Saffron-stained by nicotine
Stirs at my tea with her crusty spoon

**' Not there. That wer Mister Rotherham's chair.
THERE if yer will.**

**Five stone by the end, pyjamas
Hung off horrible OOOE he were ill
Couldn't even touch his bananas '**

I, the new boy, take my tea, sit still

2.

Three months pass - our relationship
Is blooming like a rosy chancre. Dawn
Draws me downstairs to staffroom darkness, drip
Of washerless taps, a floor done Cardinal Red,
A corner cupboard (*'Watch yer friggin head'*)
The dishrag tea prepared.
Is this why I was born?
To take her tannin in tenebrous gloom
While she recites her paper's snippets of Doom?

**'Earned that on her back she did, the whore
An he's no better, whoremaster fer sure.
CLEOPATRA in a reincarnation?
Cleopatra me arsel I expect he's JULIUS CAESAR?
Right credit ter the Nation '**

She turns the page.
Has she forgotten me ?
I drink my tea.

***'Hay, these ones now it says they're going ter ROME
They're all in lumber but they've still got HOPE
(That's one thing anycome)
They're hoping ter have an audition with the POPE ...
In my opinion might as well stay home ...
An this one COULDN'T DENY HER LOVE??? Her lust
She means the randy cow!
I'd have HIS plumbs
And as for HER
I'd rub her nose' in it ... '***

Her nose in what? Nonplussed
I drink my tea
And only spill a bit.

Once she has asked me ***'Are yer courting son?
I wonder what yer do without yer clothes?
Do yer spread it round or do it on yer own?
It's only a curiosity I suppose ...
Hard fer a man ter live a!one '***

She pours more tea
I down my daily dose.

3.

Another year, release at hand, transferred elsewhere
Our intercourse nigh done I down the stair
For one last time and meet her, Grendel's Ma
Timewarped and fierce as ever in her lair :

*'So yer friggin off now are yer? Best of luck!
They say that we take FAILURES - may be true
Like them as Industry won't back
Like lacking GO and PLUCK
Mind you' - a belch of smoke - 'I don't meen YOU
Though you're as bad as the udders, soft as soap
If you were Mine I think I'd abandon hope
Still, yer've a job of sorts so stick ter it like glue ...
A single man can't cope ...
I DON'T MEEN YOU '*

Well, what if she should ' frigg off ' herself someday
Leaving her Capstans wreathing in the air
Her mopheads dry, her squeegees petrified?
Would her ghost still warn from Mister Rotherham's chair?
Her tea-time cheer be everywhere

I wonder what yer do without yer clothes

If you were mine

I'd rub yer nose

THE WHITSUN AWAY GAME.

Four hours that beastly train crawled like a hearse
In bottom gear

(Some bolshie driver on go slow or worse

I mused, if only Mrs T. were here)

Failing to crack my crossword in the Times

At Stoke I wondered what that awful smell is?

And counted empty factories grimed and sooty;

Wishing I'd one of Gladys Mitchell's crimes

I counted silage plants and colour tellies

I didn't know that proles play summer footie

Scanning small ads at first I hardly heard

Their bloody row

As banners boots and booze they bombed aboard

Farting and gobbing, sprawling anyhow

THAT FRIGGING REF WERE ARSE,

TOO FRIGGING RIGHT!

One of them slouched and idly scratched his cods

Tattoos and earrings, scarves wound round his wrist

(Why not around his neck, I thought, and Tight?)

Hitachi rules OK .? you idle sods ...

I (young) was sometimes tipsy - these were pissed

Just time to light up cigs or swap some swipes

WE FUCKED THEM REDS

A dozen yobs sliced seats to check the tripes

Then went and smashed the basins in the heads;

A tap flew out - and then a toilet brush

And none cared I was dying for a pee
Or thought that railway cops might have them
earmarked;
I watched them sway a sort of rigger crush
Raucous on Guinness whilst I sipped my tea
And yearned to chuck the bastards to the Wehrmacht

Aged and unarmed, my remonstrance mere murmurs
OOPS SORRY COCK
Said some great oik who tripped and smashed my thermos
Then, sloshed, sat down and squashed my sandwich box.
Keeping my broolly handy like a sword
I conned my crossword for a further hour
While these swigged chants saved from their aggro
winters

Then some shit pulled the communication cord
And all went purlers, like a bottle shower
Chucked at the ref, somewhere becoming splinters.

PRELUDE.

Awaking to the wind's battalion
From your dreams of safe rebellion
As you stumble to the stool:
As you squat for the convulsion
Of a food canal's compulsion
Something's ageing you, you fool -

Time that kills and Time that burgles.
How the waterheater gurgles!
(There are dishes to be done)
Dark as Ibsen's rained-on Norway
Lurks the hallwell lurks the doorway :
Mother, see - the sun! - the sun!

Now Grannie slips her cardie on
The bankclerk buys his 'Guardian'
The fozzled clocks all tick;
Buses load their normal panic
(Last boat's leaving the Titanic)
And the skies are grey and sick -

As the madman still half shaven
Hurls out of his house behaving
As the world demands he do.
How he hates this world, this closet
Caked with horrible deposit!

And he thinks this world is you.

WINTER DAWN.

In the January dawnwind
A larchlap fence
Stirs like a sheet.
The- misted greenhouse
Bears one small red sun
like a single tomato
Humid and huge
In another world's heat.

SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON ON THE 'MANX MAID'.

Grey as some hackle-raised wolf is this strenuous sea and as dull as an old spitoon.

So different this rug-swaddled day trip is now from ingenuous visits to sundecks of June,

Yet still there's this present - this Irish Sea venue;

Bemused, she stirs tea with a cracked plastic spoon.

Since with knitting - or nothing - just sitting can send you

Asleep let us talk thus forgetting how soon

The coast must return. 'Ah, with Wingate?' 'Ah then you

Saw Burma?' 'Resourceful' 'Yet Slim called their tune'

Red trousersuits. Blazers. Age mottles. Ah tenuous hold that these hold on their late afternoon;

ATTENTION PLEASE. LUNCH FROM THE ALLAH

CARD MENU

IS STILL BEING SERVED IN THE DINING SALOON.

THE RESORT.

Have you been here? Look at this photograph
These sepia hills those gently tinted seas
Or here that hydropathic place, the Guelph Hotel
Where lights burn evenly between the trees
Those thwarted rustling palms. A sandy links And pubs
at twilight, strangers standing drinks
And a slow strong sandsagged tide that builds out there
In shoals with crimson buoys. And hulks
Whorled more baroquely every passing year.

You have been here. Look, in this register
(calf binding cracked) Your name, in crimson ink!
Yes, crimson with a squiggle you don't use -
Not now - and someone else's name below, I think
Someone you know or knew who joined you here
Someone just come from the Pavilion Show
Who liked this sort of place this time of year.

'Pied pierrots reappear upon the pier' Can you say that?
You couldn't when they took you up to bed
And left the ewer close, near full. A bulb
Gleamed in a turkish crescent on your forehead
Then they went out and you went on asleep
Swimming the sandsagged tide until it reaches
These broken bottles these deserted beaches

At eight a.m. a chambermaid found you dead.

THE LOVE SONG OF TOMMO FROGLEY.

Comeahead then comeahead
When the skies round Birkie turn tomatater red
Like some ould heart case breathalysed in a copshop;
Comeahead past tellies on the blink
An bashed-in bins that stink :
Past playgrounds strewed with soupcans rubbers rocks
An offies gorrup like Fort Knox
o comeahead I dare yer
An see ar NO GO area

In twos an twos the busies comes an goes
Chattin back ter their radios

The fog that hangs around the ferries
Squeezed out a sock near Fort Perch Rock
Squeezed out an udder one near Formby light
Picked at its athlete's foot by Crosby baths
Towelled itself down against the floating roadway
Coughed up its lungs at Tranmere
Then crashed a lobbo job dead snug-an-tite

An there will be time
Fer me to go meet me peergroup in the dump;
Ter roll a drunk or give some cow a hump
An time ter wire another horseless carriage
Or have a gangshag in a broke-in garage
Time ter do what we goan ter do
Before we sit round sniffing bags of glue

In twos an twos the busies comes an goes
Chattin back ter their radios

An there will be time
Ter do Park Road at ninety
(Cornering on one wheel)
Time ter bomb up the wrong cider the street
An make them oul age parasites use their feet
Puttin me foot down like I meant it
When all them copcars go demented
An Time fer me Legal Aid ter lodge an appeal

Cos I've knowed the courthouse gobshites knowed them all
Probation prats that set yer 'aims' an 'goals'
I've wrote me name all round with aerosols

An I've knowed the juries cos they're all the same
The ones that seem ter know yer family name ...

An I've knowed me Risley oppos knowed them all
The scabby ones as smelly as ar dog
(If fights kick off theyr sleeping like a log)
The snides the no-marks an the maniacs
The ones that's away with the mixer;
The crapheads an the nutters an the mongs
I wooden touch with a tongs

Have yer gorra toke of smack? Lets go roll another quare
I'll slip me crombie on an hang round Falkner Square
An watch them prostitutes that hang round there

(Yer don't get in those jellyboxes free)

I've seed them swigging sherry on a step
Posing in kinky boots an plastic macs
Fer trade in shades an beatup Cadillacs

In bed yer dream yer smashed on highclass grass
With highclass prosties (like yer get from phone ads)
Till scuffer toecaps tap yer in the gonads.

MERSEYSIDE POETRY MINIBOOKS SERIES

ROGER CRAWFORD was born and brought up in the Isle of Man. He is old enough (technically) to be a 'Victory' baby. He was educated at Ramsey Grammar School and later at the new white-tiled University of Warwick where he received lessons from Germaine Greer. Since 1968 he has been entangled in Liverpool Public Libraries.

And if you want to know something really interesting about him he is married with two children and has a mortgage.

WINDOWS

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