

MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

As I walked out one May morning
green Devonshire's mud waste
the urban-canyoned stores on
dog-legged Division Street

Pace on pace Sheffield's Seville tower
loomed larger into view
its great brass bell boomed High Noon hour...
Malachite, polar-hued

hawk-eyed, helmed, twice-bolted Vulcan
stark on malign nimbus
cranked grim gaze round razed Peace Gardens
pole-axed Fargate, dauntless

fire-stormed Star clock, Old Town Hall ridge
so-crowned still Wain's motte gone
from long watch over Lady's Bridge
where guardless now flowed Don...

While petty pace crept on past
Balm's bare pole to the dead
of Armageddon Gaumont masked
in red-brick burqa Peck's

ghosts scratched vinyl pianos jangling –
Sudden stunning civic
gallows its three hanged men dangling
kicking grim and gothic

as George pinjoined Patrick the pair
spread-eagled Andrew three
boxed hapless compass in thin air
a lesser Calvary

one-gibbet Trinity... They swayed
half-masted red while blue
that bleak 5th day of malvine May
In nineteen eighty-two

and far away midst grim green hills
of southern whale's way's waste
invincible destiny's mills
ground heedless without haste

ground small Hull down on Falkland's rim
a sinking steel ship named
with our Steel City's eponym
burned hissed flared seethed proclaimed

To dust and Eros *O, you who*
Wreak wrong on others learn!
Wretchedness will be wrought on you
by others in return!

HILLSBOROUGH ECHOES (After Carol Ann Duffy)

Two small crowds in one pub that Saturday
in April eighty-nine. One shares its name.
The other mirrors their hope – to win the game.
They kick off in two hours! – two miles away.

But now the passing honours, now displays
of pride. First Merseyside's young hearts, that burn.
The *Forests* grin and bear it, wait their turn...
The *Nottingham*, that semi-final day.

And every one would have a memory
of how they met last year. *Will this year be
the Double? Or Quits?* They all walked on, to see!

Stone-boxed, back home. Perched high on terraced edge
my attic view: the Don; green park; that stadium
whose sound waves lap this *Crescent* auditorium –
from that shoebox, crouched blue on my window ledge?

Sense kick-off. *Hear those chants! Wait for that glorious
Ground swell that hails attack; roars ecstatic* –
Cut off. To dead ball – not yet ominous...

Along the Mersey now it's very late.
Phone-boxed mothers; children; partners; wives; mates – still cry.
For each of them, the clock will too long be
stopped dead at fifteen minutes after three.
But none of us can ever say *Goodbye!* –
Without the truth and justice we all wait.