God, and King, and Denis Law

written on hearing – incorrectly– that Tony Blair was a Manchester City fan,
for Trevor Griffiths, who really is

As I lay asleep in Germany,
there came a voice from over the sea,
and with great power it forth led me
to walk in the visions of Poesy.

When the dust had settled on Utopia
and the Dulux gloss had hardened
to a cold pale blue,
the people’s government found they had
some fine tuning to do.

Curt directives came from Downing Street:
the Free Trade Hall in Manchester was to be
renamed the Mike Summerbee Mall;
the National Anthem became ‘Swing Lee Sweet Chariot’;
Trevor Griffiths was appointed as Poet Laureate;
the Hallé Orchestra would be re-constituted as
the Freddie and the Dreamers Revival Band;
relegation from the Premier League was to be
suspended – just to be on the safe side.

But when fighting broke out along Denis Law Way,
as the Peace Line had recently been called,
the Leader of the Opposition in the upper house,
Lord Stiles of Stretford End,
roundly condemned Queen Camilla, who the day before
had called in at the Manchester City Superstore
(formerly Harrods of Oxford Street).

There she had praised the new legislation
that had given merchandising access
to those not fortunate enough to live in the North West.

As she took a Colin Bell memento mug
and a Frank Swift replica jersey from the rack,
she announced that she, the previous week
at Sotheby’s, had been the mystery buyer behind
the bid for Bert Trautmann’s 1958 Cup Final
neck brace (in honour of her husband’s German
stiff-upper-neck ancestors).

At a mass rally of the Red Spartacus League
at St. Peter’s Field, oblivious to protocol,
Lord Best, preserved in alcohol,
read, through a megaphone, Shelley’s ‘Mask of Anarchy’.
The main speakers were Posh and Becks –
Old Trafford’s Luxemburg and Liebknecht –
eloquent, oracular; a volcano heard afar.

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Unprecedented nuclear weapons spending

His nuclear disarmament rhetoric notwithstanding, a plan submitted to
Congress by President Obama projects an investment of ‘well over’
$185 billions by 2020 to maintain and modernize US nuclear weapons
systems. The FY 2012 budget request includes $7.6 billion for
programs related to nuclear warheads – an 8.9 per cent increase over
the President’s FY 2011 request. This includes increased funding for
three new nuclear weapons production plants and a new Life
Extension Program for the B61 warhead, a US bomb still deployed at
NATO bases in Europe.

In response to the President’s commitment to modernize all three
legs of the ‘strategic triad’ of nuclear weapons delivery systems, the
FY 2012 budget request also includes $197 million for research and
development on a new Air Force long-range nuclear bomber, $1.07
billion to develop a new replacement ballistic missile submarine, and
$2.6 million to study a future Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

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