

A Little Local Difference

Written by Charles Eden

Wednesday, 21 July 2010 10:44 - Last Updated Wednesday, 04 August 2010 11:21

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In de mean streets of Ledbury
Der is one block
Between 15th and Mabel's Orchard
It's best not to look.
Der's a hang-out called Oice Boites
- What kinda name is dat? -
Where de Shoiks and de Jets
Toit dey'd go nap.
I ain't toikin' cards
I'm toikin' turf wars:
For control of de territory
Out come de boys.

Ledbury's a town
Where you don't wanna mess.
De law, it ain't stoopid,
Dey've just left it, I guess,
To shake itself down
Den dey'll clean up de cess.
Now in Ledbury Town
Poetry's big - I mean big-
An' to shift all de shit
You need a good gig.
Most of de noice guys
Dey've ended up dead
Trundlin' in concrete
Tru de banks of de Led.
So we're toikin' real serious,
let's get dis straight,
De shoiks an der famblies
Got it all on a plate.
Widdout dey say "yes"
Der ain't nothin' moves -
Der teacake franchise
Is jus' one of der grooves.
No cake moves an inch
Widdout dey say so
But if you're a good boy
You can share in de dough.

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Mrs Muffins in Choich Lane
De washroom all right
Where dey launder de money
To whitest of white.

Free-range butchery's another
Where dey got control,
Ain't a poik chop dat's eaten
Dat ain't paid de toll.
But butchers an' teashops
Dat's just chicken-feed stuff,
Poetry's mainline,
Dey jus' can't get enough.
So jus' like de teacakes
An' jus' like de chops
When it comes to de pomes
- an' I mean de whole shebang:
Production, Distribution,
Protection, Remooneration -
When it comes to de pomes
It's de Shoiks call de shots.

But onto dis happy scene
Der falls a shadow,
A noo buncha guys
Are up in de saddle.
Dey call demselves Jets
An' dey're lookin' for land
Der biros an' pens
Dey are hot in der hand.

For a coupla weeks
It was evens, dey say,
Some deaths on each side
Other lives'd have to pay
- Also a whole lotta collateral damage -
Things weren't goin' nowhere
Till a Shoik had a thought
- An' it ain't every day
A Shoik manages a whole thought
All on his own -
"We could save on de bloodshed
If just two of us fought."
De noos it spread fast
Dat a dool ud take place
Wid de boss of de Shoiks

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An de Jets face to face.

Nick opened proceedins
With a well-crafted line.
It smacked Dan in de midriff,
But he said he was fine.
Danny swung a couplet
That caught Nicky's head,
He rocked for a moment.
What's in dat glove? Lead?
Nick socked him a sonnet,
All fourteen lines.
Dan swayed on, his eyes glazed,
But he held on in time.
Back came a haiku,
Dat's five-seven-five,
An old eastern trick,
But, hey! we're still alive.
Quick as a flash
With an Auden quotation
Nick got in a body blow
Which drew admiration.
Danny countered with a limerick,
A doity one at that,
Nick doubled in laughter,
His knees hit the mat.
But he's back on his feet
And he's trading blank verse,
At the end of the round
Danny's come out de worse.
Nick thinks he smells blood
An' moves in for de kill,
A chunk of free verse
Should just fit de bill.
You can see Danny's hurt
By de look on his face.

But whateva is dis?
His wig's slipped its place.
At last all stands clear
Dan is not one of us,
He's flutterin' his eyelids
An' that chest is a bust.
It's now clear he's a broad
Dressed up as a guy,
An' to make matters worse

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Now she's startin' to cry.
Finish her, Nick!
Was the shout from his gang,
But Nick is a gent
An' lets his gloves hang.
Daniella looks up
An' sees her big chance:
Astounding alliteration,
Astonishing assonance.
Nick folds to de canvas
An' measures his length
The Jets' super-hero
Has been sapped of his strength
By dis fickle Delilah
Who gets de Shoiks' cheers.
From de open-mouthed Jets
It's half-hearted jeers.

De ref is bewildered
He looks in de rules
But there ain't one to cover
Broads fightin' doods.
He calls dem together
An' says it's a draw.
Nick, he don' like it
But he offers a paw.
Daniella accepts it
An' flutters her peepers,
Nick's lookin' strange -
O my God, jeepers creepers,
What's goin' on here?
Don't fall fer her, kid.
Dis story's turned puky
So I'll screw down de lid.

De Shoiks an' de Jets
Called a truce de next day
- On a temporary basis, you understand -
An' de Scribes an' de Poets
Joined in de melee.[NB add accent]
When dey troo down der arms
What a sight to behold:
sharpened pencils
chewed-down ball-points
front loadin' propellin' pencils
fountain pens with rusty nibs

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any number of keyboards
a typewriter
and one packet of fluorescent glitter gel pens.

An' de paper!
Spiral bounds, jotters,
post-it notes, writing pads,
an' note pads of every size an' color,
A4 sheets wid an' widdout margins,
even ol' envelopes an' table napkins.

- A truly sickenin' sight
Which struck dumb de townsfolk
Whose hearts dey jus' froze
Dat all dis sick scribblin'
Was jus' under der nose.

Now I'm sure dat you know dis
But under der armor
All hoods an' gangsters
Dey luvva der mamma.
Show me a gang boss
Or show me some muscle,
Der hearts are marshmallow
When dey ain't on de hustle.
So with Christmas approachin'
- Am I really sayin' dis? -
It's hugs an' embraces
An' a big sloppy kiss.

De vendetta's over
De moral now comes:
Put de hardware away
An' stick to de pomes.

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The Homend Poets meet on the last Tuesday of each month (except July and August) at Ice Bytes at 6pm. For further information contact Nick Halligan on 01684 563281