

# Foreword

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Bill Shankly once said, “Football’s not a matter of life and death – it’s more important than that.”

The global football industry is a monster enterprise, an unstoppable juggernaut that is going from strength to strength. Football in England in the shape of the Premiership has become a phenomenon. Fans are flocking to grounds, superstars are arriving en masse and our papers, inboxes and cell phones are brimming with the most up to date news and supplements.

The incredulous amongst us may see poetry and football as incompatible, yet not so well known is the fact that a number of our football clubs now have football poets in residence.

In the words of Michael Horowitz, “Football and poetry have a lot in common: they are performance arts with more socially communicative panache than many other forms of entertainment or competition – though of course both provide superlative entertainment too.”

I am delighted to have been offered the opportunity to write the foreword for this book of football verse. I taught the author when he was a pupil at Stepney Green Boys School, East London between 1988 and 1992. Football is a sport that produces the correct doses of drama, heartache, jubilation and ecstasy; absolutely key elements for a poem to stimulate and to inspire the masses.

The book is an endowment from the author and it contains verses that will touch a chord with poetry and football lovers alike. As a mainstream school teacher I would encourage the use of such forms of poetry in educational institutes, to help foster methods of communication. Related workshops would also be a useful tool to boost self-esteem in pupils.

The book has touched on different aspects of the beautiful game; Diego Maradona, childhood dreams, Christian Gross, Dave Beasant’s historical penalty save and Istanbul 2005, where the family of football, bar the Milanese witnessed and celebrated the most amazing European night of all.

The author is a popular name within his community, and this in itself should be enough to create interest and get people to pick up and read the book.

This book will take you on a journey, from theatrics to the spectacular, from the dire and dour to sheer magnificence. For all lovers of poetry and football this short collection will ignite treasured recollections and reminiscences of the beautiful game. If you're into the artistic aspect of football, here's something that is sure to delight and captivate you.

## **Chris Kinnear**

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