

## Rachel McGladdery

### A Bigger Stage

A bigger stage  
a tying in of ships and water,  
see Albion's daughter  
dangling her legs.  
Above.  
the yellow stone  
stillness created out of flight.  
Below the shame of black boys wearing bangles  
tucked at the bank's entrance  
out of sight.  
And further out  
ships up streets  
the echo of plimsoll's running metal ring up alleys  
and boys in v-neck sweaters  
and barbaric hair cuts  
socks pooling at the heel  
And their sharp arse bones  
Cutting holes in their shorts.  
You walked it  
Swung an aspiring satchel  
On your way to grammar  
Piano lessons too, to fit the bill  
A common-sense of language  
I share with you  
Idioms that don't carry weight elsewhere  
but the North.  
And you had the humour  
this place is famous for.  
But pain's the universal theme  
felt the high tensile steel  
cutting us, keen  
wounding when you screamed  
'Momma don't go/daddy come home.'  
We love our icons tortured  
roll in the guts of road accidents  
then skulk off  
replete and shameful.  
See the victim flogged and bleeding.  
Catharsis  
emotion playing on the edge then crashing down in  
white water.  
This is what the people crave  
give us pain  
show us your naked body,  
crucify yourself.  
Oh, we love that don't we?  
see our mistakes in yours  
projected on the altar, but

higher and wider and taller  
so that the world can see  
that you can falter  
and thusly we can.  
Absolved.  
We see you  
just like us but on  
a bigger stage.

### **Dear John**

I thought you looked like Jesus  
I was young and had a crush on Robert Powell  
but everybody loved the Beatles and we all sang *Yellow Submarine* in the playground, mixing it up  
with The Alleyallyoh and confiding which one we liked best.  
I loved you,  
Sharon loved George,  
no-one fancied Ringo,  
all of us loved Paul even though we were way too young,  
my mum preferred the Stones, she said  
but then, she would, but she liked 'the later stuff', as if we'd understand, at 7 what she meant.  
We nodded sagely.  
It seems you catalogued my life,  
remember you dying, watched my sister break her heart behind her hands at endless plays of  
*Jealous Guy*  
and somehow got wrapped up in all the grief,  
We all sang *Imagine* then at break time, swinging our legs and crying delicious tears  
At how you were too young.  
Although, you were as old as my mum,  
Christ...we were ten.  
Later, we picked up guitars, learnt how to kiss and smoke, squinting and folding back our long  
shining hair  
wearing parodies of Flower power, for we were cool,  
as *Yesterday* turned into *Working Class Hero*.  
Still sang my first born son to sleep with a tear ached throat  
'...beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful boy'  
and suddenly I'm 40. The age that you were when you died.  
It seems momentous, like reaching 33 and reflecting that you've outpaced Christ,  
My God, you were too young.

### **Gabby Tyrell**

#### **In Bed with John Lennon**

I lay in bed with John Lennon  
his mind's eye beckons me  
white folds cover the space between us.  
His room is a landscape of solitude mingled with the words of *Imagine* written  
On this empty place.  
A flash of lightning  
quavers and semi quavers bounce across night blue clouds,

words become tornadoes  
then drop to this bare white place  
On the bed I lay, dressed in a white robe with seams embossed with the words  
Inspire.  
I lay at peace with his mind's eye,...slipping into a world without possessions  
white wardrobes standing free, owned by no-one.  
Beds scattered around white earth  
people of many hues  
like the keys of his piano.  
Sipping milk from Friesian cows  
mooing Imagine  
his eyes hover absorbing each sense  
words float from his head.  
I see his ideal world at one with itself.  
Each race enchained in an embrace of love that sucks in his words...  
and exhales his music,  
this world is real and concrete for me.  
I awake,  
Pick up a guitar and strum a chord or two.  
Now  
...even I can play music!

### **All aboard**

We all live in a yellow submarine  
a yellow submarine  
a yellow submarine  
these words echoed in my dreams on a voyage on the yellow submarine.  
John turned the submarine on autopilot and watched  
as we passed a lobster inscribed the words Mendips on a house made of rocks.  
He smiled and began meditating with his friends  
Contemplating what did life mean?  
We had everything we needed suddenly the submarine shook  
there was an earth shattering blast the seabed exploded- a bomb.  
John ran to the controls changing the coordinates to get away from it.  
Minutes later the sounds became distant,  
a grey whale with Nixon's red indignant head swam alongside the submarine  
and angrily peered in.  
John sang a chorus  
We all live in a yellow submarine  
a yellow submarine  
a yellow submarine  
in a blink a furious Nixon was gone.  
I sat contemplating this time close to nature's side  
wandering what Nixon thought of the submarine.  
John saw a seal wearing a wedding veil sat on a rock etched with the word Gibraltar.  
We passed a field of yellow strawberries being harvested

**David Mason**  
**Lennon's Lenses**

Hey! Come 'ead fellas  
You must know who that is  
Him, him with the glasses  
That's John Lennon that is!  
Yeah, it is, it's the glasses.  
I tell you that's a Beatle  
That is.  
And they're at it  
With their cameras  
Yet there is none as blind  
As those who will not see  
That it's not you  
John – but me.  
It's all gone horribly wrong, John.  
They don't remember a single word  
Of your songs, John  
And as time passes  
It's obvious that it's the glasses  
Let the memory live on, John.  
So come on do us a favour  
What with me being a scouser  
And *not* wanting a job as  
A soldier – I don't wanna die  
Or a lawyer – I don't wanna lie  
But rather  
A paperback writer  
And you being a visionary  
Getting yours when luckily  
Glasses (and love) were free  
So making yourself a luminary -  
Yeah, you could distil into me  
The very essence of your words and phrases  
The spirit of the lyric from those magic lenses.  
And you would show me the meaning of success  
And I'd thank you in a song  
That sounded something like this  
Recognise the tune?  
Ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooooOOh-ooh  
Well, well,  
Thank God for those glasses  
Ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooooOOh-ooh  
Yeah, yeah,  
With John Lennon's lenses.

### **On the street where you lived**

Much like your own, John  
Spiritual that sound of the street  
Liverpool 1950s, 60s  
It was our Wembley

It was our Wimbledon  
It was our Lord's  
The street  
It was hot hands held aloft  
A trophy photo  
Of the Fab Four  
On the street  
It was little kids  
Big kids  
In betweeny kids  
The street  
It was I am the walrus  
Bet you don't know  
The chorus  
On the street  
It was dare you  
Bet you wouldn't  
Run for it...  
The street  
Imagine – me with the first copy  
Into the groove  
And showing off  
On the street  
But now – all the kids have gone  
And silent street stands all alone  
Where rainy tarmac tears flow  
Through empty gutters on and on  
And it's true, John  
Time's moved on  
And they don't want  
Men of action  
Or people of opinion  
On the street  
They want quietude  
Middle of the road  
Not rock'n'roll  
On the street  
So I'll put away the photos  
The vinyl and the pictures  
John, they just don't  
Comprehend us  
And the games we played  
The noise we made  
On our street.

**Isabel Malinowski**  
**A Tribute to Cynthia Lennon**

*All you need is love, you say  
then hide your love away*

*Imagine* how I feel  
upon that day  
*'I am the Walrus*  
*Crippled inside*  
*Watching the wheels*  
with *No ticket to ride*  
*No working class hero*  
at work *in my life*  
*cold turkey* comfort  
for this *mother*  
your wife  
*Give me some truth*  
*I'm so tired* of the lies  
the *Mind Games*, the bored games  
that look in your eyes...  
I thought you'd *grow old with me*  
never be cold with me  
*Nobody told me*, life was so hard  
and the peace that you further  
could never be further  
than the war that you've started  
inside of my heart  
*How do you sleep*  
when the light is so bright?  
*Whatever gets you through the night?*  
*Revolution*  
comes easy  
to those without laws  
much harder the karma  
that comes from lost cause.  
Won't somebody lead me  
out of this trance,  
someone please *help* me  
to *Give peace a chance*  
*Starting Over*  
is so hard to do  
haunted by songs  
of the ghost that is you  
A life lived in lyrics  
can never be sung  
words that once meant something  
bleached on the tongue,  
sounds *come together*  
to torture a soul,  
lingering memories  
of two halves  
once whole  
And yet from this union,  
in Your image made,  
my son, a redeemer  
my future to pave

stones weighted with sorrow  
encased by his love  
whitened and lightened  
this gift from above  
Together, abandoned  
our peace we both made,  
forgave in our hearts  
all the hurt that you gave  
HIS lyrics quite simple  
from hard places come

**“Always remember  
To hug your mum”**

**Iconic**

Picture yourself on a street  
New York city,  
autograph bounty  
with no peace of mind,  
somebody tells you  
it's over, all over,  
a gun with kaleidoscope eyes  
Picture the chase  
to a photo shot heaven,  
the lens of a camera  
to capture its prize,  
taking the floor  
for last tango in Paris,  
to Di with the light in her eyes  
Picture yourself  
all alone  
with youth fading,  
beauty's a beast  
as the age starts to show,  
barbiturate babies  
to sweeten the journey  
and the flame of a candle  
to blow  
Picture yourself in  
in a scramble  
from terror,  
blood spangled bullets  
through blue Texan skies  
Ich bin ein Berliner,  
American hero  
on the day that democracy dies  
Picture yourself  
in a fight  
for man's freedom  
from poverty fuelled  
by a capital wage

Cuba now libra  
a new revolution  
and a firing squad turns  
as you take centre stage  
Picture a vision  
of colour blind beauty,  
shattered by those  
who just can't understand  
that skin is a coat  
for a core that is human,  
the 'I have a dream'  
of a much promised land.  
*Is life unspent more precious than  
the life of ordinary man,  
immortalised by its endeavour,  
in memory to last forever?  
Do shock waves make the message richer?  
To show this world a bigger picture...*  
Picture a love  
with no time line, no limits  
nailed to a cross  
by man's infinite lies,  
white feather falls  
to a son re-united,  
the world with kaleidoscope eyes  
by a black jellyfish.  
Now all was calm again on this wondrous day.  
We continued our voyage an octopus some eight foot long  
opened its star spangled tentacles trying to trap the submarine-but slipped off  
we laughed.  
The octopus furious swam off.  
A school of white angel fish sat smoking seaweed  
whilst an orange walrus played bowls against yellow crabs with sea anemones.  
I joined in a happy song  
John and the yellow submarine drifted into the green sea  
on a quiet night we all live on a on a yellow submarine  
can be heard carried by the wind across the sea

## **Jennifer Pickup**

### **Dear Lucy**

Your eyes were diamonds, studded  
stars in skies; captured in crayon  
and then, in music, immortalised.  
The world would wonder at your  
borrowed name, and in their millions  
sing back to the stage the sweet refrain.  
They questioned inspiration,  
tore those words apart to find truth  
they imagined hidden; it was you.  
Who knew then the fate that he

would meet? Lennon's legacy; he  
laid it at your childish feet, in tune.  
You lived life on limelight's edge;  
you never liked the song, it's said.  
Still, we'll sing it as you go to bed.  
Sleep tight, sweet, eternal child,  
in the sky; diamonds shining bright;  
kaleidoscope eyes encased in night.

### **Imagine (Mark Two)**

Imagine, your face is everywhere, pixilated:  
In magazines, reprinted; on billboards, celebrated;  
This year, your famous black and white stare  
Is reminding us all that you're still there.

**Imagine a future so inspired by the past,  
A man with dreams that could not be outclassed.**

Strawberry Fields forever lie in Central Park,  
Silence spells out one word cast in mosaic art,  
So simple: Life distilled into a circle on the path.  
In stone, the echoes of one interrupted will last.

**Imagine a talent so strong it lived on,  
The inspiration behind a million songs.**

We drove past *that* doorway on the open-topped bus  
With the spirited guide whose passion silenced us;  
He remembered the night, the crowds, the vigil;  
The shock of a nation who lost the invincible.

**Imagine a story as enduring as yours;  
Four men whose tale cannot be ignored.**

The sunlight cast shadows where once you stood,  
Arguing with a fan who went on and drew blood.  
I showed the newsreels to my Year Ten class:  
They knew who you were, thirty years past.

**Imagine that death was only the start,  
In how many smiles have you played a part?**

My radio springs to life; it blooms with your tunes.  
I sing along, badly, but they're over too soon.  
I'm losing my words; they're caught on the page,  
My talent confined to this first time on stage.

**Imagine rewinding right back to the start:  
One night in Liverpool, straight from the**

## **Mab Jones**

### **This Boy**

There was this boy, this kid, this lad  
A baby who maybe some thought of as bad  
A trouble-maker, rebellious nature  
Rule-breaker, waster, authority-hater  
Some said (though usually those  
Who didn't like people who stepped on their toes  
And had massive, enormous toes anyway)  
And this boy broke rules in school and outside it  
Some fire stoked inside him and he couldn't hide it  
An acidic tongue, and each battle won  
Not by fists but by wits and quite often for some  
Who couldn't speak up for themselves  
(And the teachers, those preachers with mean little features,  
Didn't really like that a lot, did they)  
So there was this boy, this odd-bod, this freak  
So he thought and was taught when his sarcastic streak  
By his elders not betters was governed as bad  
A rebel's more trouble than most and this lad  
Failed his exams which derailed all his plans  
For art college, he thought ('til an elder, much better  
Went and stepped on a few of those enormous toes, too)  
And while there this boy found a way to express  
All the wrongs that he saw and would later address  
With a guitar, a sitar, but most of all words  
The boy was a star but through verses and verbs  
He sang what he saw, sore heart inside bleeding  
All the greed of the world and the poor who need feeding  
(Forgotten by those with the fat, well-fed toes)  
And this boy, this poet, through song addressed those  
For, "as soon as you're born, they make you feel small  
By giving you no time, instead of it all"  
We can make it, he said; we can break it, in bed  
On the stage, on the page, with our heart and our head  
Imagine, imagine, what could be achieved  
(And the government fat cats with fat toes were peeved)  
For art has its part in evolution to play  
Revolution's a fad, it won't happen some say  
But this rebel, this writer, this singer has shown us  
Its those with fat toes who the system will bonus  
And, "a working class hero is something to be"  
Let's follow his lead and if you feel the need  
Then speak up! Speak out! And don't feel aggrieved  
When they paint you, they taint you a wastrel, a fool  
A young gun, a no-one, a yobbo, a tool  
A loser, a liar, a loudmouth, a loon  
A felon, a fellow who loves to annoy -  
Remember this legend whose words still ring true  
Remember this rebel, this poet, this boy

## **On Going Too Far**

### **(Poem for John Lennon)**

What makes a legend?  
Why are a few remembered?  
How come some live on, shine on  
While others dim, their light soon gone  
Why are you, dear John, revered  
While most have disappeared?  
Well, you are from a shipping town  
Let's take that as a metaphor  
The ships come in and then go out  
They travel to some distant shore  
Or try to, some are soon waylaid  
Some have gotten lost and strayed  
Some are simply too afraid  
To leave and in the docks have stayed  
And that's how it is, when you are young  
They tell you not to go too far  
Some things, they say, just can't be done  
You want to sing and play guitar?  
Well, the guitar's alright, John,  
But you'll never make a living at it.  
But you try, you tried, you soon untied  
Yourself from where your ship was moored  
You formed a group and side by side  
You set your sails and swiftly oared  
Away from the known into waters uncharted  
And into the charts with your catchy pop tunes  
You gathered good speed and the waves weakly parted  
And weekly you started to top the chart news  
But fame does not a legend make  
A legend is something a little more  
The aim is not to make but break  
The claims of those who stay on shore  
And the names of those who came before  
And what came before was four-by-four  
Four beats to a bar, four points to a compass  
And what came before you chose to ignore  
Four beatles in a band who chose to redress this  
You wanted more, you travelled further  
Love songs okay, now satire, now sitar  
You went off course, didn't pause and your fervour  
Found favour with the fates as you travelled too far  
Not just outwards through the sounds of a guitar  
But inwards, too.  
And this, I think is what made you  
The legend that you are today.  
You wrote about the things you knew  
That most of us are scared to say  
Love songs okay but also love's pain

Jealousy, fear, and obsession  
Loneliness, aimlessness, the political game  
Your mother's death, drugs and depression  
But also the joy of your Beautiful Boy  
And also the beauty of Woman  
You felt it your duty to try and destroy  
The thoughts old men taught you were wisdom  
Because, love is all you need, indeed  
And true wisdom's ignoring the map  
The best thing to chart is your own human heart  
And you, dear John, did that  
And that's what legends are made of  
And that's why you should go too far  
And though now our John's ship has sailed off  
Well, his light still burns bright as a star  
So set your own course, that's off course of course  
Like you, John, the legend you are

**Patric Cunnane**

**FOR JOHN LENNON 1940-1980**

*'Those in the stalls clap, those in the boxes rattle your jewellery'*

***John at the Royal Variety Performance***

When the phone rang  
I was in the shower  
I thought let it go,  
Let it go to hell  
But it kept ringing  
Insistent, bad tempered  
I answered dripping,  
Dripping soap on the red phone  
I should have let it ring  
Why does bad news  
Travel so impersonally by phone  
What? Who's dead?  
I rung the soap from my ears  
Lenin? Which Lenin?  
Lennon!  
Oh Christ No!  
I boiled eggs with Steffi  
Fought back tears  
She shrugged when I told her  
How could she know  
Only twenty  
We drove to the coast  
A fine sun for December  
The radio playing only his records  
As if to negate the unspeakable fact  
Each song punctuating  
Some bubble of my youth

We walked on pebbles in Brighton  
A grey sea  
A chill wind  
A world cheapened by loss  
It was ordinary  
Being alive  
The day John Lennon died  
I thought of Yoko  
I thought of friends  
Who might be crying  
I thought of anthems  
Of years  
When a dream was shared  
I thought of epitaphs  
Of useless death  
Of anger  
I thought of dinner tonight  
baked beans perhaps,  
chips with vinegar  
It was ordinary being alive  
We walked on pebbles  
In a world cheapened by loss  
A chill wind rattling  
Like jewellery in the stalls

### **THE KEEPER OF JOHN LENNON'S GLASSES**

*At Parque John Lennon, Havana*

Out of the shade  
Steps the keeper of John Lennon's glasses  
Slips them over the ex-Beatle's bronze ears  
I shove up next to the Great Man  
Put my arm around his shoulders  
Made too warm by the heat of the sun  
You capture the moment  
When I meet John Lennon's likeness in Havana  
A life-size casting on a bench  
One leg draped casually over the other  
I attempt to swap specs  
But the keeper wags his finger  
I take a moment to bless John  
For his life, in my life  
I place a coin in the keeper's palm  
In recognition of the sacred task  
He has been anointed so to do  
It 's not every day you meet  
The keeper of John Lennon's glasses  
Let me take you down...  
ends

**Roger Hodskins**  
**Lennon J (deceased)**

**From the City after the bombers  
to the City before it's bombers,  
via hamburg.**

*We are re-born.  
Sell all previous works;  
Exhibit, perform  
nothing before today.  
Warehouse and archive  
remainders.*

**From Please Please me Lar!  
to Imagine there's no war  
via thoughts.**

*A new canvas  
All will be prepared  
with white base.  
Start with who we are,  
understand our beliefs  
and imagine.*

**From quartet of likely lads  
to wealth and life of modish fads  
via hallucinogens.**

*Discard mask  
of scouse laddish wit.  
Lose loss, find  
another who will be  
She, the source being  
White art.*

**From fame and young girl's wet  
dream  
to perceived eccentric artists  
meme  
via meditation**

*Haunted before -  
now haunting another  
man. As you purged;  
so must he exorcise  
with fire and iron,  
your past.*

**From your Aunties rebel boy  
To that a crazy woman's toy**

**via the press**

*The second life  
so short destroyed by  
the first in shadow  
play. Mother lost,  
Mother found and death-  
Oh Ma! Oh No!*

**From Icon for a lost generation  
to a perfect life's distillation  
via Martyrdom**

**Insanity Plea**

Precinct house  
Interrogation room three  
Name?  
*J-John Lennon!*  
Don't wiseass me.

We know you know  
who you shot down,  
tell me  
your name and where  
you call home town.

*J-John. No more!*  
By the time I count one  
two  
three I want your  
goddam name you bum.

Silence don't cut it  
your license to drive  
says you're  
Mark Chapman. *No more*  
*John is the one alive*  
*In here my mind.*

*Mark is lost and gone*  
*Lennon*  
*is my personality*  
*despite what I've done.*

Sounds like, punk,  
that you are hazing me  
setting  
out to manufacture  
some kinda insanity plea.

*You don't understand  
For I am he and he is me  
That is why  
I am the iceman  
Book him, he'll never go free.*

**Steve Regan**  
**'Imagine' Revisited**

Look at all the detail in a single insect's wing.  
Consider all the lust for life  
that makes you want to sing,  
and all the loss and compromise  
that being human brings;  
not to mention all your injuries,  
the piercings and the stings.  
And while we're in reflective mood  
let's think of what might be ...

'Imagine there's no countries...'  
No thanks, I'd rather not ...  
'and no religion too...'  
Bad grammar in music;  
it rocks the unformed heart  
and creates a naïve world view.

Imagine there's no religion –  
it means no point to life;  
no force that built the western lands,  
no joy, no culture, no strife;  
no way of telling when things are wrong, no wit, no wisdom, no sacred song; no heart, no hearth, no  
burning coals, no hope, no courage, no battling souls; no running mascara, no panda eyes, no  
satirical sniggers, no cunning lies; no richness to life, for dreamers like John, when all that makes us  
human ... is gone.

Imagine there's no suffering,  
nor even hope of death.  
In Lennon's eternal fantasyland  
we'd all breathe out tinned breath.  
But we'd 'Imagine', we'd 'Imagine',  
we'd 'Imagine' ...  
Well, no, we wouldn't ...  
because imagination would be dead.

**'John, not Paul'**

Your wit is your skill.  
You smile as you kill.  
From unlikely streets and a skiffle start

you staked a claim on everyone's heart  
It was a difficult start, no mum there  
but an aunt who did her best to care –  
for the boy who changed the world.

You brought colour and passion to our world,  
You mop-topped messiah who morphed into  
the long-haired lover who outgrew ... Liverpool,  
You maddening peacenik who,  
in a world battle scarred,  
dared to be avant garde,  
and took to the max your class act as the world's sparkiest nark.

You're the hero who sneered  
all through the years,  
immortal now dead,  
oh the things that you said!  
They took our breath away.

You were working class, kinda;  
a freedom finder. You were one of us.  
You spoke to our dream, before we dreamt it,  
each word spiked before you sent it.  
And we (mostly) lapped it up.

You were best of all,  
very John, never Paul.  
His fans could sleep at night.  
Yours were too excited.

You took on the powers,  
saying power was ours.  
All we'd been told, blown away,  
peace and love 'here to stay' Eh?!  
We didn't know, we never guessed.  
that peace, for all it was expressed,  
for all you were saying, would not be staying  
instead there'd be slaying  
from the military machine  
and the crack of the gun  
killing your dream  
and killing you, as we never imagined.

### **Tim Stone**

#### **Mr Lennon**

He lives on our street  
does Mr Lennon,  
paper-thin, cigarette-ed and  
weak chested.

"Bit of a card, our Mr Lennon"  
the neighbours say  
"can be 'funny'." Caustic, I call it;  
a mean old man

"It's me seventieth" he tells me  
"lived a life I have;  
could've been someone famous  
me guitar and me"  
we look at the scarred  
stringless lump huddled  
in the corner.  
"could have played  
with McCartney and Harrison"  
I stare blankly.  
"You sad pathetic specimen," he mocks me  
"of The Depth Chargers? Liverpool sixties group?"  
I nod, though still none the wiser.  
"Didn't like them though (McCartney and Harrison)  
not tough enough,  
I was a right lad back then".

he licked a rolly, wetly;  
and slurped lager piss from his jam jar,  
lit up and coughed fumes in my face,  
"glad I wasn't no pop star though",  
his lip curled as if yanked by some invisible cord.  
"Pop star – me? Right lad I was'  
would've been dead by forty".  
He laughed toothlessly,  
the sound filling the gaps in his loneliness  
"all that sex, drugs and Rock and Roll".

### **My dad's bigger than your dad**

He was waiting for me  
on the other side of the great portal  
you know, by those giant white gates,  
that bore shades of my earthly piano and clothes;  
in fact I thought it would have suited my house down below;  
a strapping wrought iron entrance,  
for I presumed that's what it was made from.

Then he stopped me dead  
stepping silently in front of me  
gliding as if walking on water  
“Hey man, how’re you doing?” I asked  
He scrutinised my face, but said nothing  
“Like your beard man” I said chattily;  
“My son, you aren’t better than me”  
he replied, less chatty-like  
“And if you ever say you are  
I’ll set my father onto your father.....”  
and then as an after thought  
“and my dad’s bigger than your dad”  
I thought about Alf ‘Freddie’ Lennon,  
who’d disappear at the slightest of sneezes  
up against God Almighty.....;  
Man, was he was correct.

“But I write better songs” I said.  
he examined the holes in his hands  
for a moment and then nodded  
“Fancy a jam then?” he asked  
I thought for a bit, then smiled  
“Only if our Julia plays on the Banjo”, I replied

## **James Dillon**

### **Real Love**

70 years ago amongst the rations and air raid warnings  
A baby was born on a cold October morning  
A boy who would influence a generation and beyond  
A man who would shake the world through the simple form of song  
A trip through Liverpool suburbs ended up on the world’s stage  
There was a point when everyone on the planet knew your name  
Yet this didn’t hamper or hinder it seemed to spur you on  
Your creativity increased & your songs surpassed what had gone before  
There doesn’t exist a man who isn’t contradictory, hypocritical, fallible  
Yet there are plenty who exist without substance, spirit and soul  
You were prepared to be wrong but would never sacrifice your belief  
An anger at the world, yet a yearning for the infinite possibilities of peace  
For a man in a crazy world you retained a sense of sanity  
You took time out to be a full time dad; revolutionary in its own way  
You took a step back and allowed the wheels to revolve.  
Yet there must have been an inner part wanting to remain involved  
There’s an underlying sadness that you were struck down in your prime  
I’m now the same age, that you were when you died.  
Yet you’ve left a legacy that’s transcends all forms of art  
That’s a permanent place within this human’s heart  
I could wax lyrical all afternoon quoting lyrics & everything they convey  
But that’s not the picture of the man I’m trying to portray  
Many songwriters articulate the human emotions that everyone does feel  
But for me your greatest strength was that your love felt real

**Liam Brayd**

**Beats and Chimes**

forty years in forty lines  
how can you tell of a life in rhymes  
in a rhythm of verse  
of beats and chimes  
the story of a man of our times

it started in the town where I was born  
as air raid sirens harangued the dawn  
and doodle bugs doodled all over our land  
a mother took a wailing baby in hand

I'll call him John after sailor Jack  
I'll hold him close then give him back  
I'll love him from afar in the only way I can  
I'll kiss his toes when no one knows and watch the boy turn into man

little did the mother know  
for she could not fore see  
a moment in the making of  
a legend for eternity

cast off the ropes and set out to sea  
what's on the tide there waiting for me  
on the cast iron shore by a singing tree  
we'll meet again in the English rain and pen a rhyme for me

but that survived all said and done  
boy buys guitar and the future's begun  
two or three chords baby that's alright  
love me do  
yes its true  
its been a hard days night

it's a short way up  
but a long way down  
keep your head in tact  
and your feet on the ground

that boy did well  
that boy did good  
that boy lived life  
like only he could

but in the end you left too soon  
and its hard to say sometimes  
but I miss your love  
and I miss your life and I miss your rhythm and rhyme  
the story of a man of our times

