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# The Tears and the Trumpets

TONY HARRISON

↳ Ρανος & Βλ.ii  
Tm 2/02

**D.** W. BLANDFORD, IN WHAT HE admits as a “red-nosed” epilogue to his essay on the Virgil Society in *Pentekontaetia*, wonders if the Society should perhaps go for “street cred” and appeal to YOOF. “We could revamp the Society as the Virgil Fan Club, issue lapel badges with the motto *AMO MARONEM*, etc.”

I have to confess to wondering if asking me to be your President was part of the same fantasy, as I have, even in my sixties and long past my YOOF, been recently styled in the Press as the “Liam Gallaher of modern poetry.”

This tabloid branding, presumably, was for the outcries in 1987 surrounding my poem *v*. At the same time as I was being branded as a yob from the gasworks I was also President of the Classical Association. Because of the huge controversy the *Independent* published the whole poem on its news pages. On the very day that it appeared I was trying to decipher the *Res Gestae* of Augustus on a temple wall in Ankara, Turkey, where I’d been invited to give a reading of my poetry.

*v*. is a poem which has the central place in the collection of my poetry published in Italian translation by Einaudi in 1996. Since its publication I’ve had many invitations to Italy to read my poems: Rome, Venice, Bologna, Torino, Genoa, Milan and Napoli, where I returned the year before last. My first visit to Napoli was in 1987 to make one of my film-poems for the BBC called *Mimmo Perella non è più*, about the burial customs of the modern Neapolitans, showing how bodies are exhumed after a year in the volcanic soil of Naples and deposited in marble lockers in the vast Cemetery

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A Presidential Address given to the Virgil Society on 3 June 2000.

ΔΩΡΕΑ  
ΕΛΛΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝΙΚΟΥ  
ΠΑΙΟΝΙΔΗ