

Mersey Royals

"Life goes on day after day..."

A duet in E flat for horn and seagulls,
mournful notes across the silt, an evensong
for the last in line of the Mersey monarchy,
fragile circumstance and faded pomp
unfurled with undiminished pride.

The ancient right of passage of man and horse
ordained by royal charter; forward came
the industrialists and new wave of commuters,
the storm of Victorian rail and road,
the underground tide.

Gone now the Egremont and the Leasowe, gone
the Wallasey elite, the legacy reduced to dim-lit
memories and economic debate, their illustrious
companion long since abandoned and dying alone,

the Royal Iris rocked into legend, the chords now a distant
echo, beyond resurrection in rust-wracked dereliction,
not worth the tuppence to cross,
sinking like a flower made of stone.

Gone the glory days of Woodchurch, Overchurch,

Mountwood and the elegant guests of the Cunard
and White Star lines escorted to the floating stage,
the invitation to the ball,

Seacombe waltzing in primrose on a summer evening,
Woodside a youthful hustle in blue-and-cream bobby-sox,
New Brighton smiling in her best frock,
the belle of them all.

Families flocking to the Tower Circus, the baths, the sands,
the return to the waterfront via Shanghai and New York,
the anchored birds offering their fabled protection
day and night.

Crown jewels of the Pier Head, the last two dowager queens
defiantly keeping afloat the romantic heritage and the vision
of the city where always in the centre of the dream
a magnolia blazes with light.