

## *Two Poems by Hilary Corke*

### **The River**

So we went with my father in a two-cylinder Rover  
To Tewkesbury, where we hired a boat (he had been  
A rowing-man in his time). By King John's bridge  
The water-troops were herded by sharp arches;  
We passed by that, and then the widening scene  
Of liquid movement counting her pebbles over.

The banks reclined, with short fat willows leaning  
To leave their long-leaved hair-do's and discuss  
What garters of light were rippling up their thighs:  
The river-skin gleamed broad and luminous,  
Reflecting stilly loose-strife, codlins and cream,  
Till we multiplied their stars with human meaning.

The plash of the oars, the grunt of the rowlocks and  
The hushing ridges the mild water made  
Between my fingers dangling. Overhead  
The sky was an equal river, pent in trees,  
With rare white boats that ran before the breeze  
But no more ruffled or more tenanted.

My father rowed in a vest, with large moustaches  
Drooping safe in the shade of a small straw hat.  
We took our turns at the rudder. And now we see  
Twining Ferry, a quiet white pub with its feet  
In the sleepy Avon water, and flowering rushes  
Spatting the alder ankles, and gaze to greet

Round only one bend more the familiar landing  
Where we shall tie and carefully clamber ashore  
And the rug will be spread and the sandwiches and the apples  
And Corona fruit-drinks appear from a heavenly store  
In a pasture-corner alive with dimples and dapples;  
And the peace of repletion that passeth all understanding.

O and the electric dragonflies like neons  
And the bathe (One Hour after Lunch) as one opened one's eyes  
Far below water into a thick green world  
Of soupy shadowing, and the water-boatmen  
Swimming on stilts and yes! the frog-green furled  
Leafspikes of the arrowhead and the surprise  
Of the mussel-shells with pearls that tiled one tiny  
Beach in an inlet, and then the nettle-thickets  
All round the disused lock with knots of spiny  
Black caterpillars that would be tortoiseshells;  
And the roofless mill, and the notice that said "Beware,  
This bridge is dangerous." Cross it if you dare!

We dared and crossed it, and the August sun  
 Sloped colder down its slideway and our mother's  
 Voice was calling "Children! It's time, children."  
 The swifter flight downstream. She put to bed  
 Fifty inches of visions, bright and bewildering.  
 Then sleep came sudden and the river fled.

So then I slept thirty years and awoke where I am,  
 In a parked car by a bypass where a brash  
 River of animate iron pours honking through  
 Channels of Nuhomes like a pustular rash,  
 Though still from the butcherly-pollarded elms a few  
 Unabashable sparrows regard the blue. . . .

It is not just my childhood, not mine alone,  
 But what is happening to almost everything  
 Seeing that almost everywhere and swiftly  
 In once not so small England's narrowing range  
 Both the innocent and the other and strange  
 Grow hourly so all-knowing and all-known.

### **Boltons at Midwinter**

Boltons at midwinter, the laburnum locked,  
 The double may in chains, the season's fetters:  
 The cries of children from the frozen playground.

Leaves of the planes lay sodden, now lie stiff  
 Below the gothic arms; the gutter's jungle  
 Compacts in floors of browned and shooting crystal.

And the bitten lip of the iron park stays dumb,  
 The impressive stuccos of the residences  
 Questioning with reflected light in vain

From blind bright glass that holds minutely imaged,  
 Spent, out of India, down the contractive air  
 Fluttering to lair, a single windbeat plane.

Mudflat, Saxon saltings, mudflat of Thames  
 Creeky and rushy with fish-eating waterbird  
 Zigging on jagged estuarial skies,

Though paved and groved and grooved with hurrying buses  
 You keep your sourness still that still abides  
 Clenched in your sewers below the skin one rides.

And northern stillness (your returning mew of children),  
 English holding of breath like bread asleep  
 Before the working leaven and the oven,

As through your planes the noon 'plane from Karachi  
 So only in your pewter marble move  
 The forking veins of negroes, loose and burning.

T. R. Fyvel

# The Teddy Boy International

## *Unhappy Hooligans*

THE VIEW that the Teddy boy movement and the increase of lawlessness among British youth represent something new, a "new wave" in delinquency, arising from a specific combination of contemporary social conditions, is strengthened if one looks at the international scene. Reports of youthful disturbances similar to those in Britain have come from a number of countries; mostly they are countries which are technically and industrially advanced (although there are also interesting stories from others, like the report from Greece that local Teddy boys, called by this name, had engaged in the pastime of throwing yoghurt in people's faces and as punishment had their heads shaved, evidently a successful deterrent). Especially during the last few years, it was not hard to find newspaper reports of disturbances to match those of Britain; in the first place from the United States, where the public has been shocked by such startling revelations as that in a single year about 5 per cent of American children get into trouble with the police or the courts, and that youngsters under 21 constitute over half those arrested for car thefts and robbery.

*Daytona Beach, Florida.* Nearly 4,000 car enthusiasts in their teens fought police and firemen for five hours to-day in riots which began when police ordered a group of youngsters to stop making acceleration tests on a main street. The youngsters slashed tyres of cars, smashed shop windows and tore down advertisements before armed police dispersed them.

*New York.* New violence flared yesterday among packs of unruly teenagers stalking the streets of New York. The newest outbreak, in more than a week of tenement jungle warfare that has claimed four lives and caused several critical injuries, occurred in Brooklyn. Two men

were shot by a gang that ambushed them with a shotgun blast of birdshot as they left a restaurant. The victims of the unprovoked attack were taken to a hospital for treatment of painful injuries. The shooting came only a few hours after police prevented an all-out gang battle in the Bronx between members of the Scorpion and Fordham Baldies gangs, made up of both white and Negro boys. Detectives moved in on the boys in a park. They arrested 13 youths and seized an assortment of lethal weapons. New York City officials scheduled a meeting with State Youth Commission officials to-day to determine whether State help is needed to combat the teenage crime wave.

Or to turn to Europe, the following reports from Germany, Austria, France, and Sweden are typical of many which could have been quoted:

*Duisburg, Germany.* Thirty-three young people were arrested yesterday after a night in which hundreds of excited people had milled in the streets, smashing street lights, damaging private cars and starting free fights. The disturbance, which reached the proportion of a minor riot, followed similar incidents in Hamburg, Frankfurt and Brunswick. A police spokesman said that hardly a day seemed to pass without reports of some pitched but aimless battles between young rowdies and members of the public, the police or the new armed forces.

*Vienna.* The *Halbstarken*—the leather-jacketed "Teddy Boy" gangs of Western Germany—have spread to Austria, and the steady increase in teenage delinquency in the country is alarming the Austrian people. Nearly every day in the past few months police have reported at least one clash between the *Halbstarken* gangs in Vienna. Police patrols have had to be increased in many Vienna districts to keep down violence. Criminal activity by teenagers has trebled compared with pre-war. The Vienna police are taking concerted action to put down gangs. They comb