

Introduction

“Football is a global language. It can bridge social, cultural and religious divides. It enhances personal development and growth, teaches us teamwork and fair play, builds self-esteem and opens doors to new opportunities. This, in turn, can contribute to the well-being of whole communities and countries.”

– Kofi Annan

My earliest recollection of football was watching my hero Bryan Robson orchestrating a resounding 3-0 win against an all star Barcelona team at Old Trafford in the European Cup Winners Cup quarter finals in 1984. Other significant memories include Liverpool beating AS Roma in the European Cup final that year with Bruce Grobbelaar's 'wobbly legs' clown antics cementing his place in footballing folklore, Everton capturing the Cup Winners Cup against Rapid Wien in 85 and the Liverpool double year of 1986.

As a ten year old, the icing on the cake was Mexico 86, which was just an incredible and endless talent show; El Diego, Preben Elkjær, Laudrup, Francescoli, Scotland's shorts, Michel Platini, Zico, Butragueno, Negrete, Sanchez, Belanov and Lineker. For a starry eyed youngster, this was a mesmerising tournament, one which cemented an obsession with the beautiful game.

I started writing football poems in 2006 after I stumbled across a football poetry website. Most of these poems and the inspiration behind them have been penned on the go, waiting in a queue, driving, whilst listening to a lecture etc.

During the 2005 World Summit, global Governments acknowledged that “sports can foster peace and development, and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding” and the evidence is there. Through football we can promote peace, tolerance and celebration of diversity. Poetry is a medium to express inspiration and creativity, it is a portal for ingenuity and inventiveness to thrive and for talent to be celebrated and prosper and I have jumped on the bandwagon and readily signed up as a member.

The reader is requested to bear in mind that I do this as a hobby and wrote this book to share my pastime with likeminded football fans. Any constructive criticism is much sought and will be taken on board.

Emdad