

Madness

"The Liberty of Norton Folgate"

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This is the story of the Liberty of Norton Folgate

Old Jack Norris, 'The Musical Shrimp'
And the cadging ramble
A little bit of this
Would you like a bit of that?
But in weather like this
You should wear a coat, a nice warm hat
A needle and thread
The hand stitches of time
Battling Lavinski versus Jackie Burke
Bobbing and weaving an invisible line
So step for step and both light on our feet
We'll travel many a long, dim, silent street
Would you like a bit of this
Or a little bit of that missus
A little bit of what you like does you no harm
You know that

The perpetual steady echo of the passing beat
A continual dark river of people
In their transience and in its permanence

But when the streetlamp fills the gutter with gold
So many priceless items bought and sold

So step for step and both light on our feet
We'll travel many a long, dim, silent street - together

Once round Arnold Circus
Up through Petticoat Lane
Past The Well of Shadows
And once back round again
Arm in arm with an abstracted air, to where
The people stared at the upstairs windows
Because we are living like kings
And these days will last forever
Cos sailors from Africa, China and the Archipelago of
Malay
Jump ship ragged and penniless into Shadwell's Tiger
Bay

The Welsh and Irish Wagtails - mothers of midnight
The music hall carousal is spilling out into bonfire light
Sending half crazed shadows, giants
Dancing up the brick wall
Of Mr. Truman's beer factory
Waving bottles ten feet tall
Whether one calls it Spitalfields, Whitechapel,
Tower Hamlets or Bangle Town
We're all dancing in the moonlight
We're all on borrowed ground
Oh I'm just walking down to
I'm just floating down through
Won't you come with me?
To the Liberty of Norton Folgate

But wait, what's that
Dan Leno and a Lime house Gollum

Purposefully walking nowhere
Oh I'm happy just floating about (have a banana)
On a Sunday afternoon
The stall holders all call and shout (to no-one in
particular)
Avoiding people you know
You're just basking in your own company
The Technicolor worlds going by
But you're the lead in your own movie
Cos in the Liberty of Norton Folgate
Walking wild and free
In your second hand coat
Happy just to float
In this little taste of liberty
A part of everything you see
There coming left or right
Trying to flog you stuff you don't need or want
And a smiling chap takes your hand and drags you
In his uncles restaurant (here, here, here, here)
There's a Chinese man trying hard to flog you moody
DVDs
You know you've seen the film, its black and white, it's
got no sound
And a man's head pops up and down right across you
wide screen TV
Only a fiver (how much?)
Alright two for eight quid
(‘Ere y’ar, look look, I’m giving it away)
Cos in the Liberty of Norton Folgate
Walking wild and free
In your second hand coat
Happy just to float
In this little piece of liberty

You're a part of everything you see

Cos it's steady old fellows, pickpockets,
dandies, extortioners and night wanderers
The feeble, the ghastly upon whom death had placed a
very sure hand
Some in shreds and patches,
reeling inarticulate full of noisy and inordinate vivacity
Which jars discordantly upon the ear and
give an aching sensation to both pair of eyeballs
(noisy and inordinate vivacity)

In the beginning I'd the fear of the immigrant
In the beginning was the fear of the immigrant
He's made his way down to the dark riverside

In the beginning was the fear of the immigrant
In the beginning was the fear of the immigrant
He made his home there by the dark riverside

He made his home there down by the riverside
They made their homes there down by the riverside
The city sprang from the dark river Thames

They made their home there down by the riverside
They made their homes there down by the riverside
The city sprang up from the dark mud of the Thames
I say it again

Cos in the Liberty of Norton Folgate
Walking wild and free
And in your second hand coat
Happy just to float
In this little taste of liberty
Cos you're a part of everything you see
Yes you're a part of everything you see

With a little bit of this
And a little bit of that
A little bit of what you like does you no harm
You know that

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