

LONDON ROAD, 1966

1)

Outside the Odeon in London Road, Bob Dylan smokes a cigarette, wild mercury in his veins. It's May 14th, 1966 and any day now a solar eclipse will pass across these paving stones, a black sun casting shadows on the ruins of this post war city...Hopped up on Benzedrine, hair like tarantulas, Dylan shines like neon...

2)

Bob Dylan blows smoke rings into the face of Julie Andrews on a Sound of Music poster, watched by the old women sipping rum in the Lord Warden pub. He nods to these broken down Medusas and gap-toothed sirens guarding the entrance to Hades...

3)

One year earlier the Beatles drive their Austin Princess to the Odeon through crowds of screaming girls. As 200,000 people line the streets to catch a glimpse of John, Paul, George and Ringo, the Liverpool City Police Band play the theme from Z Cars and John Lennon gives a Nazi salute...

4)

I want to stand on London Road and watch as Ray and Julie dance along its gutters. And I want to find that old cassette of love poems they recorded for each other. I want to see my grandfather drive his horse and cart up London Road, carrying ice to P Galkoff, Family Butchers. And I want to pick up a cigarette butt Bob Dylan smoked in 1966 and keep it as a sacred relic.

5)

TV sets and radios blasting out the FA Cup Final - Everton are beating Sheffield Wednesday 3 – 2 as Bob Dylan glides in a limousine through the city. Mike Trebilcock gets two goals and Derek Temple one. The streets are deserted but for the urchin kids of Dublin Street, staring at this visitor from Mars. They have their photo taken with him down the Liverpool Docks, his black shades hiding his amphetamine eyes...

6)

Arthur Rimbaud drank just down the road from here on Commutation Row in 1877, on his way from Java to Le Havre. Jack Kerouac played billiards in the seamen's mission in 1943 and had sex up against a statue with a prostitute called Lillian. Bob Dylan is a lightning conductor, fusing the lights of London Road with the electricity of poets. It is May 14th 1966 and the world is about to change...

7)

In the darkness of their bedrooms, two small children, Ray and Julie say their prayers. Across the rooftops Bob Dylan's voice sneers, 'Well Mack the Finger said to Louie the King, I got forty red white and blue shoe strings, and a thousand telephones that don't ring...' rolling along London Road, filtering through keyholes and beneath the cracks of bedroom doors like the nursery rhymes of drunken fathers...or gods.

8)

The dead cinemas of Liverpool are car parks now and lap dance clubs, or tumbling into rubble heaps of buddleia and willow herb. Across the street from the Odeon old men and women sit in the pub where their grandparents sat, looking at an empty hole, where the Dream Palace once echoed with Stratocasters and chaos...

9)

The ghosts of long dead lovers kiss in car parks where old cinemas once stood. If you listen you can hear them whisper, glimpse their tender fingers touching, underneath the dust-flecked beam...the ghost-breath of their desire, their murmured croon echoing through dream land...If you listen you can hear the sound of London Road on May 14th 1966.

And it sounds like this...