

Being British

By Terry

This Britain, a land of fast food, football and forever
Moaning about the weather, of rain that drains the colours from the day
and dyes our lives with shades of grey.

Then comes summers,
When we chase a dream, pack late-bought sun cream
And sip that unaccustomed 7am pint before our trip,
To flee each year in search of sun, sand and sea.

Or this land of suffocating social classes,
Where those that have conspire so
Those that haven't stay on their arses.
A land where money flows, but only to those who
Watch as others strive, while they ensure their own money grows.
Elsewhere there's talk of 'democracy', an admirable notion,
But often spoken of with hypocrisy rather than devotion.

1707 and 1801, memorable dates for four nations spun together as one,
To squabble and quibble yet together forge a brittle Britain
Which, little by little, came to paint one quarter
Of this globe Empire red. And with this legacy we still live,
In which the lucky ones won, but many bled.
And now we're a country ill-at-ease, where across our sea
We see once neighbourly friends as enemies.
What price sovereignty?

But then behind, beneath this land
Lies a deeper vein, a richer strand,
Sometimes in shadows, just visible in its grain,
Of what this country was and can be again.
So despite all the kings and crafty capitalists

Weaving their webs of selfishness and avarice,
A quiet sense of decency still persists.
Of people calm and gentle, to whom kindness is not tantamount to weakness,
Who say 'please' and 'thank you' and do not rank you
By the clothes you wear and the accent you bear.

And then there is a vast array
Of abundant talent on display.
Of engineers, scientists, inventors galore,
Who've made their mark, but we still need more.
And there's poets, and playwrights and painters too,
Who've stood the test of time and speak their truth to you,
To sooth our minds from ages past. They feed our souls
And will last in our hearts 'til time itself has passed.

So Britain's neither all good nor all bad
But in the cold light of day, I guess I'm quite glad
To call myself British, but I won't wave a flag.
All any can do in this world of insanity
Is reach out and touch others with our innate humanity.