

A YEAR AND FOUR MORNINGS

Words: Martyn Wiley Music: Luke

*This is the year
The year of the line
A moving line*

*This is the year
The year of the vans
Moving in lines*

*This is the year
The year of the shield
The year of the stick that beats the shield*

*This is the year
The year of the shout
The year of the bottle caught in the light*

*This is the year
The year of the line
A moving line*

*This is the year
The year of the vans
Moving in lines*

*This is the year
The year of the horse
The year of the hooves that clatter the street*

*This is the year
The year of the dog
On back legs and chain
Waiting to bite*

Hickleton Main Colliery South
Yorkshire

A fin-de-siecle morning with
pheasant-killing mist
The shooting parties are long gone
in a rattle of hobnail and brogue
The big house stands shuttered
Holding only the old men from
the war who will spend all their
mornings walking
At the main road we wait where
we always wait
But this morning a motorbike cop
stands with his arm raised against
the buzzing traffic
A pause
Breath hanging before eight blue
vans dark as gangsters in shades
Sweep into and out of focus away
down the lane
The cop lowers a gauntleted fist
Covers his half hidden face and is
gone

Prince of Wales Colliery New
Year's Eve 1984
I could write about the morning
brisk and blue
I could write about these trees
brittle in white embroidery
I could write about the turn of a
year the passing of time
Or I could write about silent
winding gear
And men warming their hands on
a fire
Under the careful stares of
policemen
All stamping their feet like

Men at a match

Dearne Valley Colliery Summer
1984
Every morning they are here
watching
Ten of them in a hired van waiting
At the top of our lane where we
went to watch trains
Watching
Summer days hang loose like
washing
Waiting for the dinner time
Devonian
And tea time Thames Clyde
Express
Watching
Reinforcements slide into position
Dogs in the back
Watching
Pitmen in donkey jackets
NCB on the back
Waiting

Coal picker picked a bad bag
Castleford
This morning I saw a man
kneeling in the road
By his side a bicycle one wheel
still spinning
On the ground a plastic sack split
like sausage skin
The man was scooping sleek
between his hands
Gathering muck into his lap
The face streaked black
On any other day in any other
town
It might have been funny