

20.0h Namings

Dylan Harris



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Potato Press

by Dylan Harris

4 anticipating the metaverse, 3 nation six dog, 2 discard

chapbooks

20.0: *v* the dead cat blues, *u* bremen, *t* autumn, *s* mechelen, *r* dye-de-ho, *q* antwerp, *p* tension nitro ego, *o* church is dangerous vital, *n* tin rush, *m* the A rush, *l* an engineering rush (ii), *k* Miss Demeanour, *j* flock state, *i* be infinity, *h* Namings, *g* nation six dog, *f* uncivil law, *e* dead write, *d* chase chase, *c* an engineering rush (i), *b* a much for we, *a* The Joy Of Tax

19.9: *c* Inn, *b* Swoop, *a* An Ode To The A14

19.8: *c* Rose, *b* Hymnen, *a* Darmstadt

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Recitals of some of these poems may be found online

Namings

America

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Namings

America

The “What–A–Good–Idea” Pilgrim Fathers
brought no wagon,
brought no wheelwright.

One exasperated lady
invented a working truck,
the “Mary Cart”.

Now, in this time,
‘Lingua Franca’
meant what it said.

Affected fools
morphed their speech to French,
sounding silent a word’s last consonant:

but not the end of Mary’s name
for she was young unmarried;
cracking shins for reputation.

So the words a Crown Inspector heard
on riding the colony’s Mary cart
were “er...this is a Mary car’.”

Bedford

Years ago,
bed design was perfected.
Reasons were spun for wheels:
sending from carpenter to customer,
obsessive room re-arrangers,
rocking bouncy kids to sleep.
Early beds had standard wheels.

Unfortunately,
young couples,
as young couples do,
experienced runaway passion,
forgetting to put the handbrake on.
Beds bounced about,
buckshotting walls, canoning furniture,
rocketing lamps, smithereening china.

Makers shrunk the bed wheel size,
making transportation hard.
Convoys of beds,
raced across the countryside,
became rare.

The difficulty was water.
In those days,
few rivers had bridges.
Goods with normal wheels
transversed fords.
Beds were now ferried,
increasing costs.

So those rare places
with very shallow fords
and a smooth river floor
counted.

Such fords were found
across rock–landscape rivers,
and nowhere else,
except in West Anglia.

A merchant town grew up,
named for the merchants' luck:
Bedford.

Cambridge

In ancient days
the town of Ugg was filled
by what would now be rudely called
Neanderthals and peasants,
and occasional flounced academics.

But the rich boys and the clever boys
resented the rough and common culture,
They caused a language strike-out
against the sounded names;
the hills of Gog Magog
became the 'Local Ridge'.

But 'Local' was too wuss.
A horizontal jogging entrepreneur,
who gifted screaming services
loud and hidden on the hills
to gentlemen with cash,
was Madame "Catherine Anna Maud Belgique".
She was known, in spoken code
when wives were nosy near,
by her "Camb" initials.

Up grew the town
around the flouncing schools,
whose name became,
from those wildly-rumour hills,
Camb Ridge.
But when that times'
unhumoured censorship collapsed,
those earthen lumps
reverted back 'The Gog Magog'.

So now the town was only named
for gifted screaming services.
An academic city
named after a horizontal professional?
A king with cash to budget
sensitive to scandal?
Something must be done.
But luck had struck;
the river could be named again,
the town could claim
a story good for getting grants,
pseudo–history’s “Cambridge”.

Catford

The world's most evil moggy,
so he liked to think,
was black cat "Ginger",
his name and counter shade
caused him bully curse
at army kitty school.

His great delight,
this small and fluffing cat:
when dogs arrived to greet hello
and sniff those places dogs must sniff;
he'd swipe each black and feeling nose
with slicing sharpest claws.

Even the best of dogs were stung,
for that was Ginger's way.
But Brian was quite a special mutt,
and had the nous to more than howl;
he barked around, and quickly found
that every local hound had felt those claws.

Now Ginger loved to sleep
beneath his scratching tree
by the catfish stream.
So Brian got half the local dogs
to creep around and half-moon surround
the napping sharpest claws.

And on the count of “whine two three”
the dogs all barked the barking song:
“wr wr wr wr wr wr wr wr”
but stopped halfway through verse two.
Ginger panicked up, and ran the only no-dog way,
he rushed right through the water.

And now the devious plan enlightened,
for on the other side were all the other dogs
hiding silent at Brian’s behest,
until the soaking cat had landed there.
And then they barked, how sharp they barked;
the panicked cat, he rushed right splashing back.

And this is what a travelling landlord heard:
“Wr wr wr wr” “mwah!’ splash splash
“Wrf wrf wrf wrf” “mwah!” splash splash,
and saw the panicked echo cat
rush forth and back across the stream;
he’d found a drunken place to build his inn.

And to this day, we’ve heard of Brian’s barkers,
the famous “Catford Dogs”.

Keighly

Bertha Bright's childhood love
was Keith Lea.

Bertha, only child, was heiress to fortune,
to breath-sharp-in lung-ice fortune.

Keith grew proud
and left the Pennines for ambition,
so he'd return to Bertha
all pride and rich desire.

Despite the decades
Bertha refused all doubt of him,
spurning the assertive hands of vagabonds,
awaiting Keith, her Odysseus.

But he did not return;
she died alone, unmarried.
This sad story so inspired the ladies of Doolally,
they renamed their town for Bertha's love.

That's the official line.
Actually, Keith eloped a Swedish royal;
and not just any royal
but the Swedish king himself.

They hid in Malmo suburbs;
Keith, professional man, a duck inspector;
the king, living his transvestite dream,
scatty wife.

The neighbours had grasping eyes:
for the king overacted his bimbo avatar
forgetting to remove his eye-draw crown
when doorstep kissing Keith goodbye.

The Swedish State found their missing king.
Keith was banished to the empire's beyond,
to Siberia,
where he died of a broken promise.

Of course Bertha knew Keith was gay.
She also knew heiresses
handed fortunes over
to husbands.

Manchester

Sister Hester's girlie dream
was not a swirling gown or glitter jewels,
but the biggest and bestest house
there ever was.

Every day at school in rugby class
or hobnail boot and stamping club
she dreamt the biggest and bestest house
there ever was.

There would be two hundred and ninety-three bathrooms
one for every cat she'd ever sat on
in the biggest and bestest house
there ever was.

So massive and humongously huge
the mouse holes will be dragon holes
in the biggest and bestest house
there ever was.

But Little Hester became Big Hester
and her children grew up to be accountants
she forgot the biggest and bestest house
there ever was.

And Big Hester became Granny Hester,
telling them all of naughty naughty boys,
she remembered the biggest and bestest house
there ever was.

And then a competition rose,
rename the town of “Rainie”:
she thought of the biggest and bestest house
there ever was.

“Hester’s House? No. Hester’s Mansion?
Mmmm. Just manche. Yes, yes! Manche Hester!”,
named after the biggest and bestest house
there never was.

Milton Keynes

Two grand economists uniting like fusing hydrogen,
and exploded as quickly apart again.

The younger, Milton Friedman, ran the world to Chile
to invent half-built shopping-centres and military dictators.

The older, John Maynard Keynes, kept to England
to invent stagflation (remember?), wine gums,
and birthed their child.

Even today anyone is welcome to
Milton Keynes.

Few people know donkey's ears later
these two great economists reconciled
and named the baby Gordon Brown.

Norfolk

“Nowt as queer as folk”,
the famous Yorkshire phrase recites.

Five hundred year it’s been
since this was set to one specific place.

A location full of so strangest people
the idiom rode all the land’s gossip.

“Nowt as ... folk” it reduced,
“Now folk” the locals counter–spun.

And when the counties came along
this flub was spoken ‘Norfolk’.

Sandy

A sect, a now forgotten name,
known by populist satire
the “The No Naughty Nookie Nutters”,

built a priory.
They chose a place to speak belief,
to keep themselves entirely pure.

They made their beds in sand,
so if desire decided to arise,
the lust was broken scratched.

The town they built and bloated
took the name of soil and county:
Sandy Beds..

