

Something About England

The Clash

They say immigrants steal the hubcaps
Of the respected gentlemen
They say it would be wine an' roses
If England were for Englishmen again

Well I saw a dirty overcoat
At the foot of the pillar of the road
Propped inside was an old man
Whom time would not erode
When the night was snapped by sirens
Those blue lights circled fast
The dancehall called for an' ambulance
The bars all closed up fast

My silence gazing at the ceiling
While roaming the single room
I thought the old man could help me
If he could explain the gloom
You really think it's all new
You really think about it too
The old man scoffed as he spoke to me
I'll tell you a thing or two

I missed the fourteen-eighteen war
But not the sorrow afterwards
With my father dead and my mother ran off
My brothers took the pay of hoods
The twenties turned the north was dead
The hunger strike came marching south
At the garden party not a word was said
The ladies lifted cake to their mouths

The next war began and my ship sailed
With battle orders writ in bed
In five long years of bullets and shells
We left ten million dead
The few returned to old Piccadily
We limped around Leicester Square
The world was busy rebuilding itself
The architects could not care

But how could we know when I was young
All the changes that were to come?
All the photos in the wallets on the battlefield
And now the terror of the scientific sun
There was masters an' servants an' servants an' dogs
They taught you how to touch your cap
But through strikes an' famine an' war an' peace
England never closed this gap

So leave me now the moon is up
But remember all the tales I tell
The memories that you have dredged up
Are on letters forwarded from hell

The streets were by now deserted
The gangs had trudged off home

The lights clicked off in the bedsits
An' old England was all alone