

## **His Master's Voice** *for Jacob Porter*

Walking in Piccadilly with my son  
I see a familiar image of a gramophone  
With a dog listening at the horn

And find my time has come round to explain  
How strange all that once seemed,  
Sound trapped on plates, the silent run

Of the thorn point in from the edge  
To where mad dogs and Englishmen  
Walked in the mid-day sun, Prokofiev's

Bird ascended in a flute  
Stalked by clarinets in morning suits,  
Where with each winding of the spring  
Abdul Abulbul bit his scarf  
And died for me, again, again, again.

It was such simple magic, anyone  
Who'd felt the skin jump on a drum  
Could understand how music, fed to wax,  
Could live in album leaves like photographs,

The mystery was why it took so long  
With hardly anything in the machine  
That couldn't have been fashioned in the bronze  
Age, or that of Brahms, Liszt, Schumann, Chopin.

It seems we inhabit islands lapped by time,  
Each scarcely linked to each, though your delight  
As the hi-fi belts out disco hits just might  
Be a passing wave to mine at the horn's rim.

**Ben Thompson**  
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