

Jubilate Messi

some poems about football

SAMPLER
Steve Ely

Shearsman Books

First published in the United Kingdom in 2018 by
Shearsman Books
50 Westons Hill Drive
Emersons Green
BRISTOL
BS16 7DF

Shearsman Books Ltd Registered Office
30–31 St. James Place, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9JB
(this address not for correspondence)

www.shearsman.com

ISBN 978-1-84861-xxx-x

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Tohuwabohu

Goddess ex nihilo burlesquing naked
 from tohuwabohu
 parthenogenetic hush-lipped logos
 waltz-whelping wind
 wave and welkin wyrm
 womb-whelmed son-serpent
 sperming the fat-papped
 snake-hipped shekinah Iahu
 exalted dove

What came first
 the streptopeliac platform of bitten off birch-twigs
 bobbing on brine of cosmic amnion
 or the egg
 black-winged Night on brooding waters (some say)
 or sevenfold coils of nachash
 proleptic imago of the male
 red-necked phalrope
 brood patch hotter than Big Bang's blood
 Word's hammering egg-tooth birth-breaking
 chrysalic-empyrean naming nidifugous
 night day firmament waters land
 grass lights fowls whales cattle
 Man formed from dirtblood
 Hawwah Mother of All-Living
 (save those that lived before) *but*

On boreal flat-field lit by star-spurt creaming cosmos
 cropped grass-glade fenced with knife-skinned aspens
 gleaming gainst the viridescence leathern egg
 of pterandon aeypornis or moa

percnopterus rondo breaking with stones
the blonde head of Jehovah
throne down by Eden's Angel

Shadow and brawling
the billioned clamour of ectopistes migratorius
jewelled splintrring aspens pearls
far bigger than pigeons' eggs
cast before condemned swine

Go forth lone blackbird
multipliferous whistling
homely dunnock go forth in motley

Aspens detonate
and Spirit descending

Fiery Pramanath
explodes with ball
and roaring

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Football in Crowe Street, 1721

Daybreak, Bartlemy Fair. Inns trashed
with Saint's-Eve flotsam; butchers, haberdashers,
poet-suckers, punks, the wits and whimsies
of unwashed Wen, wasted on bottle-ale,
neat jenever. Slum-Lords sorted on malmsey
and sack, lap-lounging, quim-queasy queans.
Gross Chanticleer trumpeting wilted streets,
Goose, Cock, Crowe: time to get up.

Rude rhythm of tabor and cat-call of drum,
trestle-top trap-dancing pattens; two powdered
and periwigged toothless drabs burlesquing
Bent Bob and his Sour Kraut King. The German
presents, the Englishman enters. *A rough!*
No Justice, no Peace; Slack Alice, Moll Quicksheet,
bowing bare-cheeked and exiting Fye-wards,
showered in glistening robbins.

Drunk soldier, spouting from gin mills
assemble; on rough-field from Bart Church
to Clerkenwell gate, sun shines on the liveried
golden boys swarming the piss-pocket, guttersnipe
streets; haberdashers, butchers and joiners-to-chaos —
cut-purses, apprentice-boys, pimps
and proud beggars — pacing and prowling,
restless for riot.

Sun-flash cleaver — howl and blood-splash
Red Sea parting; skull-hacked haberdash,
nimbused in claret; stretchered from market
to Giltspur's gutter — out-of-bounds. Then tempting fate
from the plank of the scaffold Jock Chartres
announcing Sally-from-our-Alley, the ball-bearing
bully-off mistress of game. Mob surgent

and brawling — tart tumbled from table,
bow-legged and loose from a half-score of Lords:
the ball slipped her skirts like a rabbit — *game on!*

A shark-mouthed butcher-boy boots the ball skyward;
the field follows stampeding like Dungeness beef-kine,
hard-hoofed hobnails rattling cobbles, storm-surge roar
and shattering shingle on Smithfield's slaughterhouse streets.

Ball flies from Crowe to St. John's Lane
cries up ball under herd wheels and sucks
to scrummaging vortex shoulder-to-shoulder
head down grappling
in maelstrom ball
up someone's jumper but
aproned-pit-dogs ploughshare through
fist-down
trample
snotsplash snappleeth
howl murder cry
that ball —

Shark-mouthed butcher-boy
rolling from tumult leapt hacks
duckt forearms
swerved
headlocks and nelsons *catch me if you can*
smashed gutterwards screaming cannonball blindside —

Ball spurts form the ruck
open door of the coffee-house
where windows went through
and tables went over
gentil-men scalded books broken
specs trampled
haymakers head-butts

guffaw and rawping
and —

Shark-mouthed butcher-boy
racing away
vaulting trips
fending side-swipes
and wrenching free
from outstretched arms
and grasping fingers

John-Gate's goalhole
arching before him spring
leap like a leopard
straining for
glory —

Shark-mouthed butcher-boy
rickety
chancered
fleet as a greyhound brave as a bear
wrecked sudden
on streetlight
piled frenzy of wolves
back and forth
back and forth
scrum and brawl back and forth
all day
with broke jaws

chawing and gouging
split lips and shiners
snapped forearms and shinbones
knotskulls and crackribs
shivvings and coshings
backforth
from Bart-Gate to goalied St. John's
when —

Shark-mouthed butcher-boy
pride of Crowe Street
squirmed from the melee
with ball at his feet

Shrugged off the maulers
and rakers of ruck
and dribbled for glory
out of blood and the muck

Dropped-shoulder step-over
drag-back and feint
he stooped like a hawk
on the gate of the Saint

Nutmegged the gaoler
left him flat on his arse
and smashed the pig's bladder
through Clerkenwell Arch.

*Sunrise, the Feast of St Austin: up the workers.
Face like raw liver. Bones bruised and buckled,
a nag to the knackers. Bonce banging with beer —
and the ague and the plague and the pox
and the stocks; I've been better. Ten thousand
ways to die. One way to live. Sleeping beside me,
Sally-from-our-Alley, lauded and lorded.
Bit 'o rough. That fucking cockerel.
Time to get up. Still clutching the ball.*