

**Love the Life You Live...Live The Life You Love**  
**by Carol Leeming © 2014**

*'Beauty is not in the face, beauty is a light in the heart.'* Anonymous

**Dramatic Monologue**

**Character: Martin, a 24 year-old gay, dual heritage Leicester man who works as window dresser.**

*It's 1980's Leicester. Martin is retelling an experience he had on a celebratory night out in St Georges area and Church Cemetery grounds in Leicester.*

Martin:

1.

I guess this worra lost  
then found story,  
one yud find tucked away  
somewhere you least expect it

2.

1984, it wer warm forra May night  
I left haunted fish tank tele home  
It wer depressin gale force winds  
Crap music, loads of boring soaps  
Militant miners strike wi bloody tories  
I wer at Helsinki Bar on the lash  
Neckin drinks an poppin pills-  
Wi mi mates, a right queer lot!  
We wer at tha Alternative Miss  
Universe a bona big drag fest  
I dint enter I'da won wunt ta  
I would have liked to any road  
Well wunt be fair: I am gorgeous eh?

3.

I wer togged up as bizarre pirate  
In mi flouncy shirt a black leather  
Trousered romantic, wi loads a slap  
I wer celebratin myself, big time!  
Dancing an snappin to Eurythmics,  
I'd gorra new house all paid up  
Wot mi real dad had lef it mi  
Worra shock, it wer in Highfields  
A neat two up two down terrace  
Me, Ghetto Queen in the hood  
Yeah, I'd give as good as I get

4.

Yuh see I wer adopted baby  
Dint know me real dad eh  
Or mi real Mam either,  
Grew up in St Barnados home  
Miles way, up Glenfrith way  
Grown up, first time I had jerk  
Chicken to eat at carnival I cried  
It wer tha bleedin hot wi pepper!  
Burra I got to love it, I learnt  
How to wine up mi waistline  
Like a snake wi reggae soca  
Music, I wer gerrin mi culture eh?

5.

Blacks wer on tele nor in Glenfrith  
I never saw any black people  
Well, the odd one eh? In town,  
I wer slagged off in the home  
Bullied always, cos I wer black  
That's when I started messin  
Wi mi food nor eatin for days  
Staff wud send mi to lock up,  
I'd bi at window for hours roarin

6.

I felt odd one out to all them  
Not just cos a that though  
I wer little runt then anyway  
Thed mek fun a mi afro hair  
I fought I wanted to bi white  
I'd dress up in gels clothes  
Purra a tee shirt on mi head  
Flick it like it wor straight hair

7.

Oh, I blamed mi made up dad  
For giving mi away as baby  
I thought my mum wer like a  
film star, she had to leave mi  
that she had *really* loved mi  
But mi Dad's lawyer said mi  
Real Mam didn't care either  
The'd both forgot about mi

8.

Dad: Nathaniel Jacob Lawyer English Jewish  
Mam: Lorna Mckinney Nurse Jamaican Christian  
Strangers names on paper wer everythin  
Cos of their 60's affair I am here,

Lawyer said neither of 'em wanted contact  
Dad felt guilty so before he died  
He left me tha house on condition  
I never ever contact any of his family  
I said to the Lawyer well why would I?

9.

He showed mi photo of tha two of em  
Together they looked really happy  
It weren't a bloody fairy tale worrit?  
I'd made up stories about them  
Mi whole life, tha truths gutted mi  
They wer both bona clever people  
I suppose I got somat from 'em both eh?  
How I look people get mi all wrong  
I might dress dummies inna shops  
Now, bur I knew I wer no dummy  
I went college I wer good at arts

10.

I 've lost me track now bum!  
Oo aah, yeah in Helsinki Bar  
Cocktails Long Island Iced Teas  
I'm wer at no loss for male company  
Bees round honey wi mi love!  
Picking up fellas is what I do best  
Always they want me to be top  
I 'd love to bi bottom forra change  
Makes me wonder worr its like  
To have it off wi a woman, burra fink  
I'd bi dropped like hot cakes by mi friends  
I would be wiunt ah! Billy no mates no thanks!

11.

Anyway I cruised the bar wi a big fella  
Staggerin we went out for a quickie  
Up by tha St Geroges' church ground  
He said I looked big, a nice breed  
He dint like stuck up Snow queens  
Name wot gays call black queens  
Who like go out wi white gay men  
Cheeky fucker! I said I aint no  
Fucking sad snow queen mi oh no!  
I 'am an equal opportunities lova !  
Specially, if you can flash tha cash  
Cos I have got expensive tastes.

12.

Dinge Queens, white gay men  
Wi jungle fever for black gay men

Oh they cant ger enuf a mi!  
I do look good all 6'3' shaped up  
They all have tha same fantasies  
I play hot Nubian Prince to their  
Shy Princess when wer havin it off  
Secretly, I wish I wer bloody princess  
Inna way I am, cos I make a big fuss  
When they lavish money an gifts on mi  
Cos I know they like to be seen wi mi  
I am so good-looking, I know it  
Mi girlfriend well Sheniah mi fag hag  
Says finding Mr Right to settle down  
To accept mi for all mi kinks  
Like mi cross dressing or bein stage performer  
Aint bloody easy, so for now its all about  
All the Mr Wrongs... so many men  
So little time eh?

13.

Where worra m'duck, ooh aah yes !  
Mi an this bloke finished - havin it yuh know  
I came out from the bushes  
I bumped straight into this other bloke  
I reckon he wer watching me ooyah!  
You know at it, wi the other bloke  
Theres some tha gerr off watchin others  
Yuh know, at it, or maybe join in too  
Cranin their necks like nosy birds  
He were coughin up like car exhaust

14.

I said Oi! Watch it spreadin yer germs  
He said, fair Prince I meant not to offend  
Only to befriend, in tha manner of tha Greeks  
Worra pouncey way a speaking he had  
I said have sniff of poppers love, stop  
You hacking like a cat wi a fluff ball  
He said he'd be alright soon enuf  
Fit as a fiddle, as he passed it back  
Nor having a sniff, so I did big sniff  
of it, he looked Italian bur he weren't

15.

Suddenly mi guts twisted mi up  
Knotted tighter than gnats tweeter  
I remembered I aint eaten propley  
Well for several days, as is my way  
Just loads of booze fags an pills  
He said yuh look green around tha gills  
Mi spasms rocked mi an he offered

Me a hipflask of rum I drank greedily  
Thinkin he talks proper ol 'school  
He looked proper vintage as well all  
Greeney yellow tweeds, brogue shoes  
Big fat moustache wi bushy side burns

16.

Hoverin over me like he wer gon  
kiss me or somat he said all lechy  
I see a tot of firewater  
Has stiffened you up ol boy!  
I just looked at him, as if to say  
No chance mate, yur not mi fancy  
He blushed faintly an turned away  
He looked about 30 ish butch  
Broad shouldered an upright  
Smiling wi brown eyes an pink  
Full lips peepin from his moustache  
Wi a severe short back an sides  
Dark brown hair slightly wavy on top  
He looked at mi again an we both smiled

17

Then two townie gels bumbled along  
All white stilettos backcombed up do's  
Neckin a bottle a vodka an faggin it  
Singin silly song from film Grease  
Yur tha one that I want oh oo oo ooo  
Their tongues an heels all clackin  
One goes forra quick slash in bushes  
When she comes back she sees mi  
Gigglin, her an her mate eye mi right up  
Its as if this other bloke wern't even there  
He makes like hes shooin 'em away  
As they pass by me, I give em a wink

18

Ooyah date! this bloke so loses it  
Shoutin Fiibertigibbits, harridans whores  
Fish dressed up, in cheap bits of skirt!  
Heartless harlots, tarty slutty slags  
Top of his voice, wi his eyes all bulgin  
Bits of spit at tha corners of his gob  
Gels walk on like they never heard him  
I said wot? them girls are works of fine art  
He said, all women were vile harpies  
Tha ruin of men drainin their essence  
Look at Samson Delilah Caesar Cleopatra  
He stood there lookin around then said

By the way, Sidney George Bradshaw is my name  
I have not had the pleasure ...  
His eyes twinkled as he put his hand out  
Pleasure, I said, not yet you've not cheeky bugger  
Well! talk about in like Flynn !  
Martin's my names unless I 'am dragged up  
Then I am Maz the Maneater m'duck eh?

19.

Look Sidney mate I wann go an rave  
I fancy goin up Spectrum theres a  
Warehouse party, its on Midland St  
All mi mates wud a' bin there wi  
Other mates outta Spots Gay Club  
nr Palais to miss the gay bashers  
I may end up at Highfields Blues Shebeen  
No one troubles mi cos all sorts there  
Sidney shot me a look as if to say  
Don't go, he said can we just sit?  
Alright I said for a bit, an then  
I haf to go, he looked well relieved  
I wer two sheets to the wind  
Off my face I wer very blotto  
So I sat down on the church steps  
I lit a fag an I said hows trix  
He looked completely baffled  
So I said hows yur life then

20

He started coughin again  
When hed calmed down  
He said he wer a bit bored  
Lookin for some excitement  
Said he liked the cut of my gib  
He said he wish he wer me free  
An could we be friends?  
I asked him wer he wi anyone  
Meanin someone out for the night  
An his eyes just glazed over  
He sighed heavy like someone had died  
When he looked at me his eyes wer  
All moist an his face were cracked up

21

He told me he wer lonely chap  
Hed lost a very special friendship  
Back in the day wi some bloke  
Jake, he knew from his college days  
Said they were both joined at the hip  
All through college they wer best mates

They both studied mechanical engineering  
Sidney wer always top of the class  
Jake wer always near the bottom  
They spent all their spare time together  
Course, Jake invited him home  
For his family country weekends  
An to his gentlemen's club an balls  
He recognised Sidney wer decent sort

22

I said what worreh he, this Jake bloke?  
Sounds like he werra proper toff  
He said he wor from Liverpool  
Like him Sidney, I wer titterin  
So I said ooyah, two posh scousers!  
Sidney looked really miffed  
Wer obvious he wer a bit of a snob eh?  
I told him Sidney, he weren't bad lookin  
To change tha mood, well a bit of flirtin  
Diunt hurt anyone does it eh ?  
He seemed to relax, well he smiled  
I gorra flash 'a red gold glintin  
Out his gob, when he twirled  
Over an over tha ends of his moustache

23

I could tell straight off he liked me  
I stared back into his peerin eyes  
I then I got lost totally, it wer  
As if I'd entered deep space  
It wer the strangest feeling of  
being sucked in by strong current  
He was sitting quite close now  
I didn't notice before, but he had a  
wooden left leg as he inched closer  
It wer sticking out like ironing board  
He said it worra a war injury gor it abroad  
Eyes lookin deep said it wer destiny

24

Sidney said I wer a lucky fellow popular  
I said wot celebratin gerring a new house  
Coun't make up for all those years in  
In a childrens home being picked on daily  
He said he meant, I had carnal knowledge  
He wer a just man's man, well-travelled  
Sidney kept turning his head  
Lookin round for somat weird like  
He wor expectin someone to turn up  
At any time, bur he wiunt be pleased

I asked him if he wer cottagin round here  
He looked at mi completely blank as paper

25

He dint know wor I meant so  
I told im, toilet trader, man-shagger  
He pur his fingers up to his lips  
For me to be quiet, ther wer  
A voice wailin wi some louder  
Sharper voices joinin, then it stopped  
Sidney starts breathin heavy  
The air frilling up his lips  
He grabs mi hand ever so tight  
Tha voices had made mi shiver a bit  
Sidney whispered real camaraderie  
Were the finest things in man's life  
Let us talk just now no more of this  
German condition your speaking of  
He wer tryin to smile bur he looked frit

26

I said wot you on about, wot  
German' condition  
Are you gay a bender?  
Nancy boy wuffter?  
raging queer, queen?  
Puffter or not mate?  
Keep your voice down he says they'll hear  
Who I said are they...?  
He got even more agitated  
I say ol' boy are you suggestin  
That I am a ...?  
Say it! I shouted... yes a  
He wer stammering now  
Takin a white hanky out  
Mopping his brow then he  
Gets up an turns his back  
Bit quieter I say  
are you omo, an homosexual?

27

His shoulders went all rounded  
wer jiggin up an down bent over  
He wer roarin like a kid for its Mam  
Pitiful like - diunt roar I said come an  
Sit down wi mi he turns briefly then away  
Hi eyes looked like shiny brown marbles  
An he moved all awkward  
Like his body were all new  
He sits down an cant look mi

In the eye, so I tell him its ok  
I understand he can't say...  
It wer alright nor everyone  
Can be out an proud like me  
I said I knew from wen I wer a kid  
Older lad slipped in mi bed  
At tha Home one night an said lets  
Pretend we're husband an wife  
He made me play the wife cos  
I played wi tha gels an' wore lipstick  
I wer bent as a nine bob note mi

28

Sidney wer as quiet as death  
Barely hearin me it seemed  
Just gruntin now an then  
He weren't half bloody mardy  
After a while he piped up an said  
He'd took the Kings shilling  
Wot wer that I said? he said it meant  
When you signed up for the  
Army- him an his beloved Jake -  
It was the right thing to do  
He fought they both were marked  
For a special purpose nor ordinary fellows

29

In action he an Jake both wer injured  
Both ferried out to Hospital General  
For propa treatment, looked like they  
Did everything together even bein  
Blasted by a Jack Johnson bomb  
Jack Johnson bomb I said, wot wer tha?  
He starting roarin again, only more  
Softly this time he said, they'd only ever embraced  
It wer was the closest ... as they were both officers  
Gentlemen, men of honour, the'd made great sacrifice  
I dint know whether to go or not  
I asked him what happened next  
He said he had to leave hospital an' Jake  
Prematurely, he roared even louder then  
I held on to him he wer chokin he said  
Later on Jake married, then died from Spanish Flu  
Wore ever that wor?  
He said he cuddin't ger over it, not it seeing his Jake again

30

Sidney sat up an looked at the stars  
Like they were gonna tell him somethin  
He wipes his face slaps his wooden leg

Turns then shakin his head to mi  
Puts his hand, tender on mine  
Like it wer hot, an I'd burn him  
I did feel sorry for him he wer so sad  
I took his hand an told im  
put yor' head on mi shoulder  
He buried his face in mi chest  
He smelt a metal like an old poker  
I felt me heart judder then go floaty  
We just sat there like that for  
What seemed ages, he felt lighter  
Than he looked, I was trying to stop mi  
Eyes closin, I wer still well pissed up  
Some other drugs I took earlier  
Started kickin in, mi face wer red hot

31

He said he after losin his leg,  
Later, he wer kicked out of hospital  
He ended up in a doss house place  
on Swain St, wi load of scruffy people  
a lorra of em wer widows or injured  
blokes, factory workers so beneath  
him, he had norra bean to his name  
He were skint an wor roughin it, in  
civvy street, he ended up basket case  
he'd been a warrior now alone he wer  
wishin his days away looking outta a window  
of tha Guild for the Crippled on Colton Street

32

I asked him forra another tot of rum  
I finished it, an its warmth hit mi empty  
Stomach hard, like a hammer smash  
I am seeing flashes in front of mi eyes  
Mi body wer so floppy I needed proppin up  
Then in a flash it wer right heavy as lead  
Slurring mi words I said Jake meant  
A lot to you then, he said he wer his life  
He wer everything noble wonderful  
Now he had nothing and no one  
Only he wer stuck round here with  
nothin more than raga muffins  
Guild for tha crippled had a motto  
'Happy with your lot' he shook his head  
He looks at me asks mi, if I am happy wi my lot?

33

No I said, no I am soddin not!  
Well, who is these ruddy days?

I tried to stay awake so I said  
Again, so Jake meant a lot to you  
He was the ruler of your all  
Whar about yur family?  
Sidney's Mam wer Irish dragon lady  
A dour disciplinarian always  
Ready to make his home teacher  
Wer handy with tha strap  
She owned several  
Boardin houses for Seamen  
When there was trouble at home  
He just never ever went back  
I said yer dad wor about him  
No report to make he said, nothin,  
just shrugged an' patted his hair  
I started thinking about gerrin off  
He grabs both of mi hands  
Don't go he says  
company of a fellow like yours is good  
for mi ol chap indeed - we're friends

34

I couldn't stop thinkin about gerrin off  
He wer bringin me down off mi buzz  
I gor up to ger off he grabs mi hand  
You're the right sort of chap for me  
He says, whisperin movin close  
He's seen people here, lower orders  
He's seen 'em hagged women wi  
hideous offspring, tykes wi dirty faces  
black teeth, ragged smelly an filthy  
He hears em' singin sometimes  
Awful high pitched piercing shrieking  
Or worse horrid groaning an moanin  
Who are they I say? he looks around  
He shakes his head, coughin says  
They're plebs tha worst sort, I said people  
Are just people, he said he'd never pass time  
Wi people he had nothing in common with

35

Such riff raff an educated man like himself  
It wer intolerable for destiny to place him wi  
An undeserving, scrounging rabble,  
Great unwashed holding their hands out?  
So many feebleminded parasites of society  
Wud be better to have got rid tha worthless women  
Tha errant urchins, progeny of drunken feckless men  
Tha wer a ugly blight upon decent society  
He wer bullding up a right head of steam

Taikin as if he wer making political speech  
I lit another fag up shrugged mi shoulders  
He says me an him wer like shining gods  
Fashioned by divine hands to reign supreme  
In beauty strength manhood to spurn womankind  
Ye Gad! unclean harlots, he saw besmirch  
An 'stain heroic Tommies, in the field led astray  
So many brainless uncouth strumpets  
wud not know a butter knife from fish knife  
Understand Britain's commerce, of Caribbean sugar  
Shangai Silk, Lapsang Tea, Johannesburgs'  
Diamonds, an' Gold, fruits of Empire by right  
Ol' blighty rules the waves, he stamps an salutes!

36

What's a Tommy? I said, he says brave warriors ol' boy  
Gallant British soldiers young lions, loyal  
To our illustrious King an country  
Bit strong mate, War, I said laughin  
Blokes jollies, rapin stealin killin folks,  
All people of colour in the world  
We end up payin for it, why what for?  
Ol' boy he carried on, changin tack,  
You an I have enjoyed finer things in life  
We've wined dined at the best places  
Fashioned in gifted finery, fit for a prince  
He then put his arms round mi an squeezed  
He said you are an Adonis Apollo Dionysus  
Unleashed upon the world how  
I envy you, let me tarry with a bit longer?  
I am now starting to think this guy might be  
A mentalist, harmless one but one all the same  
On he goes he says, I have shared bitter afflictions  
Of mi heart, wrought by cruel jealous fate-  
By goodness, is just like a scorned woman  
Sets out to spoil always tha joy, happiness  
Noble love between two men as in ancient times  
We men who are the gods of humankind's' destiny  
With tha power of life an death in our hands  
To rule over tha lesser, thus we're set upon glory

37

Sidney looks at his hands, they 're shaking  
In quiverin voice he says, he adored Jake  
How he breathed for tha sight of him  
Tha intoxicating smell, this his one true love  
He was his commander an his close friend  
He wer filled always with a deep longin  
They were as two great pillars divided  
By a chasm, a dangerous sea, neither of 'em

Could ever cross, they lived an almost died  
Together, they knew they were one  
But their love had never lived  
It knew nothin of the ecstasy  
The mesh, tha entwining of manly flesh  
Their love neither lived, nor could it never die  
It wer eternal melancholy, like a dark fire  
It could never be quenched...

38

He said he knew Jake loved him  
Sidney saw to all Jake's needs  
Excited to both be in the army  
Every night Sidney knew like him  
Jake would lie awake restless  
Both of them, in their own bunk  
Not wanting to sleep cos of a slight touch  
That would send a stabbin sharp thrill  
Burnin into Sidney's heart curling down  
Into his spine, swirling in the searing heat  
Of his aching loins, making his mouth  
An lips dry to the touch of his tongue

39

Sidney said he wer wounded warrior, cravin  
To know what passed between free grown men  
True Kings, who shaped their destiny as I did  
To gather their fleshly rose buds, where they may  
Drinking deeply of the manly cup of love  
Sidney, had been pierced in the chest  
By cupids unerring arrow, only knew loves bitter loss  
Sidney said, he choose me to transport him to  
Oblige him this very night, be my fellow passenger  
To share tha experience of mi fleshly  
Sports with men, so he may sample some small part of  
The magnificence of my virility  
As even now he sensed mi tumescent glow  
Due to his wholly Inflammatory words?  
No doubt I would I please allow him...

40

I just sat there with my mouth open  
I didn't know what to say. I felt a bit horny  
He was waiting for me to say somat  
I said the first thing that came into my head  
Want some trade eh? are you a top or a bottom?  
Butch or femme love hmm?  
Kinky, into threesomes or wot?  
He wer confused, I carried on  
You dominant, or passive?

He looks like I've scratched him  
Starts coughin uncontrollably an  
Drops back down onto the steps  
He wer quiet an lookin proper fed up

41

Sidney is definitely off wi tha fairies  
As he's me told all his stuff, I tell him  
Look, I reckon most of blokes  
Just cant help fallin in love wi me  
Me, I mean once they had a taste  
He looks up an he smiles again  
I say they love my skin – (stroking my own hand)  
Love up mi my café au lait flesh  
I imagine an wish it wer darker  
More chocalata like Nina Simone's  
Sidney's face clouds over  
Like a stormy Monday, he says By Jove never!

42

Grim-faced Sidney starts to sing:  
Inney Miney Mo  
Catch a nigger by its Toes  
If it squeals let it go  
Inney Miney Miney Mo  
Fuck off I said, that's racist  
Who do to think you are?  
He shhss me looking smug  
I read you I said, waggin my finger  
You look a bit flamin tinted yourself  
He says, I am ridiculous, he's not at all  
I know he is, so I say well you are!  
Yuh aint no white man, fink yuh can pass nah!!

43

Sidney says I'am not a wog ol' man  
Eyes at mi an says, what tha devil are you?  
Man or Woman? Or don't you know?  
Namby Pamby, carnival grotesquerie  
Your bizarre masque, parading yushelf  
Cissy bloody jiggaboo junglebunny  
Mind you, like all the Kings men  
Could be persuaded to like brown meat  
Darker the berry the sweeter the juice  
Bit of primitive exotic so to speak ol boy!  
Dressed up like a pirates falllalish  
You should grow a pair of goolies  
My man, you're not meant to be a frou frou  
Are you? More a rampant lothario  
Blessed by tha gods, an amorous swordsman

Ichabod! Not a jossler wasted on wally women

44

I wer fuming mi head off now  
I knew exactly what he meant  
He were up for being a voyeur  
I should be more straight-acting  
Hettie hetro, an more blokish eh?  
The two faced racist sexist git!  
So I slapped his face - hard!  
It wer like slappin a sponge  
I shouted, at least I know what I am  
Black an I'm well proud of it  
We all came out of women's  
Fannies, so ger over yuhself twat!  
Tha one half of tha human race  
Wud say tha bloody better half too  
State tha world that's run by men  
Am not lost and found like you  
Fucking bounty coconut bar!  
Black on tha outside white inside  
Have a good look at yourself in  
Tha mirror, check yuhself fool  
If you aint white, you're all black!

45

I've got mi shoes off - I can be fierce  
He puts his fists up then drops 'em  
Balderdash! Poppy cock! he says  
He's just swarthy cos I he's lived  
Quite an outdoor country life  
Time spent abroad ol' chap  
He's says hes's gorra roman nose  
His lips are not all thick  
He can run a comb right through his hair  
Not at all like a coons ol' man  
I say just listen to yuhself  
Yes, your lips are thick, they are  
Blackman's, your lips are much  
Much more thicker than mine, an  
They're much more pinki too  
You're just lyin to yuhself

46

Sidney, says I am the one lying to myself  
So I say, did you use bleachin cream  
Scrub yourself whiter in tha bath  
Rubbin lemon juice a la Josephine Baker?  
I am singing, emancipate yuhself  
From mental slavery- Bob Marley says

I am shouting now like fish wife, wi mi  
shoes pokin at him an movin closer  
He now starts mumblin, as I grab  
For him, I want to see his back  
We both start fightin grapplin  
It felt so wrong, like you know  
All that one drop slavery rubbish!  
I learnt in Sheniah's Black History books  
But just had to know to see his lower back  
Tek im down a peg or two  
I reckon he knows what I'am up to  
I know its somewhere you can see  
on light skin, a patch at the bottom of the spine

47

This patch its funny bruise, shows yur  
Mixed race yuh see, its called tha  
Mongolian blue spot, discovered ages ago  
People diun't talk about, it they just know  
It's a pool of melanine pigment cells  
It goes sometimes by the time yur grown  
But sometimes it diun't nor always  
Anyway Sidney fights me viciously  
He wer a cornered dog I'm flying off  
Him like I'm on a bouncy castle  
He loses his balance falls on the floor  
I grab his shirt up fast for drunken tranny

48

Sidney's... gorra blue gray bruise, it spreads  
Like a dark continent across his lower back  
I stand back, victorious an shout see  
Pointing, yuh are a Black brother!  
I start singing to be Young Gifted an' Black  
I'm funky dancing cool, mi James Brown  
I hold out my hand to do a soul shake  
He slaps my hand away an snorts  
Fixin his clothes, wipin his head wi hanky

49

Sidney eyes are red as he pulls down his shirt  
He says, a matron told the Army Authorities  
To send for his birth papers back home  
From Liverpool, they said he had to leave  
The Hospital because he wasn't white  
He wer put in filthy dosshouse on Swain St  
Jake wiun't be his friend any more  
Jake wiunt even say goodbye or speak  
They said he was Black, he asked me  
Black, what does that mean?

He had no idea, he really he dint care to know  
As he could not be, an he had never been  
Black in his entire rotten ill-fated life

50

I just stood an looked at him  
Dazed, he wer bundled like crushed paper  
Wi his left leg stickin out on tha steps  
I felt sorry for him, angry all at tha same time  
I said to him it's never too late to find out  
To begin to learn about all of himself  
Be aware of all which seems strange  
To yer, what's inside part of you, all the same  
I only could only start, when 'I came to tha city  
To meet others, like miself to understand  
An' be understood, by those tha are mixed too  
Like being an onion, peelin off layers, bur also  
Piling on as much propa cultural knowledge  
To wrap yourself up in, like a blanket  
All you can get you hands on, wot's been denied to  
You in yur past, an mix it all in yuhself to know  
You can be loud an proud, just fab as you are  
Diun't matter what others say or fink eh?  
I wer talkin to him, but I wer talkin to myself  
He started coughin up again, only this time  
It wer blood in his hanky, he looked down 'n' out

51

I fought I really should go ravin now  
I still felt drugged an drunk, flyin really  
Burra felt I couldn't' just leave him  
I mean I were fakin just like him  
Bur in a very different way eh  
I suppose we all do in a way  
Purr on a different face to the world  
Pretend wi somat what wer not eh?  
Maybe cos be scared or somat  
Cos is if we got to bi what wi really are  
Once wi find out wot the hell thar is  
It's like as if somat bad wud happen  
It seems a bit daft but it aint eh?

52

He wer scarily quiet now so  
I said, I wer gonna go fer a walk  
I started goin off towards Morledge St  
I fought I'd go to the warehouse party  
Were all worked up inside wi tha drama  
Cud hear him limpin behind me  
I stopped an lit another fag

I started walkin round tha corner  
I felt bit faint,so bent over an I rested  
Nr the corner of Midland St  
I wer covered by a shadow  
It wer Sidney standin over me

53

He tells in me voice dead flat  
Cold, to stay were I am or else  
An do all wha he says  
I can see he's clenching his fists  
Meanwhile he's saying mumblin  
All he wanted to do, is feel as I do  
This sounds very weird - bit freaky  
I then feel this heavy pressure  
On the top of my head  
Like someone sitting on it  
An mi throat bein pressed  
Mi eyes see little lights an then  
Everythin goes fuzzy, all totally black

54

It smells like a butcher's shop  
Everywhere the smell of blood  
Worra an overpowering stench  
Rotten, worse than a cowshed  
It's so very thick an feels like  
I've got cotton wool in my throat  
I am chokin, an I can  
Just barely hear a horrible  
Gurgling, sucking sound  
Mi heart's tearin itself, till  
I am strugglin to get breath in me

55

I 'am in darkness spinning round  
An mi insides bein sucked outta mi  
Sidney, I sense him more than hear  
Speakin in a spittled whispery  
Voice now, saying to mi don't be afraid  
It will all soon be over, what brain cells  
I've got left, are darting about  
Like lottery balls, all the time I feel  
I am getting weaker, an weaker  
Like an old tele when the tube goes

56

In tha distance I hear Sidney chunterin  
The blood of men spillin on the earth  
Hellish sound of tha bosh's bombs

Droppin down tha foul smoke chokin  
Piercing cries an shrieks of grown men  
Groaning pains of tha dyin wounded  
Run! Lets run Jake! Sidney shoutin run!  
Oh God, Jack Johnson up ahead drops  
Blown to smithereens we're alive still just  
Sidney says his left leg ripped off  
Jake's blinded wi his right arm hangin  
German bosh, had fell on Jake, Sidney crawled up  
Pur this hands on tha Hun's throat an squeezed  
Die die die! he's screamin, his hands on mi throat  
Squeezin even tighter, mi arms flap wildly  
Like shirts sleeves, blowin on clothesline

57

I am in whirlin darkness like water  
I wer falling away wher to dunno  
Not really breathin like caught fish  
Sidney's voice gerrin fainter an fainter  
Till I stopped, an just floated in silence  
I see myself or wor it copy of myself  
In a hospital laid out all cold an green  
Black Female Doctor an White Male Nurse  
Both of em standing tha side a mi  
I realize its mi real parents sayin  
Found him on Southampton Street  
He's rather thin, very undernourished  
The cause of death, it's hard to say  
Alcohol poisonin, drugs maybe, anyway  
Organs failure, pity so young, a looker  
They both argue about why I'am in drag  
Dad says it's a release from conformity  
Mam says it's just deviant behavior

58

Both 'em are interrupted by Sidney rantin  
Saying, though I want a steady male partner  
I deliberately practice loose morals  
He laughs, no woman wud have mi either  
Cos wed only squabble over tha mirror  
Sidney laughs, puts both his hands on mi throat  
Better off dead...he whispers  
I am shoutin, I don't want to die I am not dead!  
I am screamin, but there's no sound  
Then I hear a loud woman say  
Subaltern Sidney George Bradshaw stop!  
You stop stop an stand back  
Leave him, I order you to release him  
Let him go now while there is still time  
The war is over....

59

Ther wer a loud whooshing  
I felt like I was travelling shootin  
Thru a dark tunnel upwards  
My lungs fill up I hear myself  
Make a loud sigh, aaaaah!  
Like when you've supped hot brew  
An you really friggin needed it  
I felt cold an stiff as a board  
Mi head wer stuck inna black fog  
I could mek out a pale grey light  
Bleedin in, at the edges of mi eyes  
I knew I wer back on solid ground  
Cos thi hardness, mi arse felt frozen  
Mi eyes felt like fresh piss holes

60

I open my eyes an Sidney's slumped  
In the arms of a tall black woman  
Her hair each side wer chiny bumps  
A face smooth wi high cheek bones  
Colour of bisto, wi large black eyes  
Sloping framed in long feathery lashes  
When she spoke, her peachy lips  
Pursed, an pulled slightly down at  
tha corners, her voice wer bass  
String pulled, warm an humming  
She stood up, an wer shaped like  
A thick coke bottle but much wider  
Wi long black dress wi little leather boots  
A tambourine wi purple green ribbons  
Gripped in her black jewelled hand

61

She looks at an me asks if I am ok  
Says her name is Hattie, I nod  
I said, oh he only tried to kill mi  
Sidney rolls over groanin, lookin  
At tha ground, Hattie says to mi  
Sort of risky, you picking up  
Up strange men, off your head  
Mockin mi, wi her even teeth  
An long pink tongue lolling  
Around at the bottom of her gob  
Smilin she says, Sidney nearly had his way?

62

Hattie wer like cat. I wer like mouse  
She purred, poor chap he can't help himself  
He wer stuck in 1918 to be exact

He had a flashback, shell shock  
Bit like you really, he lost control  
You like to take risks don't you?  
Been overdoing things darling?  
Yur dead lucky, she smiles again  
Sort of sexy, bit flirty, she's strokin  
Sidney's head, an looking at me  
None of this is making any sense  
Worn, mi body feels like I've gone  
Ten blisterin rounds wi Tim Wetherspoon  
As I try to gerr up to leave

63

Loads of strange voices strike up eerie  
This time Sidney covers his ears up  
Hattie bangs shakes tha tambourine  
It all stops, she then turns her head  
I look down Morledge St an watch  
A band of people, Women Kids an Men  
Move towards us, I want to run  
They're all walkin behind a banner  
Held up, it says Boot & Shoes Union  
The crowd are all dressed up smart  
Wool caps, waistcoats, hobnail boots  
Long dresses wi coats an big collars  
Grins on their faces like pools winners  
Chantin, full throated like a football kop  
Women at front, form half circle around us  
Shoutin, 'United We Stand Divided We Fall'

64

Hattie says to Sidney, tha crowd wud torment him  
All of 'em his fellow spirits, Boot & Shoe Workers  
Hangin about where they worked an died  
They wer ordinary honest working people  
Sidney, wer hostile stranger in their place  
In life he ignored their sort an their hard life  
He went out of his way, to insult degrade them  
Bur he died of consumption, like many of 'em  
He wern't troubled wi their sufferin denying it  
They stalked him, yet Sidney still shunned them  
He saw them as just ragged an pitiful though  
They had dropped like flies from diseases  
In Wharf Street hovels, they called home  
Crippled by shoe-making machines  
Washin an scrubbin other people's houses  
Only tha workhouse left for 'em wi no work  
It wer their sweated labour makin tha  
Very boots, Sidney tramped roun' trenches  
His arrogance self-pity kept him stuck

Alone ... here but time of hatred anger  
Wer now over, so wer theirs bein  
Workers who had been oppressed ignored  
Hattie asks Sidney, to come wi 'em over the rainbow ...

65

She said Jake wer waitin, his mother father  
Sidney could be himself, now it doesn't matter  
Cos who you are, how you look, are of no  
Consequence whatsoever... there...  
Sidney gets up, an Hattie walks with him  
Towards the crowd, they part let him go though  
Then close around him, Hattie turns says to me  
You must not judge him or yuhself too harshly  
Its only when we are at the precipice, tha point  
Very edge of crisis, an face real peril  
When things fall apart, we can change - only then  
We can destroy past things, to start over again  
Sidney choose mi to lift him from his loneliness  
To attach himself to me to live through me  
But I were nor all he expected or hoped for  
Triggerin his past wounds, stuck War drama  
Tha loss of his unrequited love  
Injured manhood, tha love of his family  
Sidney can live differently now, be  
Wi tha other spirits, as sisters brothers,  
freed from labour an' strife of past life

66

Hattie says I choose Sidney too  
A man so very unlike myself yet  
Both of us, shared some soul searchin  
Sidney brought mi to point of death  
This night an only this night  
All of us wer caused by ancient vortex  
Opening a portal between times and  
Past, of pagan rites tha God Mithras  
Roman sacrifice of bulls an cows  
Magical rites of death an rebirth of men  
All things, all times being forced to change  
So now, I could have a choice too  
I would have another chance  
To live mi dreams, be true myself  
Its wer all up to me from now on

67

Smilin she says not to judge anyone  
Who have hurt me or even myself  
Too harshly I am lovable I can love  
With those that will return it

Because they love me just as I am  
She winks, says take care of yuhself  
Hattie turns an goes off wi crowd  
A jiggin carnival movin down street  
Dancin, an wiggling as she goes  
Shaking her tambourine wi sparks  
Flying off it, whirling till they all form  
Circles, in a golden haze of light  
I am dancin wi 'em in my head

68

I watch 'em as they disappear  
I felt so tired, as I am still sittin  
Down on the pavement, as  
Tha Sky wipes on a moody dawn  
Wi some lary birds chiripng loudly  
I realize, head fuzzy, tha night wer over  
I never got to Spectrum Warehouse  
Or go up Blues Shebeens in Highfields  
Whenever I walk round St Georges  
Day or night, I can never ever forget it  
I wonder, if any of it even happened  
All what I remember, is worra I've told you  
I am relieved, had to bloody tell someone  
I mean head shrinks hear all sort of stories eh?

END

## Glossary of Leicester Dialect Polari Gay Slang & Edwardian Slang.

<i>On the lash</i>	Going out to get intoxicated with either drink or drugs or both
<i>Drag Fest</i>	Drag Show
<i>Slap</i>	Make Up
<i>Bona</i>	Excellent
<i>Cruise</i>	Pick up attract Gay men
<i>Fag Hag</i>	Gay man's female friend
<i>Townie</i>	Working Class person
<i>Fliibertigibbit</i>	Frivolous excessively, talkative flighty
<i>Harridan</i>	Strict bossy old woman
<i>Strumpet</i>	Female prostitute or a promiscuous woman
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	Black Champion Boxer USA 1900's WW1 Bomb
<i>Gad</i>	Exclamation surprise or dismay also biblical
<i>Balderdash</i>	Senseless talk or writing nonsense
<i>Poppy Cock</i>	Talk rubbish garbage
<i>Slash</i>	To Urinate
<i>Popper</i>	Drug that is sniffed popular in gay community
<i>Cottaging</i>	Casual Sex in Public places between gay/queer men
<i>Trade</i>	Available Men gay, queer or otherwise for sex, can refer to male prostitutes
<i>Jungle Fever</i>	Derogatory racist term refers to mixed Black and White or mixed relationships
<i>Jigga Boo</i>	Racist stereotypical derogatory term for a black person
<i>Jungle Bunny</i>	Racist derogatory term for a black person
<i>Blues/Shebeen</i>	African Caribbean All Night Party free entry & with a Bar
<i>Roarin'</i>	Weeping or crying
<i>Top</i>	Dominant partner role in sexual relationship/s also
<i>Bottom</i>	Passive partner role in sexual partnership/s
<i>Butch</i>	Masculinity
<i>Femme</i>	Feminity
<i>Kinky</i>	Bondage S & M BDSM or Group Sex
<i>Fallalish</i>	Excessively showy clothing or dress fast or extravagant
<i>Goolies</i>	Testicles
<i>Frou Frou</i>	Gay man and or effeminate man
<i>Puffter</i>	As above
<i>Wuffter</i>	As Above
<i>Nancy Boy</i>	As above
<i>Omo</i>	As above
<i>Read</i>	To intuit , to fully understand a person's nature
<i>Icahbod</i>	Exclamation Edwardian biblical origin
<i>Tykes</i>	Small child cheeky or mischievous
<i>Hettie</i>	Hetrosexual person
<i>Coon</i>	Racist derogatory term for a black person
<i>Doss House</i>	A Poor unemployed Workhouse or Hostel
<i>Subaltern</i>	A lower Army Officer
<i>Lary</i>	To be loud aggressive antisocial, or cheeky

