

**Christopher Parry**

**FOOTBALL**

in memorium WSH

even Ronnie Barker glasses were not funny  
when the drunk in you  
came home  
the doused tongue crude as thistle  
your silver locks wild as smoke  
from some internal combustion

on Saturdays you drank at home  
watched Match of the Day at 1  
stacked beer cans about your ankles like trophies  
and held me like a boy-regent on the throne of your lap  
tossing me into the air like a winner's cap  
with every goal

for my 7th year your gift was a football

that country yard was no Wembley  
no Hampden Park no Easter Road cheering  
as I tackled and ran into your thick legs  
endless as railway steel  
on Wimmera earth baked to concrete and dust  
never having seen snow heather  
under the blinding blue sky you squinted from

it snowed in Auchterader as your heart gave way  
and later as I curved a pebble from left boot  
to your sunken coffin  
I wondered had I worn your heart out  
with kicking

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