

Jeff Wayne "Horsell Common And The Heat Ray"

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Next morning, a crowd gathered on the Common
Hypnotized by the unscrewing of the cylinder
Two feet of shining screw projected
When, suddenly the lid fell off

Two luminous, disc like eyes
Appeared above the rim
A huge, rounded bulk, larger than a bear
Rose up slowly, glistening like wet leather

It's lip less mouth quivered
And snake like tentacles writhed
As the clumsy body heaved and pulsated

A few young men crept closer to the pit
A tall funnel rose, then an invisible ray
Of heat leapt from man to man
And there was a bright glare
As each was instantly turned to to fire

Every tree and bush
Became a mass of flames
At the touch of this savage
Unearthly Heat Ray

People clawed their way
Off the Common and I ran too
I felt I was being toyed with that
When I was on the very verge of safety
This mysterious death would leap after me
And strike me down

At last I reached Maybury Hill
And in the dim coolness of my home
I wrote an account for my newspaper
Before I sank into a restless, haunted sleep

I awoke to alien sounds
Of hammering from the pit
And hurried to the railway station
To buy the paper

Around me, the daily routine
Of life working, eating, sleeping
Was continuing serenely
As it had for countless years

On Horsell Common, the Martians
Continued hammering and stirring
Sleepless, indefatigable at work
Upon the machines they were making

Now and again a light, like the beam
Of a warship's searchlight
Swept the Common
And the Heat Ray was ready to follow

In the afternoon, a company of soldiers
Came through and deployed along the edge
Of the Common, to form a cordon
That evening, there was a violent crash

And I realized with horror
That my home was now within range
Of the Martian's Heat Ray

At down, a falling star
With a trail of green mist landed
With a flash like summer lightning
This was the second cylinder

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