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PALACES OF GOLD by LEON ROSSELSON

If the sons of company directors and judges' private daughters

Had to go to school in a slum school

Dumped by some joker in a damp back alley

Had to herd into classrooms cramped with worry

With a view onto slagheaps and stagnant pools

Had to file through corridors grey with age

And play in a crackpot concrete cage.

Buttons would be pressed

Rules would be broken

Strings would be pulled

And magic words spoken

Invisible fingers would mould

Palaces of gold.

If prime-ministers and advertising executives

Royal personages and bank managers' wives

Had to live out their lives in dank rooms

Blinded by smoke and the foul air of sewers

Rot on the walls and rats in the cellars

In rows of dumb houses like mouldering tombs

Had to bring up their children and watch them grow

In a waste land of dead streets where nothing will grow.

Buttons would be pressed

Rules would be broken

Strings would be pulled

And magic words spoken

Invisible fingers would mould

Palaces of gold.

I'm not suggesting any sort of a plot

Everyone knows there's not

But you unborn millions might like to be warned

That if you don't want to be buried alive by slagheaps

Pitfalls and damp walls and rat-traps and dead streets

Arrange to be democratically born

The son of a company director

Or a judge's fine and private daughter.

Buttons will be pressed

Rules will be broken

Strings will be pulled

And magic words spoken

Invisible fingers will mould

Palaces of gold.

"The lesson of Aberfan is never put your faith in experts or authority....Unless ordinary people take notice there will be another Aberfan, another Chernobyl and much worse." -
Cyril Vaughan, Vice-Chairman of the Aberfan Disaster Fund 18 October 1986, 20 years after Aberfan.