

Ringo's House

It's always the last one on the tour
And that's only if you ask – and then the driver
Might, only might, go home that way.
No-one knows much about it and they are
Going to knock it down anyway.
Two women at the back say it's a scandal and ask
The man at the back with the dog called Clancey
What it looked like in its heyday –
What was the wallpaper like ?? The curtains ??
But he can't remember – just that they were all in and out
Of each other's houses all of the time ..
Everybody was everyone's friend -
And that Ringo's mam did great fry ups. And big mugs
Of tea. And eggy bread.
And it's getting really dark now – because John and Paul's houses took
such a long time - and it's the whole street in twilight, a kind of purple
twilight suitable for a drummer
As we all sit quiet as if we were at mass... and look the house
Up and down as if we were buying some song from the past.

And the man with the dog gets out for a smoke –
And another car pulls up – and asks the way to George's house...
And the house of the drummer that will soon be ashes
That will soon be just dust gives out a long sigh
Into the Liverpool night.

And through the window you can see that the wallpaper
is green and still intact and that across one of
The boarded up bits – someone has written LOVE ME DO .
“it's a damn shame,” says the chunkiest of the women
And hands round cheese sandwiches while
The other one gets out and leans against the wall like
A Da Vinci figure – and puts her hand up against the window.

And one by one we all get out – and sure enough the driver
Starts to sing *Love Me Do* – and the dog barks along.
Just down the road. And all of us are young.
And the house glows in the twilight.
And everything still to play for – hope in our hearts
In the compelling and deafening Liverpool night.

Ringo's House



... Helen Burke

Ballad of Penny Lane

I remember the first time
I heard Penny Lane
We sang it at school, we sang it in the street
We sang it anywhere we could -
Wherever young people meet.
I saved all me pocket money
To go to Liverpool to take the Ferry across the Mersey
And seek that Lane out.
Everyone had their favourite Beatle
Stuck the pictures of them from *Jackie* magazine
Up on the bedroom wall.
They were what life in the sixties
Was all about.

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Cover: *Ringo Star* - Drawing by
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