

# Tom Palin at Cinderloo

*now Telford Forge Retail Park*

the rain blowing in as we gather  
sixpence a day lopped off a weekly wage  
of fifteen bob, a sixpence out the mouths  
of our kids & pray for help on Sundays.  
So we grip our sticks & walk to Donnington Wood  
& strip the furnace plugs at Old Park Ironworks  
& on to Lightmoor, Dawley, Horsehay  
when down come the Yeomanry & Constables  
& hem us in on the cinder hills & back us up  
so up we goes slipping & cramming our boots into slag  
& the shouting starts *We'll have our wages*  
*If we're to fight for it, we're all together*

iron is durable

below us the Peace Officers arrest & thrash our boys  
so we throw down the slag & stone from off the cinder hills  
we rain a rain of iron & rage  
a rain of sixpences & hunger  
& Tom runs down with some mates & looses our prisoners  
& then the Yeomen open fire –  
a rain of iron & power  
a rain of wealth  
their bullets hunt us off the cinder hills  
the women tumbled on the trampled children  
& William Bird is dead at eighteen  
& Thomas Gittins gone  
& our Tom will face the rope.

iron is durable

the rain blowing into the crowd by the gibbet  
& our lad stands to his end  
& someone sings out  
*Farewell Tom*  
& the executioner lifts the cap he's put over Tom's face  
so Tom looks up & sees. He nods.  
They put the cap back on.  
And then he swings.

Jean Atkin