

A LOUSY FIFTY QUID

"If you publish that story
you'll never see your son again
and surely he's worth more to you
than a lousy fifty quid...."

The story eventually appeared
in an Arts Council anthology
edited by Charles Osborne and Margaret Drabble.

My son, Jonathan, is five years old
I imagine he's started school now
his brown hair thicker and eyes bright as topaz
and in his small hand which resembles mine
he's holding a pencil and writing down his name.

I've not seen him for three years
the divorce court has not only given her custody
but barred me from access.

Few people have ever read the story
let alone remember it, the fifty quid was soon spent
and the anthology has been remaindered
I don't know whether it's been worth it
but at the time I had no alternative
and my decision would be the same again.

FROM WARS OF THE ROSES: 48

At Jacob's Well opposite the City Hall
Nick drinks his half of bitter and orders pie and peas.
He edits Little Word Machine and Woolcity Rocker
runs a pop group, Uterior Motives,
and lives in a terrace house high up in Undercliffe
with two dogs and a cat, a sweeping view of the bowl of
Bradford.

At thirty, his hair receding slightly, thin
he's full of energy, planning various projects, an entre-
preneur

bridging the world of rock and literature.

He intends to make it on the media, writing for glossy
magazines,

has visions of himself a star, top of the pops:

once after a mile swim at Windsor Baths

(Victorian result of Chadwick's sanitary reforms)

he told me he intended doing for Bradford

what Hemingway had done for Paris in The Moveable Feast.