

Part 1

breeze–
breathe
leaves,
soft
light,
cloud,
moss,
mud,
damp,
wood.

Up–
steps,
steep
path–
breath
fast,
past
ash,
oak,
stone.

Then–

descent,
village,
new bridge,
squeeze-stile
ginnell

canal,
platform.
tannoy–
on time.

waiting.

tunnel
unlit,
silent
until
rails hum.
Rumble
reveals
two lights.
approach
braking.

Get on,
sit down
gaze out.

Dull glass,
Dirt tint,
sky glint
silver
sun fleck
flood, sedge
sallow

acres
ochre
alders
follow
full flow
current
coursing,
clear stream.

shallows,
placid
ripples,

then deep
unseen
spooling,
unheard
echoes,
relent
to Trent.
Derwent.

relentless,
remember
Derwenydd

Peis Dinogat [Dinogad's Cloak]

Peis dinogat e vreith vreith
o grywn balaot ban wreith.
chwit chwit chwidogeith.
gochanwn gochenyn wythgeith.
pan elei dy dat ty e helya;
llath ar y ysgwyd llory eny law.
ef gelwi gwn gogyhwc.
giff gaff. dhaly dhaly dhwc dhwc.
ef lledi bysc yng corwc.
mal ban llad. llew llywyw.
pan elei dy dat ty e vynyd.
dydygei ef penn ywrc h penn gwythwch
penn hyd.
penn grugyar vreith o venyd.
penn pysc o rayadr derwennyd.
or sawl yt gyrhaedei dy dat ty ae gicwein
o wythwch a llewyn a llwyuein.
nyt angei oll ny uei oradein.

Scél lem dúib [I have tidings for you]

Scél lem dúib
dordaid dam;
snigid gaim;
ro fáith sam;

Gáeth ard úar;
ísel grían;
gair a rriith;
ruirthech rían;

Rorúad rath;
ro cleth cruth;
ro gab gnáth
giugrann guth

Ro gab úacht
etti én;
aigre ré;
é mo scél.

Translation

Dinogad's cloak is speckled, speckled,
I made it with pelts of marten.
Twit, twit, twittering,
I sang, and so eight slaves would sing.
When your daddy went off to hunt,
spear on his shoulder, club in his hand,
He'd call the hounds so swift of foot,
Catch, catch, fetch, fetch,
He'd strike fish from a coracle
As a lion strikes a small animal
When your daddy would go to the mountain,
He'd bring back a stag, a boar, a deer,
A speckled mountain grouse,
A fish from Derwent falls.
Of those your daddy reached with his lance,
Whether a boar or a fox or a lynx,
None could escape unless it had wings.

Translation

I have tidings for you;
the stag calls;
winter pours;
summer has gone.

Wind is high and cold;
the sun is low;
its course is short;
the sea runs strongly.

Bracken is very red,
its shape has been hidden;
the call of the barnacle goose has become usual.

Cold has seized the wings of birds;
season of ice;
these are my tidings.

Approximate transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet

pais dinogat ə vraiθ vraiθ
o griun balaod ban wraiθ
xwid xwid xwidogaiθ
goxanun goxenən wəθgaiθ
pan elei di dad ti ə helya
ləθ ar ə əsgwəd ʔori ənə lau
ɛv gɛlui gun gogəhug
giff gaff dali dali dug dug
ɛv lɛði bəsg əng horug
mal ban ləð. ʔeu ʔəwiug
pan elei dy dad ti ə vənið
dəðəgei ɛv pɛn iurx pɛn gwiθux
pɛn hið
pɛn grigyar vraiθ o vɛnið
pɛn piʃg o raiadr dɛrwennið
or sawl əð gərhaidei di dad ti ai gigwein
o wəθux a ʔɛwən a ʔuivɛin
niθ anghei oʔ vɛi oradein

Transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet

Sge:l lɛm du:vɪ
dɔrdaðɪ dɑv
snɪʔɪðɪ gɑvɪ
rɔ fɑ:θɪ sɑvɪ

Gɑ:ɛθ ɑrd u:ɑr
i:ɛɪl grɪ:ɑn
gɑrɪ ɑ rɪθɪ
rurɪθɪɛx rɪ:ɑn

rɔru:ɑð rɑθ
rɔ cleθ crɪθ
rɔ gɑv gnɑ:θ
gɪugrɑn grɪθ

rɔ gɑv u:ɑxt
ɛtɪ ɛ:n
ɑgrɛ rɛ:
ɛ: mɔ sge:l

Journeys Across the Midlands or Multilingual Memories on the Way to Work

Rajinder Dudrah

My train commute to work runs from Hamstead to Birmingham city centre – calling at Perry Barr, Witton, Aston, and Duddeston, arriving at Birmingham New Street.

Chook, chook chalti hai gaadi (Hindi – chook, chook goes the train) x 2
Is that a line from a Hindi film that I have picked up over the years?
Or should it be *Chalti ka naam hai gaadi, ise ka naam hai zindagi?* (Life goes on, moving forward, is that the meaning of life?)

Waiting. I usually get to the platform around 5 minutes before my train arrives (when it's on time of course!). I buy my ticket and wait for the journey to begin. Or had it started already, when I stepped out my front door? Waiting, I pause to think.

Hamstead. Hamstead Village. My *pind* (village) where I live local. Walking down the hill, past my favourite pizza place – banging veggie tikka pizza! Though the shop is closed at the moment... Where am I gonna get my veggie supreme tikka pizza from now? The carpet seller on the left, then the phone shop, next to the recently arrived tattooist - inking past, presents and creating futures, next to the yummy dessert place – cookie dough and ice cream. Across the road the German superstore, you know the one – “*Badda on Kwalty, Thodi Price*”. No? How about – “*Groß auf Qualität, Lidl auf Preis*”? That better? (By the way, thanks for the pronunciation, Katrin).

First stop Perry Barr. Get off here for the One Stop shopping centre. But remnants of our old campus still exist. #PerryBarrMemories. It's being pulled down to make way for the new Commonwealth Games village in 2022. Exciting. I wonder how many languages are spoken in the former Commonwealth countries?

Slow start and then fast move along to Witton. A popular stop for travels to Villa Park, home of Aston Villa football club. This is where the terrace chants were once largely from the white Villains, now the claret and blue mixes with colours, creeds and people many, much more than few. ‘Come on you Villa! Chake de mundeyo! Allez, Allez, Allez’ English, Punjabi, even Italian disco lyrics are sung out here.

Third stop Aston. This marks the place of my former Manor - Aston Manor Secondary School, now Aston Manor Academy. Here is where I learnt French for the first three years of my classes. I was upset when I couldn't take it further for GCSE in the fourth and fifth year of my studies. For the class to formally run, we required eight to ten students to opt for it, and unfortunately there were only six of us. I had to take a GCSE in Craft, Design and Technology instead (which I mostly enjoyed!). Perhaps unwittingly, one of my favourite lines of French to this day is ‘*Je ne parle pas Français*’. ‘Did you do okay, Rajinder? Ca va Rajinder?’ Oui, Rajinder ca va bien. The playground, corridors and even some classroom lessons were a mix of diverse spoken languages, nuanced and made comfortable in inner city B6 and surrounding Newtown. English combined with snatches of Punjabi, Caribbean patois, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu. Refrains from bhangra and Bollywood tunes were heard alongside, rnb, pop, steelband sounds, and dancehall.

After Aston comes Duddeston. This stop always intrigues me as I don't think I know enough about this area. As the train pulls in, high rises and maisonettes stand alongside houses and a working class community going about its business. My friend from primary school Ayoub Khan went here. I think he was inspired by the band Musical Youth and their ‘Pass the dutchie’ hit song in the 80s.

A few minutes further down the line we pull into New Street Station. I get off here to walk into work. Up the escalators through to the Grand Central concourse. Grand Central? Is this a New York name thing? Not sure how it works here in Brum town...

Chook chook gaddi chalti station pe aaye. Ab safar thoda aur pedal par karna hai, phir kaam par paunch jayenge. Yaadein aaye jab train station par rookhe aur phir chale (Chook chook, moving along, the train arrives at its station. Chook chook, moving along, the train arrives at its station. Just a short journey left as I need to walk on foot and then I will arrive at work. Memories are evoked as the train arrived and stopped at each station).