

Love the Life You Live...Live The Life You Love
by Carol Leeming © 2014

'Beauty is not in the face, beauty is a light in the heart.' Anonymous

Dramatic Monologue

Character: Martin, a 24 year-old gay, dual heritage Leicester man who works as window dresser.

It's 1980's Leicester. Martin is retelling an experience he had on a celebratory night out in St Georges area and Church Cemetery grounds in Leicester.

Martin:

1.

I guess this worra lost
then found story,
one yud find tucked away
somewhere you least expect it

2.

1984, it wer warm forra May night
I left haunted fish tank tele home
It wer depressin gale force winds
Crap music, loads of boring soaps
Militant miners strike wi bloody tories
I wer at Helsinki Bar on the lash
Neckin drinks an poppin pills-
Wi mi mates, a right queer lot!
We wer at tha Alternative Miss
Universe a bona big drag fest
I dint enter I'da won wunt ta
I would have liked to any road
Well wunt be fair: I am gorgeous eh?

3.

I wer togged up as bizarre pirate
In mi flouncy shirt a black leather
Trousered romantic, wi loads a slap
I wer celebratin myself, big time!
Dancing an snappin to Eurythmics,
I'd gorra new house all paid up
Wot mi real dad had lef it mi
Worra shock, it wer in Highfields
A neat two up two down terrace
Me, Ghetto Queen in the hood
Yeah, I'd give as good as I get

4.

Yuh see I wer adopted baby
Dint know me real dad eh
Or mi real Mam either,
Grew up in St Barnados home
Miles way, up Glenfrith way
Grown up, first time I had jerk
Chicken to eat at carnival I cried
It wer tha bleedin hot wi pepper!
Burra I got to love it, I learnt
How to wine up mi waistline
Like a snake wi reggae soca
Music, I wer gerrin mi culture eh?

5.

Blacks wer on tele nor in Glenfrith
I never saw any black people
Well, the odd one eh? In town,
I wer slagged off in the home
Bullied always, cos I wer black
That's when I started messin
Wi mi food nor eatin for days
Staff wud send mi to lock up,
I'd bi at window for hours roarin

6.

I felt odd one out to all them
Not just cos a that though
I wer little runt then anyway
Thed mek fun a mi afro hair
I fought I wanted to bi white
I'd dress up in gels clothes
Purra a tee shirt on mi head
Flick it like it wor straight hair

7.

Oh, I blamed mi made up dad
For giving mi away as baby
I thought my mum wer like a
film star, she had to leave mi
that she had *really* loved mi
But mi Dad's lawyer said mi
Real Mam didn't care either
The'd both forgot about mi

8.

Dad: Nathaniel Jacob Lawyer English Jewish
Mam: Lorna Mckinney Nurse Jamaican Christian
Strangers names on paper wer everythin
Cos of their 60's affair I am here,

Lawyer said neither of 'em wanted contact
Dad felt guilty so before he died
He left me tha house on condition
I never ever contact any of his family
I said to the Lawyer well why would I?

9.

He showed mi photo of tha two of em
Together they looked really happy
It weren't a bloody fairy tale worrit?
I'd made up stories about them
Mi whole life, tha truths gutted mi
They wer both bona clever people
I suppose I got somat from 'em both eh?
How I look people get mi all wrong
I might dress dummies inna shops
Now, bur I knew I wer no dummy
I went college I wer good at arts

10.

I 've lost me track now bum!
Oo aah, yeah in Helsinki Bar
Cocktails Long Island Iced Teas
I'm wer at no loss for male company
Bees round honey wi mi love!
Picking up fellas is what I do best
Always they want me to be top
I 'd love to bi bottom forra change
Makes me wonder worr its like
To have it off wi a woman, burra fink
I'd bi dropped like hot cakes by mi friends
I would be wiunt ah! Billy no mates no thanks!

11.

Anyway I cruised the bar wi a big fella
Staggerin we went out for a quickie
Up by tha St Geroges' church ground
He said I looked big, a nice breed
He dint like stuck up Snow queens
Name wot gays call black queens
Who like go out wi white gay men
Cheeky fucker! I said I aint no
Fucking sad snow queen mi oh no!
I 'am an equal opportunities lova !
Specially, if you can flash tha cash
Cos I have got expensive tastes.

12.

Dinge Queens, white gay men
Wi jungle fever for black gay men

Oh they cant ger enuf a mi!
I do look good all 6'3' shaped up
They all have tha same fantasies
I play hot Nubian Prince to their
Shy Princess when wer havin it off
Secretly, I wish I wer bloody princess
Inna way I am, cos I make a big fuss
When they lavish money an gifts on mi
Cos I know they like to be seen wi mi
I am so good-looking, I know it
Mi girlfriend well Sheniah mi fag hag
Says finding Mr Right to settle down
To accept mi for all mi kinks
Like mi cross dressing or bein stage performer
Aint bloody easy, so for now its all about
All the Mr Wrongs... so many men
So little time eh?

13.

Where worra m'duck, ooh aah yes !
Mi an this bloke finished - havin it yuh know
I came out from the bushes
I bumped straight into this other bloke
I reckon he wer watching me ooyah!
You know at it, wi the other bloke
Theres some tha gerr off watchin others
Yuh know, at it, or maybe join in too
Cranin their necks like nosy birds
He were coughin up like car exhaust

14.

I said Oi! Watch it spreadin yer germs
He said, fair Prince I meant not to offend
Only to befriend, in tha manner of tha Greeks
Worra pouncey way a speaking he had
I said have sniff of poppers love, stop
You hacking like a cat wi a fluff ball
He said he'd be alright soon enuf
Fit as a fiddle, as he passed it back
Nor having a sniff, so I did big sniff
of it, he looked Italian bur he weren't

15.

Suddenly mi guts twisted mi up
Knotted tighter than gnats tweeter
I remembered I aint eaten propley
Well for several days, as is my way
Just loads of booze fags an pills
He said yuh look green around tha gills
Mi spasms rocked mi an he offered

Me a hipflask of rum I drank greedily
Thinkin he talks proper ol 'school
He looked proper vintage as well all
Greeney yellow tweeds, brogue shoes
Big fat moustache wi bushy side burns

16.

Hoverin over me like he wer gon
kiss me or somat he said all lechy
I see a tot of firewater
Has stiffened you up ol boy!
I just looked at him, as if to say
No chance mate, yur not mi fancy
He blushed faintly an turned away
He looked about 30 ish butch
Broad shouldered an upright
Smiling wi brown eyes an pink
Full lips peepin from his moustache
Wi a severe short back an sides
Dark brown hair slightly wavy on top
He looked at mi again an we both smiled

17

Then two townie gels bumbled along
All white stilettos backcombed up do's
Neckin a bottle a vodka an faggin it
Singin silly song from film Grease
Yur tha one that I want oh oo oo ooo
Their tongues an heels all clackin
One goes forra quick slash in bushes
When she comes back she sees mi
Gigglin, her an her mate eye mi right up
Its as if this other bloke wern't even there
He makes like hes shooin 'em away
As they pass by me, I give em a wink

18

Ooyah date! this bloke so loses it
Shoutin Fiibertigibbits, harridans whores
Fish dressed up, in cheap bits of skirt!
Heartless harlots, tarty slutty slags
Top of his voice, wi his eyes all bulgin
Bits of spit at tha corners of his gob
Gels walk on like they never heard him
I said wot? them girls are works of fine art
He said, all women were vile harpies
Tha ruin of men drainin their essence
Look at Samson Delilah Caesar Cleopatra
He stood there lookin around then said

By the way, Sidney George Bradshaw is my name
I have not had the pleasure ...
His eyes twinkled as he put his hand out
Pleasure, I said, not yet you've not cheeky bugger
Well! talk about in like Flynn !
Martin's my names unless I 'am dragged up
Then I am Maz the Maneater m'duck eh?

19.

Look Sidney mate I wann go an rave
I fancy goin up Spectrum theres a
Warehouse party, its on Midland St
All mi mates wud a' bin there wi
Other mates outta Spots Gay Club
nr Palais to miss the gay bashers
I may end up at Highfields Blues Shebeen
No one troubles mi cos all sorts there
Sidney shot me a look as if to say
Don't go, he said can we just sit?
Alright I said for a bit, an then
I haf to go, he looked well relieved
I wer two sheets to the wind
Off my face I wer very blotto
So I sat down on the church steps
I lit a fag an I said hows trix
He looked completely baffled
So I said hows yur life then

20

He started coughin again
When hed calmed down
He said he wer a bit bored
Lookin for some excitement
Said he liked the cut of my gib
He said he wish he wer me free
An could we be friends?
I asked him wer he wi anyone
Meanin someone out for the night
An his eyes just glazed over
He sighed heavy like someone had died
When he looked at me his eyes wer
All moist an his face were cracked up

21

He told me he wer lonely chap
Hed lost a very special friendship
Back in the day wi some bloke
Jake, he knew from his college days
Said they were both joined at the hip
All through college they wer best mates

They both studied mechanical engineering
Sidney wer always top of the class
Jake wer always near the bottom
They spent all their spare time together
Course, Jake invited him home
For his family country weekends
An to his gentlemen's club an balls
He recognised Sidney wer decent sort

22

I said what worreh he, this Jake bloke?
Sounds like he werra proper toff
He said he wor from Liverpool
Like him Sidney, I wer titterin
So I said ooyah, two posh scousers!
Sidney looked really miffed
Wer obvious he wer a bit of a snob eh?
I told him Sidney, he weren't bad lookin
To change tha mood, well a bit of flirtin
Diunt hurt anyone does it eh ?
He seemed to relax, well he smiled
I gorra flash 'a red gold glintin
Out his gob, when he twirled
Over an over tha ends of his moustache

23

I could tell straight off he liked me
I stared back into his peerin eyes
I then I got lost totally, it wer
As if I'd entered deep space
It wer the strangest feeling of
being sucked in by strong current
He was sitting quite close now
I didn't notice before, but he had a
wooden left leg as he inched closer
It wer sticking out like ironing board
He said it worra a war injury gor it abroad
Eyes lookin deep said it wer destiny

24

Sidney said I wer a lucky fellow popular
I said wot celebratin gerring a new house
Coun't make up for all those years in
In a childrens home being picked on daily
He said he meant, I had carnal knowledge
He wer a just man's man, well-travelled
Sidney kept turning his head
Lookin round for somat weird like
He wor expectin someone to turn up
At any time, bur he wiunt be pleased

I asked him if he wer cottagin round here
He looked at mi completely blank as paper

25

He dint know wor I meant so
I told im, toilet trader, man-shagger
He pur his fingers up to his lips
For me to be quiet, ther wer
A voice wailin wi some louder
Sharper voices joinin, then it stopped
Sidney starts breathin heavy
The air frilling up his lips
He grabs mi hand ever so tight
Tha voices had made mi shiver a bit
Sidney whispered real camaraderie
Were the finest things in man's life
Let us talk just now no more of this
German condition your speaking of
He wer tryin to smile bur he looked frit

26

I said wot you on about, wot
German' condition
Are you gay a bender?
Nancy boy wuffter?
raging queer, queen?
Puffter or not mate?
Keep your voice down he says they'll hear
Who I said are they...?
He got even more agitated
I say ol' boy are you suggestin
That I am a ...?
Say it! I shouted... yes a
He wer stammering now
Takin a white hanky out
Mopping his brow then he
Gets up an turns his back
Bit quieter I say
are you omo, an homosexual?

27

His shoulders went all rounded
wer jiggin up an down bent over
He wer roarin like a kid for its Mam
Pitiful like - diunt roar I said come an
Sit down wi mi he turns briefly then away
Hi eyes looked like shiny brown marbles
An he moved all awkward
Like his body were all new
He sits down an cant look mi

In the eye, so I tell him its ok
I understand he can't say...
It wer alright nor everyone
Can be out an proud like me
I said I knew from wen I wer a kid
Older lad slipped in mi bed
At tha Home one night an said lets
Pretend we're husband an wife
He made me play the wife cos
I played wi tha gels an' wore lipstick
I wer bent as a nine bob note mi

28

Sidney wer as quiet as death
Barely hearin me it seemed
Just gruntin now an then
He weren't half bloody mardy
After a while he piped up an said
He'd took the Kings shilling
Wot wer that I said? he said it meant
When you signed up for the
Army- him an his beloved Jake -
It was the right thing to do
He fought they both were marked
For a special purpose nor ordinary fellows

29

In action he an Jake both wer injured
Both ferried out to Hospital General
For propa treatment, looked like they
Did everything together even bein
Blasted by a Jack Johnson bomb
Jack Johnson bomb I said, wot wer tha?
He starting roarin again, only more
Softly this time he said, they'd only ever embraced
It wer was the closest ... as they were both officers
Gentlemen, men of honour, the'd made great sacrifice
I dint know whether to go or not
I asked him what happened next
He said he had to leave hospital an' Jake
Prematurely, he roared even louder then
I held on to him he wer chokin he said
Later on Jake married, then died from Spanish Flu
Wore ever that wor?
He said he cuddin't ger over it, not it seeing his Jake again

30

Sidney sat up an looked at the stars
Like they were gonna tell him somethin
He wipes his face slaps his wooden leg

Turns then shakin his head to mi
Puts his hand, tender on mine
Like it wer hot, an I'd burn him
I did feel sorry for him he wer so sad
I took his hand an told im
put yor' head on mi shoulder
He buried his face in mi chest
He smelt a metal like an old poker
I felt me heart judder then go floaty
We just sat there like that for
What seemed ages, he felt lighter
Than he looked, I was trying to stop mi
Eyes closin, I wer still well pissed up
Some other drugs I took earlier
Started kickin in, mi face wer red hot

31

He said he after losin his leg,
Later, he wer kicked out of hospital
He ended up in a doss house place
on Swain St, wi load of scruffy people
a lorra of em wer widows or injured
blokes, factory workers so beneath
him, he had norra bean to his name
He were skint an wor roughin it, in
civvy street, he ended up basket case
he'd been a warrior now alone he wer
wishin his days away looking outta a window
of tha Guild for the Crippled on Colton Street

32

I asked him forra another tot of rum
I finished it, an its warmth hit mi empty
Stomach hard, like a hammer smash
I am seeing flashes in front of mi eyes
Mi body wer so floppy I needed proppin up
Then in a flash it wer right heavy as lead
Slurring mi words I said Jake meant
A lot to you then, he said he wer his life
He wer everything noble wonderful
Now he had nothing and no one
Only he wer stuck round here with
nothin more than raga muffins
Guild for tha crippled had a motto
'Happy with your lot' he shook his head
He looks at me asks mi, if I am happy wi my lot?

33

No I said, no I am soddin not!
Well, who is these ruddy days?

I tried to stay awake so I said
Again, so Jake meant a lot to you
He was the ruler of your all
Whar about yur family?
Sidney's Mam wer Irish dragon lady
A dour disciplinarian always
Ready to make his home teacher
Wer handy with tha strap
She owned several
Boardin houses for Seamen
When there was trouble at home
He just never ever went back
I said yer dad wor about him
No report to make he said, nothin,
just shrugged an' patted his hair
I started thinking about gerrin off
He grabs both of mi hands
Don't go he says
company of a fellow like yours is good
for mi ol chap indeed - we're friends

34

I couldn't stop thinkin about gerrin off
He wer bringin me down off mi buzz
I gor up to ger off he grabs mi hand
You're the right sort of chap for me
He says, whisperin movin close
He's seen people here, lower orders
He's seen 'em hagged women wi
hideous offspring, tykes wi dirty faces
black teeth, ragged smelly an filthy
He hears em' singin sometimes
Awful high pitched piercing shrieking
Or worse horrid groaning an moanin
Who are they I say? he looks around
He shakes his head, coughin says
They're plebs tha worst sort, I said people
Are just people, he said he'd never pass time
Wi people he had nothing in common with

35

Such riff raff an educated man like himself
It wer intolerable for destiny to place him wi
An undeserving, scrounging rabble,
Great unwashed holding their hands out?
So many feeble-minded parasites of society
Wud be better to have got rid tha worthless women
Tha errant urchins, progeny of drunken feckless men
Tha wer a ugly blight upon decent society
He wer bullding up a right head of steam

Taikin as if he wer making political speech
I lit another fag up shrugged mi shoulders
He says me an him wer like shining gods
Fashioned by divine hands to reign supreme
In beauty strength manhood to spurn womankind
Ye Gad! unclean harlots, he saw besmirch
An 'stain heroic Tommies, in the field led astray
So many brainless uncouth strumpets
wud not know a butter knife from fish knife
Understand Britain's commerce, of Caribbean sugar
Shangai Silk, Lapsang Tea, Johannesburgs'
Diamonds, an' Gold, fruits of Empire by right
Ol' blighty rules the waves, he stamps an salutes!

36

What's a Tommy? I said, he says brave warriors ol' boy
Gallant British soldiers young lions, loyal
To our illustrious King an country
Bit strong mate, War, I said laughin
Blokes jollies, rapin stealin killin folks,
All people of colour in the world
We end up payin for it, why what for?
Ol' boy he carried on, changin tack,
You an I have enjoyed finer things in life
We've wined dined at the best places
Fashioned in gifted finery, fit for a prince
He then put his arms round mi an squeezed
He said you are an Adonis Apollo Dionysus
Unleashed upon the world how
I envy you, let me tarry with a bit longer?
I am now starting to think this guy might be
A mentalist, harmless one but one all the same
On he goes he says, I have shared bitter afflictions
Of mi heart, wrought by cruel jealous fate-
By goodness, is just like a scorned woman
Sets out to spoil always tha joy, happiness
Noble love between two men as in ancient times
We men who are the gods of humankind's' destiny
With tha power of life an death in our hands
To rule over tha lesser, thus we're set upon glory

37

Sidney looks at his hands, they 're shaking
In quiverin voice he says, he adored Jake
How he breathed for tha sight of him
Tha intoxicating smell, this his one true love
He was his commander an his close friend
He wer filled always with a deep longin
They were as two great pillars divided
By a chasm, a dangerous sea, neither of 'em

Could ever cross, they lived an almost died
Together, they knew they were one
But their love had never lived
It knew nothin of the ecstasy
The mesh, tha entwining of manly flesh
Their love neither lived, nor could it never die
It wer eternal melancholy, like a dark fire
It could never be quenched...

38

He said he knew Jake loved him
Sidney saw to all Jake's needs
Excited to both be in the army
Every night Sidney knew like him
Jake would lie awake restless
Both of them, in their own bunk
Not wanting to sleep cos of a slight touch
That would send a stabbin sharp thrill
Burnin into Sidney's heart curling down
Into his spine, swirling in the searing heat
Of his aching loins, making his mouth
An lips dry to the touch of his tongue

39

Sidney said he wer wounded warrior, cravin
To know what passed between free grown men
True Kings, who shaped their destiny as I did
To gather their fleshly rose buds, where they may
Drinking deeply of the manly cup of love
Sidney, had been pierced in the chest
By cupids unerring arrow, only knew loves bitter loss
Sidney said, he choose me to transport him to
Oblige him this very night, be my fellow passenger
To share tha experience of mi fleshly
Sports with men, so he may sample some small part of
The magnificence of my virility
As even now he sensed mi tumescent glow
Due to his wholly Inflammatory words?
No doubt I would I please allow him...

40

I just sat there with my mouth open
I didn't know what to say. I felt a bit horny
He was waiting for me to say somat
I said the first thing that came into my head
Want some trade eh? are you a top or a bottom?
Butch or femme love hmm?
Kinky, into threesomes or wot?
He wer confused, I carried on
You dominant, or passive?

He looks like I've scratched him
Starts coughin uncontrollably an
Drops back down onto the steps
He wer quiet an lookin proper fed up

41

Sidney is definitely off wi tha fairies
As he's me told all his stuff, I tell him
Look, I reckon most of blokes
Just cant help fallin in love wi me
Me, I mean once they had a taste
He looks up an he smiles again
I say they love my skin – (stroking my own hand)
Love up mi my café au lait flesh
I imagine an wish it wer darker
More chocalata like Nina Simone's
Sidney's face clouds over
Like a stormy Monday, he says By Jove never!

42

Grim-faced Sidney starts to sing:
Inney Miney Mo
Catch a nigger by its Toes
If it squeals let it go
Inney Miney Miney Mo
Fuck off I said, that's racist
Who do to think you are?
He shhss me looking smug
I read you I said, waggin my finger
You look a bit flamin tinted yourself
He says, I am ridiculous, he's not at all
I know he is, so I say well you are!
Yuh aint no white man, fink yuh can pass nah!!

43

Sidney says I'am not a wog ol' man
Eyes at mi an says, what tha devil are you?
Man or Woman? Or don't you know?
Namby Pamby, carnival grotesquerie
Your bizarre masque, parading yushelf
Cissy bloody jiggaboo junglebunny
Mind you, like all the Kings men
Could be persuaded to like brown meat
Darker the berry the sweeter the juice
Bit of primitive exotic so to speak ol boy!
Dressed up like a pirates falllalish
You should grow a pair of goolies
My man, you're not meant to be a frou frou
Are you? More a rampant lothario
Blessed by tha gods, an amorous swordsman

Ichabod! Not a jossler wasted on wally women

44

I wer fuming mi head off now
I knew exactly what he meant
He were up for being a voyeur
I should be more straight-acting
Hettie hetro, an more blokish eh?
The two faced racist sexist git!
So I slapped his face - hard!
It wer like slappin a sponge
I shouted, at least I know what I am
Black an I'm well proud of it
We all came out of women's
Fannies, so ger over yuhself twat!
Tha one half of tha human race
Wud say tha bloody better half too
State tha world that's run by men
Am not lost and found like you
Fucking bounty coconut bar!
Black on tha outside white inside
Have a good look at yourself in
Tha mirror, check yuhself fool
If you aint white, you're all black!

45

I've got mi shoes off - I can be fierce
He puts his fists up then drops 'em
Balderdash! Poppy cock! he says
He's just swarthy cos I he's lived
Quite an outdoor country life
Time spent abroad ol' chap
He's says hes's gorra roman nose
His lips are not all thick
He can run a comb right through his hair
Not at all like a coons ol' man
I say just listen to yuhself
Yes, your lips are thick, they are
Blackman's, your lips are much
Much more thicker than mine, an
They're much more pinki too
You're just lyin to yuhself

46

Sidney, says I am the one lying to myself
So I say, did you use bleachin cream
Scrub yourself whiter in tha bath
Rubbin lemon juice a la Josephine Baker?
I am singing, emancipate yuhself
From mental slavery- Bob Marley says

I am shouting now like fish wife, wi mi
shoes pokin at him an movin closer
He now starts mumblin, as I grab
For him, I want to see his back
We both start fightin grapplin
It felt so wrong, like you know
All that one drop slavery rubbish!
I learnt in Sheniah's Black History books
But just had to know to see his lower back
Tek im down a peg or two
I reckon he knows what I'am up to
I know its somewhere you can see
on light skin, a patch at the bottom of the spine

47

This patch its funny bruise, shows yur
Mixed race yuh see, its called tha
Mongolian blue spot, discovered ages ago
People diun't talk about, it they just know
It's a pool of melanine pigment cells
It goes sometimes by the time yur grown
But sometimes it diun't nor always
Anyway Sidney fights me viciously
He wer a cornered dog I'm flying off
Him like I'm on a bouncy castle
He loses his balance falls on the floor
I grab his shirt up fast for drunken tranny

48

Sidney's... gorra blue gray bruise, it spreads
Like a dark continent across his lower back
I stand back, victorious an shout see
Pointing, yuh are a Black brother!
I start singing to be Young Gifted an' Black
I'm funky dancing cool, mi James Brown
I hold out my hand to do a soul shake
He slaps my hand away an snorts
Fixin his clothes, wipin his head wi hanky

49

Sidney eyes are red as he pulls down his shirt
He says, a matron told the Army Authorities
To send for his birth papers back home
From Liverpool, they said he had to leave
The Hospital because he wasn't white
He wer put in filthy dosshouse on Swain St
Jake wiun't be his friend any more
Jake wiunt even say goodbye or speak
They said he was Black, he asked me
Black, what does that mean?

He had no idea, he really he dint care to know
As he could not be, an he had never been
Black in his entire rotten ill-fated life

50

I just stood an looked at him
Dazed, he wer bundled like crushed paper
Wi his left leg stickin out on tha steps
I felt sorry for him, angry all at tha same time
I said to him it's never too late to find out
To begin to learn about all of himself
Be aware of all which seems strange
To yer, what's inside part of you, all the same
I only could only start, when 'I came to tha city
To meet others, like miself to understand
An' be understood, by those tha are mixed too
Like being an onion, peelin off layers, bur also
Piling on as much propa cultural knowledge
To wrap yourself up in, like a blanket
All you can get you hands on, wot's been denied to
You in yur past, an mix it all in yuhself to know
You can be loud an proud, just fab as you are
Diun't matter what others say or fink eh?
I wer talkin to him, but I wer talkin to myself
He started coughin up again, only this time
It wer blood in his hanky, he looked down 'n' out

51

I fought I really should go ravin now
I still felt drugged an drunk, flyin really
Burra felt I couldn't' just leave him
I mean I were fakin just like him
Bur in a very different way eh
I suppose we all do in a way
Purr on a different face to the world
Pretend wi somat what wer not eh?
Maybe cos be scared or somat
Cos is if we got to bi what wi really are
Once wi find out wot the hell thar is
It's like as if somat bad wud happen
It seems a bit daft but it aint eh?

52

He wer scarily quiet now so
I said, I wer gonna go fer a walk
I started goin off towards Morledge St
I fought I'd go to the warehouse party
Were all worked up inside wi tha drama
Cud hear him limpin behind me
I stopped an lit another fag

I started walkin round tha corner
I felt bit faint,so bent over an I rested
Nr the corner of Midland St
I wer covered by a shadow
It wer Sidney standin over me

53

He tells in me voice dead flat
Cold, to stay were I am or else
An do all wha he says
I can see he's clenching his fists
Meanwhile he's saying mumblin
All he wanted to do, is feel as I do
This sounds very weird - bit freaky
I then feel this heavy pressure
On the top of my head
Like someone sitting on it
An mi throat bein pressed
Mi eyes see little lights an then
Everythin goes fuzzy, all totally black

54

It smells like a butcher's shop
Everywhere the smell of blood
Worra an overpowering stench
Rotten, worse than a cowshed
It's so very thick an feels like
I've got cotton wool in my throat
I am chokin, an I can
Just barely hear a horrible
Gurgling, sucking sound
Mi heart's tearin itself, till
I am strugglin to get breath in me

55

I 'am in darkness spinning round
An mi insides bein sucked outta mi
Sidney, I sense him more than hear
Speakin in a spittled whispery
Voice now, saying to mi don't be afraid
It will all soon be over, what brain cells
I've got left, are darting about
Like lottery balls, all the time I feel
I am getting weaker, an weaker
Like an old tele when the tube goes

56

In tha distance I hear Sidney chunterin
The blood of men spillin on the earth
Hellish sound of tha bosh's bombs

Droppin down tha foul smoke chokin
Piercing cries an shrieks of grown men
Groaning pains of tha dyin wounded
Run! Lets run Jake! Sidney shoutin run!
Oh God, Jack Johnson up ahead drops
Blown to smithereens we're alive still just
Sidney says his left leg ripped off
Jake's blinded wi his right arm hangin
German bosh, had fell on Jake, Sidney crawled up
Pur this hands on tha Hun's throat an squeezed
Die die die! he's screamin, his hands on mi throat
Squeezin even tighter, mi arms flap wildly
Like shirts sleeves, blowin on clothesline

57

I am in whirlin darkness like water
I wer falling away wher to dunno
Not really breathin like caught fish
Sidney's voice gerrin fainter an fainter
Till I stopped, an just floated in silence
I see myself or wor it copy of myself
In a hospital laid out all cold an green
Black Female Doctor an White Male Nurse
Both of em standing tha side a mi
I realize its mi real parents sayin
Found him on Southampton Street
He's rather thin, very undernourished
The cause of death, it's hard to say
Alcohol poisonin, drugs maybe, anyway
Organs failure, pity so young, a looker
They both argue about why I'am in drag
Dad says it's a release from conformity
Mam says it's just deviant behavior

58

Both 'em are interrupted by Sidney rantin
Saying, though I want a steady male partner
I deliberately practice loose morals
He laughs, no woman wud have mi either
Cos wed only squabble over tha mirror
Sidney laughs, puts both his hands on mi throat
Better off dead...he whispers
I am shoutin, I don't want to die I am not dead!
I am screamin, but there's no sound
Then I hear a loud woman say
Subaltern Sidney George Bradshaw stop!
You stop stop an stand back
Leave him, I order you to release him
Let him go now while there is still time
The war is over....

59

Ther wer a loud whooshing
I felt like I was travelling shootin
Thru a dark tunnel upwards
My lungs fill up I hear myself
Make a loud sigh, aaaaah!
Like when you've supped hot brew
An you really friggin needed it
I felt cold an stiff as a board
Mi head wer stuck inna black fog
I could mek out a pale grey light
Bleedin in, at the edges of mi eyes
I knew I wer back on solid ground
Cos thi hardness, mi arse felt frozen
Mi eyes felt like fresh piss holes

60

I open my eyes an Sidney's slumped
In the arms of a tall black woman
Her hair each side wer chiny bumps
A face smooth wi high cheek bones
Colour of bisto, wi large black eyes
Sloping framed in long feathery lashes
When she spoke, her peachy lips
Pursed, an pulled slightly down at
tha corners, her voice wer bass
String pulled, warm an humming
She stood up, an wer shaped like
A thick coke bottle but much wider
Wi long black dress wi little leather boots
A tambourine wi purple green ribbons
Gripped in her black jewelled hand

61

She looks at an me asks if I am ok
Says her name is Hattie, I nod
I said, oh he only tried to kill mi
Sidney rolls over groanin, lookin
At tha ground, Hattie says to mi
Sort of risky, you picking up
Up strange men, off your head
Mockin mi, wi her even teeth
An long pink tongue lolling
Around at the bottom of her gob
Smilin she says, Sidney nearly had his way?

62

Hattie wer like cat. I wer like mouse
She purred, poor chap he can't help himself
He wer stuck in 1918 to be exact

He had a flashback, shell shock
Bit like you really, he lost control
You like to take risks don't you?
Been overdoing things darling?
Yur dead lucky, she smiles again
Sort of sexy, bit flirty, she's strokin
Sidney's head, an looking at me
None of this is making any sense
Worn, mi body feels like I've gone
Ten blisterin rounds wi Tim Wetherspoon
As I try to gerr up to leave

63

Loads of strange voices strike up eerie
This time Sidney covers his ears up
Hattie bangs shakes tha tambourine
It all stops, she then turns her head
I look down Morledge St an watch
A band of people, Women Kids an Men
Move towards us, I want to run
They're all walkin behind a banner
Held up, it says Boot & Shoes Union
The crowd are all dressed up smart
Wool caps, waistcoats, hobnail boots
Long dresses wi coats an big collars
Grins on their faces like pools winners
Chantin, full throated like a football kop
Women at front, form half circle around us
Shoutin, 'United We Stand Divided We Fall'

64

Hattie says to Sidney, tha crowd wud torment him
All of 'em his fellow spirits, Boot & Shoe Workers
Hangin about where they worked an died
They wer ordinary honest working people
Sidney, wer hostile stranger in their place
In life he ignored their sort an their hard life
He went out of his way, to insult degrade them
Bur he died of consumption, like many of 'em
He wern't troubled wi their sufferin denying it
They stalked him, yet Sidney still shunned them
He saw them as just ragged an pitiful though
They had dropped like flies from diseases
In Wharf Street hovels, they called home
Crippled by shoe-making machines
Washin an scrubbin other people's houses
Only tha workhouse left for 'em wi no work
It wer their sweated labour makin tha
Very boots, Sidney tramped roun' trenches
His arrogance self-pity kept him stuck

Alone ... here but time of hatred anger
Wer now over, so wer theirs bein
Workers who had been oppressed ignored
Hattie asks Sidney, to come wi 'em over the rainbow ...

65

She said Jake wer waitin, his mother father
Sidney could be himself, now it doesn't matter
Cos who you are, how you look, are of no
Consequence whatsoever... there...
Sidney gets up, an Hattie walks with him
Towards the crowd, they part let him go though
Then close around him, Hattie turns says to me
You must not judge him or yuhself too harshly
Its only when we are at the precipice, tha point
Very edge of crisis, an face real peril
When things fall apart, we can change - only then
We can destroy past things, to start over again
Sidney choose mi to lift him from his loneliness
To attach himself to me to live through me
But I were nor all he expected or hoped for
Triggerin his past wounds, stuck War drama
Tha loss of his unrequited love
Injured manhood, tha love of his family
Sidney can live differently now, be
Wi tha other spirits, as sisters brothers,
freed from labour an' strife of past life

66

Hattie says I choose Sidney too
A man so very unlike myself yet
Both of us, shared some soul searchin
Sidney brought mi to point of death
This night an only this night
All of us wer caused by ancient vortex
Opening a portal between times and
Past, of pagan rites tha God Mithras
Roman sacrifice of bulls an cows
Magical rites of death an rebirth of men
All things, all times being forced to change
So now, I could have a choice too
I would have another chance
To live mi dreams, be true myself
Its wer all up to me from now on

67

Smilin she says not to judge anyone
Who have hurt me or even myself
Too harshly I am lovable I can love
With those that will return it

Because they love me just as I am
She winks, says take care of yuhself
Hattie turns an goes off wi crowd
A jiggin carnival movin down street
Dancin, an wiggling as she goes
Shaking her tambourine wi sparks
Flying off it, whirling till they all form
Circles, in a golden haze of light
I am dancin wi 'em in my head

68

I watch 'em as they disappear
I felt so tired, as I am still sittin
Down on the pavement, as
Tha Sky wipes on a moody dawn
Wi some lary birds chiripng loudly
I realize, head fuzzy, tha night wer over
I never got to Spectrum Warehouse
Or go up Blues Shebeens in Highfields
Whenever I walk round St Georges
Day or night, I can never ever forget it
I wonder, if any of it even happened
All what I remember, is worra I've told you
I am relieved, had to bloody tell someone
I mean head shrinks hear all sort of stories eh?

END

Glossary of Leicester Dialect Polari Gay Slang & Edwardian Slang.

<i>On the lash</i>	Going out to get intoxicated with either drink or drugs or both
<i>Drag Fest</i>	Drag Show
<i>Slap</i>	Make Up
<i>Bona</i>	Excellent
<i>Cruise</i>	Pick up attract Gay men
<i>Fag Hag</i>	Gay man's female friend
<i>Townie</i>	Working Class person
<i>Fliibertigibbit</i>	Frivolous excessively, talkative flighty
<i>Harridan</i>	Strict bossy old woman
<i>Strumpet</i>	Female prostitute or a promiscuous woman
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	Black Champion Boxer USA 1900's WW1 Bomb
<i>Gad</i>	Exclamation surprise or dismay also biblical
<i>Balderdash</i>	Senesless talk or writing nonsense
<i>Poppy Cock</i>	Talk rubbish garbage
<i>Slash</i>	To Urinate
<i>Popper</i>	Drug that is sniffed popular in gay community
<i>Cottaging</i>	Casual Sex in Public places between gay/queer men
<i>Trade</i>	Available Men gay,queer or otherwise for sex, can Can refer to male prostitutes
<i>Jungle Fever</i>	Derogatory racist term refers to mixed Black and White or mixed relationships
<i>Jigga Boo</i>	Racist stereotypical derogatory term for a black person
<i>Jungle Bunny</i>	Racist derogatory term for a black person
<i>Blues/Shebeen</i>	African Caribbean All Night Party free entry & with a Bar
<i>Roarin'</i>	Weeping or crying
<i>Top</i>	Dominant partner role in sexual relationship/s also
<i>Bottom</i>	Passive partner role in sexual partnership/s
<i>Butch</i>	Masculinity
<i>Femme</i>	Feminity
<i>Kinky</i>	Bondage S & M BDSM or Group Sex
<i>Fallalish</i>	Excessively showy clothing or dress fast or extravagant
<i>Goolies</i>	Testicles
<i>Frou Frou</i>	Gay man and or effeminate man
<i>Puffter</i>	As above
<i>Wuffter</i>	As Above
<i>Nancy Boy</i>	As above
<i>Omo</i>	As above
<i>Read</i>	To intuit , to fully understand a person's nature
<i>Icahbod</i>	Exclamation Edwardian biblical origin
<i>Tykes</i>	Small child cheeky or mischievous
<i>Hettie</i>	Hetrosexual person
<i>Coon</i>	Racist derogatory term for a black person
<i>Doss House</i>	A Poor unemployed Workhouse or Hostel
<i>Subaltern</i>	A lower Army Officer
<i>Lary</i>	To be loud aggressive antisocial, or cheeky

