

## *Football in the Park*

Shouting clichés into the wind, they were,  
as thick, grey clouds blustered their way  
above the ragged, gesticulating trees.

'Come on! Greens!'

(The 'on!' stretched lengthways, endlessly  
until it lost all shape or purpose.)

'Keep your heads up!'

(There was no sign that heads were down.)

The ball, lofted into the swirling air  
landed at the feet  
of a surprised and fat left-winger  
who set off goalwards  
with a short-legged, low-hipped run.  
His colleagues, startled by his wind-assisted pace,  
saw the sweet, deft cross too late  
but continued on their lumbering way  
towards the opposition's goalie  
long after he had sliced the ball  
into the sodden touch.

'Great cross ...'

the cliché from the crowd of two  
acknowledged beauty,  
and the man in black, capacious shorts  
smiled a shy and wry response.

In the heads of the red-kneed, paunchy teams,  
the game was being played  
with a noble and exhilarating brilliance;  
all around them, in the scudding clouds  
and gusty wind  
they heard the Wembley roar  
and dreamt that one day  
a scout on an afternoon walk  
would spot their latent talent  
and would take them to a temple,  
where clichés were chanted by the thousand  
not by two watery-eyed and cold fiancées  
huddled on the edge  
of a field of wind-whipped dreams.