



Copyright © 2015 by DAVID KILPATRICK

Design and layout: Nathen McVittie

ISBN-10: 0996205802  
ISBN-13: 978-0-9962058-0-1

Published by Beadle Books  
New York and London

[www.beadlebooks.com](http://www.beadlebooks.com)



# Obrigado

A FUTEBOL EPIC

*By*

David Kilpatrick

## *Contents*

- I. Futebologia
- II. Brazil v Croatia
- III. Mexico v Cameroon
- IV. Spain v Netherlands
- V. Chile v Australia
- VI. Colombia v Greece
- VII. Uruguay v Costa Rica
- VIII. England v Italy
- IX. Côte d'Ivoire v Japan
- X. Switzerland v Ecuador
- XI. France v Honduras
- XII. Argentina v Bosnia-Herzegovina
- XIII. Germany v Portugal
- XIV. Iran v Nigeria
- XV. Ghana v United States
- XVI. Belgium v Algeria
- XVII. Brazil v Mexico
- XVIII. Russia v Korea Republic
- XIX. Australia v Netherlands
- XX. Spain v Chile
- XXI. Cameroon v Croatia
- XXII. Colombia v Côte d'Ivoire
- XXIII. Uruguay v England
- XXIV. Japan v Greece
- XXV. Italy v Costa Rica
- XXVI. Switzerland v France
- XXVII. Honduras v Ecuador
- XXVIII. Argentina v Iran
- XXIX. Germany v Ghana
- XXX. Nigeria v Bosnia-Herzegovina
- XXXI. Belgium v Russia
- XXXII. Korea Republic v Algeria
- XXXIII. United States v Portugal
- XXXIV. Netherlands v Chile
- XXXV. Australia v Spain
- XXXVI. Cameroon v Brazil

XXXVII.	Croatia v Mexico
XXXVIII.	Italy v Uruguay
XXXIX.	Costa Rica v England
XL.	Japan v Colombia
XLI.	Greece v Côte d'Ivoire
XLII.	Nigeria v Argentina
XLIII.	Bosnia-Herzegovina v Iran
XLIV.	Honduras v Switzerland
XLV.	Ecuador v France
XLVI.	Portugal v Ghana
XLVII.	United States v Germany
XLVIII.	Korea Republic v Belgium
XLIX.	Algeria v Russia
L.	Brazil v Chile
LI.	Colombia v Uruguay
LII.	Netherlands v Mexico
LIII.	Costa Rica v Greece
LIV.	France v Nigeria
LV.	Germany v Algeria
LVI.	Argentina v Switzerland
LVII.	Belgium v United States
LVIII.	France v Germany
LIX.	Brazil v Colombia
LX.	Argentina v Belgium
LXI.	Netherlands v Costa Rica
LXII.	Brazil v Germany
LXIII.	Netherlands v Argentina
LXIV.	Brazil v Netherlands
LXV.	Germany v Argentina

## *Muitíssimo obrigado*

Pelé, Dad, Matthew Coppola, Tyler Pittman, Yunus Tuncel, Dean Rader, Jason Barnett, John McDarby, Brian Walsh, Erik Stover, Brenda Elsey, Stanislao Pugliese, Salvatore Cottone, Diane Ackerman, Alison Matika, Kristen Keckler, Khaled AbuNaama, Tim Hall, Paul Steinman, John Hughson, George Quraishi, Michael Agovino, Hossein Fassa, Anthony Gutierrez, Eleanora Kupencow, Marshall Dickson

Nathen McVittie for the design and layout

**For Lisa, Dylan and Honor**

I.  
FUTEBOLOGIA:  
TOWARDS A POETICS OF SPORT

(An Introduction/Methodology/Manifesto/Apology)

64 in 30

Futebol festival – a month takes time outside of time

At consummation I realize:  
I've not consumed the Cup  
The Cup has consumed me

These principles of moments  
Some narrative, some chronicle, reportage  
Each game itself a text begging to be read,  
Requiring re-presentation  
Muthos, ethos, dianoia, lexis, melos, opsis  
Tracks for drama, but out of love for language, love for the game I open up  
Expose myself to this Muse of Futebolphilia

If eye an ear pretend  
If you complain  
Or you commend

Blame me not, nor praise me  
For though I've courted this Muse  
I am but vessel

The game craves word

Martial at the Coliseum  
Pausanias at the Games  
The player plays his moment  
While we watch  
We praise to fame  
The exposure of the mortal  
And perhaps immortal flame  
This burning, being burnt



Bodies through space and time  
Emerging heroes  
Tales to tell  
To birth poetic  
The passing passes on through sign  
Becoming signal  
Memories proclaim

## II. BRAZIL v CROATIA SÃO PAULO

Some sought samba in São Paulo  
But after hosts belted their anthem  
Three doves sent to flight  
And with the three went the dance

Boys in gold at nap  
Wake with Marcelo's mishap  
Blazers at the hunt

Is the blood they smell  
In the stadium or the street?

A card to match his shirt  
The Hyped One responds  
His left to the post to draw level  
A sense of some samba revived

And then one ugly moment  
Halts beauty's heritage  
The cynical, the crass, the dishonest  
A dive, a disgrace, as Fred flops

Is this samba  
This shift to the left  
This stutter forward to the spot  
As the Hyped One lucks into the lead?

Is this blood they smell  
In the stadium or the street?

A ref out of depth  
Oscar's toe settles score  
Still no samba in São Paulo  
More yellow than gold

Dance now  
We beg you  
For the sake of our love  
Bring back the three doves

We have come not for dives  
But for dance

**III.**  
**MEXICO v CAMEROON**  
**NATAL**

Rain in Natal  
El Tri quickly robbed  
De Santos twice disallowed off

Cameroonian yellow clears  
Give the ball back to green  
Like Mayans on an ancient court  
Care for the ball  
Each stroke of a pass a blend  
Of risk and security

Can the line not see square through the rain?  
The injustice of incompetence  
Or the feel of a fix

Sí, se puede  
Sí, se puede  
A defiant, if ineffectual, roar

Yellow turn golden  
The ball loves them now  
El Tri betrayed by the hour

And just then

A Mexican rush, slicing diagonal  
Deserving Dos Santos but deflects  
The pelota's Peralta's  
A just twist to the tie

One will do  
So three for El Tri

**IV.**  
**SPAIN v NETHERLANDS**  
**SALVADOR**

El Roja in white  
Oranje a dark blue

A soft foul sees the spot for the Champs  
And Alonso slips true

Each side press the pitch  
To a thin middle third

Til a long ball from Blind  
Sent from centre touch

Seeks out a leaping van Persie  
His header looping hapless Casillas

The son of a painter  
An artist, all the same

Another Blind long Ball  
Finds Robben midflight

Foot catch, then a cut  
Two pass by til the finish

Here is the samba  
A Dutch dream, a dance

Striker-keeper collision  
De Vrij picks up the trash

Can revenge for a Final  
Be found first round?

Robin's a robber  
Iker's pocket picked

Salvador sun turns to rain  
As Brazil becomes Happy Holland

Arjen slices through the Armada  
And the Dutch dance a samba dream

V.  
CHILE v AUSTRALIA  
CUIBA

Another red has come to play  
The first quarter hour  
That's what one would say

But the boy knows the game  
Chilean lull, Cahill goal  
He says, and it happens

Socceroo physicality  
Breaks down Chilean technique  
Brave Bravo in goal  
Sole Chilean awake

Like them, with them  
I drift off  
Dull monotony of workman's effort

I dream of art  
But he shouts me to wake

One match may seem like many  
Put to sleep by too many  
Displays of vigorous utility  
The drag of physical imposition  
Bereft of style

Tired technicians  
Burned out ages ago  
Denouement before intermission, it seems

Til Beausejour strokes in an addition  
And seals the deal

Can fifteen of fun  
Justify a dull seventy-five?

I'd just as soon shut my eyes  
And dream of masters on the ball

VI.  
COLOMBIA v GREECE  
BELO HORIZONTE

Hellas' heroes sliced apart from the start  
Armero scores and Colombians dance  
Cut back opens Hellenic defense  
Yellow wave roars its way around  
    Belo Horizonte

Defiant blue battle back  
With unexpected attack  
Gekas heads Hellas' hopes to bar

Teo makes it two  
Near post flick to back post poach

If "heroes act like Greeks"  
    How Greek is a dive?  
Cross bar's cruelty divine retribution

For let it be known:  
The gods of play have awakened  
And they are aware, they attend  
Brasil, this festival

Joga bonito  
Or be damned



VII.  
URUGUAY v COSTA RICA  
FORTALEZA

The brute ugliness of Garra charrúa  
Gives Los Ticos an ethical edge

But a white tug of light blue  
Puts Cavani to the spot

Le Celeste sweat themselves navy  
Black and blue as knocks  
They can play but they'd  
Much rather fight

Costa Rica strings together  
Short pass to pass to pass  
Up the pitch  
Until Campbell smashes red to belief

Por suerte Duarte darts at the back  
Banana bend to a header  
Ureña's first touch lets elegance reign  
For at Fortaleza, blue see red

VIII.  
ENGLAND v ITALY  
MANAUS

Tell me, Gianluca  
Is this head over heart?  
At the Amazon Arena  
All energy England

Don't lose your mind in Manaus  
Italians tap to a different tempo

Archetypal 9, Balo heads home Azzurri  
Bearded Pirlo's the brain  
Leaving Lions white as ghosts  
Marking space as blue bodies pass by

No, don't lose your mind in Manaus  
Lions might roar another day

IX.  
CÔTE D'IVOIRE v JAPAN  
RECIFE

Blue Samurai battle Elephant orange  
Fans dance their team to a trance  
Right the rhythm of play  
With the shake of a rattle

Rain falling, Japan open up orange  
Like a treasure chest without a lock

A grasshopper hums amidst Elephant play  
Drums rattle persistent pressure  
And the Samurai gradually give way

X.  
SWITZERLAND v ECUADOR  
BRASÍLIA

Cheeseheads in the stands  
And the Swiss find holes  
Less cynical, more strong  
“Swiss time was running out...”  
To the final tick  
Ecuador will never forget

XI.  
FRANCE v HONDURAS  
PORTO ALEGRE

Anthemless they set to play  
So we all miss La Marseillaise  
French hit frame  
Hondurans hit French  
One side resolved to win  
One side resolved not to lose

White suffer for their cynicism  
Descended as they have in Brasil  
The gods of futebol won't endure anti-play

Flash of red at Palacios  
Lash from the spot by Benzema

Les Bleus sovereign on the day  
In the stands, they break into La Marseillaise  
And with song, the game is won

Do eyes deceive  
Or is technology true?  
With a camera's assist  
Les Bleus make it two

The Honduran ten cannot defend  
Benzema, blessed this day in Porto Alegre

XII.  
ARGENTINA v BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Messi at the Maracanã  
Evasive Zbisivic softens the score  
But this night in Rio  
Just one dancer  
Justifies the machine

Semiotic call, so much the Flea  
Brave Bosnians cannot stifle such genius  
He's simply too quick to kick

So long as Messi does his samba  
The enemy within, this Argentine  
(Just the one, this 10)  
Seems more Brazilian than Brasil

No, no – the Flea plays  
    Not like an Argentine  
    Not like a Brazilian

No, he plays not like  
                                    a human

He plays

Must ants work dirt  
For this Flea to fly?

**XIII.**  
**GERMANY v PORTUGAL**  
**SALVADOR**

Portuguese brought their language  
Centuries ago to this colonial capital  
Today, they didn't bring their futebol

Fröhliche Fußball furthers this neue Deutschland  
Disciplined, ja  
But drunk on spiel

Müller, majestic, brings memory of Gerd today –  
An opportunist's hatrick –  
Brutal, efficient, hungry and proud

**XIV.**  
**IRAN v NIGERIA**  
**CURITIBA**

No one had noticed  
No one had not won or lost  
No one had noticed  
No game missed a goal

No one will remember  
No one was the hero today  
Nigerian green and Iranian white  
Boos from the bored shower the uninspired

Goalless is no crime  
But a game without heroes  
Is a workout



XV.  
GHANA v UNITED STATES  
NATAL

Dream start, a Dempsey dash  
Red, white and blue clean through Ghana white  
Cut outside right  
Cut inside right  
Left lets loose – far post  
Goal in a blink

Boots on the ground in Brasil

Hamstring clutch, Jozy drops  
Unworking threatens unraveling

Is that a shaman in the stands  
Some wild traveling witch doctor  
Some spell cast to pitch  
Battling elements, Ghanians emerge  
Like the persistent pulse of an Other

Too familiar to be dehumanized  
Personality's emergence  
The promise of peripeteia

Boots on the ground in Brasil

Asamoah slices through to Gyan  
Who heels to quick Ayew  
Past Howard  
Two left feet have scored tonight in this goal

Boots on the ground in Brasil  
Last gasp corner  
Zusi's ball finds a young Berliner  
He dreamt this  
Shaking his head, this head that sent  
Ball to ground then net  
He shakes the dream in his head to this real

Boots on the ground in Brasil  
Boots on the ground  
And dreaming

XVI.  
BELGIUM v ALGERIA  
BELO HORIZONTE

From the spot, Feghali  
With confidence absolute  
Patient, he waits movement to shoot  
Sure stroke up the middle

Whistles the shrill of cicadas  
Serenade each Belgian advance  
More and more  
Still, Algerian walls show no cracks

Til Fellaini's hair heads backwards  
Upper 90  
Then Martens blasts to same net space  
The Belgians have beat down  
Algerian defenses  
Bold comeback in Belo sun

XVII.  
BRAZIL v MEXICO  
FORTALEZA

Memo Ochoa unbeatable  
Is Mexico that strong  
Or Brasil that weak?

Nil-nil can thrill  
If the gods will  
Jaguar Ochoa  
Shows grace in nullity

XVIII.  
RUSSIA v KOREA REPUBLIC  
CUIABA

Childlike bobble gifts Korea

Kerzhakov in the box  
Turns and pounces like a fox

Two moments of fortune swing balance  
Kick this way  
                  then that  
To/o level

XVIX.  
AUSTRALIA v NETHERLANDS  
PORTO ALEGRE

Robben's brilliant left expected  
Cahill's left responds, immediate  
He boxes a flag in triumph

But soon an orange stretcher carries Indi off  
For Cahill's aggressivity

An unfortunate fist  
Gifts Socceroos a spot chance  
Jedinek can resist

Brief margin, van Persie brings level  
Then just when Australia seem through  
Odd chest delivers a dodge from decisive  
And Memphis from distance strokes true

Socceroos can't overcome  
The brilliance of Oranje in blue

XX.  
SPAIN v CHILE  
RIO DE JAINERO

Falling Vargas finishes  
A series of short diagonals  
Down the Spaniards' left flank

An Alonso error exposes El Roja  
And Aránguiz blasts the champions  
To an early exit

Chileans charging ticketless  
Through the Maracanã's media wall  
Sequestered in Rio  
They'll still say they were there

Too late for tiki taka  
Sloppy Spain ashamed  
By the charging Chileans  
Forcing abdication

XXI.  
CAMEROON v CROATIA  
MANAUS

Song sees red  
His elbow hammer  
Smash into Mandžukić's back  
Bizarre blow to Indomptables

Blazers make Lions  
Look like kittens



XXII.  
COLOMBIA v CÔTE D'IVOIRE  
BRASÍLIA

Tactically tight, tense level  
Til James Rodríguez rises above Drogba  
And Los Cafeteros samba as one

James steals at midfield  
Quintero slots through  
Waking Elephants

Gervinho twists through from left touch  
To keep it a contest  
But Drogba blows two chances

Los Cafeteros hold on  
James rising  
This birth of a star in Brasília

XXIII.  
URUGUAY v ENGLAND  
SÃO PAULO

Suárez finds space and heads home  
Rooney blasts straight to keep  
A life can come down to such a chance  
Given another, he touches true to level  
And I see chariots of fire  
Ablaze through the São Paulo sky  
Suddenly Suárez breaks free  
The ball finds him in stride  
Off the head of Stevie G  
Training ground familiar  
Were it not country but club  
Lightning flash of Suárez triumphant  
Garra charrúa to the whistle

XXIV.  
JAPAN v GREECE  
NATAL

No heroics from Hellas  
Red shown  
For white recklessness  
Reduces the game to a slog  
Blue Samurai can't break Greeks down  
Though down a man  
A draw is not a win

XXV.  
ITALY v COSTA RICA  
RECIFE

Balo bragged he'd kiss the Queen  
While Lion dreams relied  
But turn of an ankle when clean through  
Sees Balo's shot go wide  
Then twice his chance denied

Ticos have not bought the hype  
Ruiz from the right heads under bar  
Line crossed Azzurri stunned

Pirlo wastes a free into the wall  
Door bolted shut  
Had Italy taken the lead  
Instead  
Ticos not so cynical  
High lines pushed to please  
Eyes divine fixed at Recife

Though passing and possession  
Azzurri dominate  
One chance is all you need  
To earn a goddess' kiss

XXVI.  
SWITZERLAND v FRANCE  
SALVADOR

Giroud climbs, lifting les Bleus  
Poking holes in Swiss defense

Pantheon of Platini, Zidane, Henry  
Welcome Benzema as new Sun King

Les Bleus run riot through the reds  
Gallic glory at la foot restored

After ceding five to the French  
Two consolations soften Swiss shame

XXVII.  
HONDURAS v ECUADOR  
CURITIBA

Long, long ball sent one third to another  
Costly – chest, touch, run and smash  
Two blasts from box to net  
Route one, one goal

But Honduran hearts quickly crushed  
Valencia strides behind a flat white four for a tap  
Then off a free he rises  
His nod to net unleashes Ecuadoran voice

Sing to the final whistle  
Sing a victory song

Ball slipped beneath his shirt  
Valencia kisses like a mother her baby

**XXVIII.**  
**ARGENTINA v IRAN**  
**BELO HORIZONTE**

For ninety minutes  
Iranians red as stop lights  
Just one magic moment

The left boot of Messi bends the ball  
Around two lunging defenders  
Past outstretched Haghighi

Inside far post, net rippling  
Seconds of genius  
Trump an hour and a half of discipline

XXIX.  
GERMANY v GHANA  
FORTALEZA

Fortaleza heat sets a slow pace  
Both sides strong but patient  
Trading tests

Billed as the Boateng brothers' battle  
Germany send Jérôme off first  
Shed of sibling storyline  
The match finds life

Götze's header-knee from Müller's cross  
A bounce Dauda cannot find

The Prince comes off  
And Andre Ayew  
Joined by his brother a moment before  
Rises about the Big F'n, Per  
Header for header  
Ghanian gall sees Gyan smash

But a yard's Klose range  
To level again

Bloodied Müller and Boye  
On their backs at the whistle  
Level on ground and tally

Given all, draw's fair  
Both played without fear  
For gods' approval



**XXX.**  
**NIGERIA v BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**  
**CUIABA**

Džeko clean through from Pjanić  
False flag renders null and void  
A blown call's but a blink  
But rather no call than wrong  
One might think  
Until his opposite line ignores  
Emenike turning Spahić to ground  
Then cutting back for Odemwingie  
Nigerians drop, content to coast and counter  
Two calls, one goal, that's game

XXXI.  
BELGIUM v RUSSIA  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Red Devils dancing in the stands  
Origi is their man  
Eden the spark  
Tactical tension stalemating  
Eden breaks through to the by  
Then cuts back

to pick out

Origi is the man  
Space enough in Russia's belly  
Turn, blast – back of the net  
Belgium is through

Play that way the whole game, Devils  
Perhaps we'll dance with you

XXXII.  
KOREA REPUBLIC v ALGERIA  
PORTO ALEGRE

The Desert Foxes tear apart  
Red Tigers with aplomb  
Pedestrian, predictable, without spark  
Nothing more than a work ethic  
Algerians snip, snip, snip away

XXXIII.  
UNITED STATES v PORTUGAL  
MANAUS

So much to prove  
Early going gaffe  
Cameron slices in his box  
A gift to Nani  
Reinforces Yank critique  
Precompetent technique

Still guts and grit, no quit

Just past an hour  
Jermaine Jones lets rip a bending blast  
Beto can only watch this strike sublime

Dempsey's belly goal closer to type  
Time ticking on this test  
A point's been proven

but

Last gasp feels like fate:

Bradley  
Eder  
Nani

Ronaldo

Varela

Finis

XXXIV.  
NETHERLANDS v CHILE  
SÃO PAULO

Both teams already advanced  
Each has to decide  
To bore or to dance  
Tactical teasing  
Each chances a thrill  
Will genius emerge  
With a goal for the kill?  
Dutch defer to Chilean verve  
But Sanchez denied  
Sub Fer's first touch  
A header goal  
Truce broken, final flourish  
Robben's racing knows only full tilt  
Memphis keeps the pace, finds space  
And wins the race for Oranje  
Two subs, two goals, two survivors

XXXV.  
AUSTRALIA v SPAIN  
CURITIBA

As if mourning lost glory  
Spain wear black, not red  
They've read their obituary  
Abdication comes with regal resignation  
Villa step over heel flick  
Torres tuck  
Mata meg  
Brilliance bereft of competitive edge  
Grants ceremonial egress  
Humble half-celebrations like waves goodbye

XXXVI.  
CAMEROON v BRAZIL  
BRASÍLIA

Nyom, already yellowed  
Shoves the Hyped One  
No second card  
Neymar's next touch hits net

The boys in gold are back  
Here is the joy – jogo bonito

Cameroonian green and red  
Has an accent of gold  
Not enough to stop the samba  
Three games in, now clicking  
The boys in gold are back home

XXXVII.  
CROATIA v MEXICO  
RECIFE

Rafa heads El Tri ahead  
Guardado makes it two  
Then Chicharito makes it three for El Tri

Late Rakitić to Perišić sends Vatrani away with small consolation

These Mexicans play with verve, flash and fight  
How far away from Mayan ball court  
Yet how close to their passionate play



XXXVIII.  
ITALY v URUGUAY  
NATAL

Down a man, needing but a draw  
Prandelli hedges Azzurri hopes  
Lock for lock  
Five at back to five at back  
Chip, knock, slog – little craft

Chiellini al dente  
Once again mad Suárez reveals  
The hunger at the heart of garra Charrúa  
Bite unpunished on the pitch  
Marks on shoulder as red as Marchisio's card

A moment after treachery allowed  
The ball bounces off the back of Godín's head

Italy exit  
Ironically white Celeste move on  
Again, at game's expense

Pray the gods will not reward  
Joga bonito or be damned  
Garra Charrúa be damned

Say something Galeano  
You prophet to a barren land  
Too much in shadow

XXXIX.  
COSTA RICA v ENGLAND  
BELO HORIZONTE

Ticos proud, already through  
Lions tamed, vacation's due  
Not much left to do  
But draw  
No ambition for spectacle  
Nil-nil a bore

Why kick the ball?

XL.  
JAPAN v COLOMBIA  
CUIABÁ

Maya Yoshida spins like a top  
James with ball at pace  
Then flips the ball  
Over helpless Kawashima

Cosmetic or beside the point  
Why four when two will do?

No, Los Cafeteros are here to play  
Golden joy in Cuiabá  
Colombia's birthed a star

**XLI.**  
**GREECE v CÔTE D'IVOIRE**  
**FORTALEZA**

Samaris walls through with Samaras  
Gervinho feeds Wilfried  
Elephants look through  
Til Samaras steps to the spot  
Late rescue more luck than heroic

XLII.  
NIGERIA v ARGENTINA  
PORTO ALEGRE

Not yet three minutes  
Messi roofs  
But Musa needs little more than a minute  
And Super Eagles equalize

At the edge of half  
Messi magic from a free

Just after break, Super Eagles slice through  
Musa once more

Roja's knee at fifty, from corner  
Proves enough for La Albiceleste

XLIII.  
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA v IRAN  
SALVADOR

Princes of Persia starving for glory  
Patient Dragons wait for break  
Džeko won't be denied by post  
Switch from besieged to storming  
Won't suit such Šāhzādegāne  
Stars dim to Dragons as Pjanić slots home  
Already eliminated  
Goal Ghoochannejhad slight solace  
No chance to push on  
Bosnians play free

Both go with grace, pride restored

XLIV.  
HONDURAS v SWITZERLAND  
MANAUS

Left upper 90  
Tuck low right  
Then left  
Shaqiri strikes thrice  
Swiss flattered by score  
Los Catrachos exposed from bravado

XLV.  
ECUADOR v FRANCE  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Gallic pride already restored  
Les Bleus in white easily withstand  
These yellow shirts  
Faces tucked inside  
Conceding the bitter truth  
They haven't the feet for the dance



XLVI.  
PORTUGAL v GHANA  
BRASÍLIA

Boye knees to his own upper 90  
But Gyan's head brings Ghana level

Cash flown, content  
They play with intent  
Despite slim chance of survival  
From this brutal Group of Death

Ronaldo misses and misses  
Til Duada spikes down  
This time the Portuguese prince hits for net

Enough for today  
Some hint of pride  
But not enough for either side  
Ghana gone, the Portuguese go with them

**XLVII.**  
**UNITED STATES v GERMANY**  
**RECIFE**

These countries, these cousins  
In rainy Recife  
To draw is no disgrace  
Last time, a draw felt like defeat  
This time, a loss feels like a win  
Five Yanks German born  
Klinsmann both kin and kind

Howard clears Mertesacker's header to Müller  
Who takes his chance with aplomb

Late Yank miss of no consequence  
These cousins have already survived  
To play another day  
Such loss is no disgrace

XLVIII.  
KOREA REPUBLIC v BELGIUM  
SÃO PAULO

Defour sees red before the break  
For stamping Shin-wook's shin  
This Belgian ten need just a chance  
Seung-gyu stops Duock Origic's drive  
But Vertonghen pounces clear for win  
Red Devils in black book a date with the States

**XLIX.**  
**ALGERIA v RUSSIA**  
**CURITIBA**

Desert Foxes down when Kombarov crosses to Kokorin  
Hosting on horizon, Russians desperate to prove their game  
But on the hour, late Slimani heads  
Algeria level and through

L.  
BRAZIL v CHILE  
BELO HORIZONTE

The Hyped One approaches the spot  
His shift left, his stutter forward  
A dance we've seen before  
Legacy on his shoulders  
Neymar keeps his nerve for net  
Jara plants pitch but strikes bar  
The gods have rescued the hosts  
And the party goes on  
Scolari lifts the Hyped One  
Tears flowing, like a father  
Embracing his son  
To fight on  
Crazy things happen in Belo Horizonte  
But do us a favor, we implore  
Dance us some samba, then let's dance some more

It is not enough  
Just to win  
Joga bonito or be damned

LI.  
COLOMBIA v URUGUAY  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Al dente absence leaves warriors  
Up for a fight  
While Colombian gold seems native  
True and pure  
Head to head to chest

volley  
goal

James, a star, rising  
James triumphs at the dance

**LII.**  
**NETHERLANDS v MEXICO**  
**FORTALEZA**

Rafa steps on Robben's foot  
A dive to survive  
Mexican misfortune  
Dutch delight

LIII.  
COSTA RICA v GREECE  
RECIFE

“The end’s the same”  
Not keen to know, I say  
“Hell no”  
We watch the ball  
I tell him Greeks are wearing blue  
Remind him Italy were robbed  
He nods  
Staring at the screen  
Hospitalled, 85 at 90 needs rest  
So we race another screen to see  
Ticos take Hellas from spot  
Added time heroics only an extension –  
The end’s the same



LIV.  
FRANCE v NIGERIA  
BRASÍLIA

Moses clears the line from Benzema  
And Cabaye crashes bar  
Spectacular Enyeama saves Super Eagles time and again  
Til he palms to Pogba's head

Late Yobo own no matter  
Les Bleus end Eagles' flight

LV.  
GERMANY v ALGERIA  
PORTO ALEGRE

An anti-futebol memory  
Anschluß at Gijón  
Fuels Fenneas' flames

Müller slips while Neuer sweeps to extra  
Schürrle's left heel flicks behind his right  
Then Özil blasts relief  
Djabou volleys Desert Foxes late consolation

Die Mannschaft no machine  
All-too-human this will-to-win

LVI.  
ARGENTINA v SWITZERLAND  
SÃO PAULO

118 minutes of apprehension  
Then Messi bursts –  
A skip, a jump, a touch  
Left foot to the diagonal right  
DiMaria needs just one touch, one chance  
But Swiss not broken  
So close, the post, imbalanced deflection  
Still one more chance  
A free inside the D  
The wall holds to whistle  
Swiss time's run out  
Flea saves Albiceleste again  
To play another day

Please don't wait so long  
Or your luck may see you wronged

LVII.  
UNITED STATES v BELGIUM  
SALVADOR

The first of sixteen, Howard saves opening minute  
Jersey boy, tattooed warrior  
No more talk of Tourette's  
He has overcome, transformed heroic  
But the gods of futbol demand more than the keeper's "no"  
One must win  
Wave after wave, Devils denied  
And at the edge of full  
The chance we all dream of  
Falls to Wondolowski  
Six yards out, skying high, he fails  
A nightmare miss to live with  
One must win  
The boys battle on  
Boots on the ground in Brazil  
Fresh Lukaku too much to bear  
Breaks down Uncle Sam's barrier  
With a ball to De Bruyne  
Who returns favor to take it to two  
Golden goal sudden death would spare collapse  
Another quarter-hour embarrassment threat  
Then long distance Bradley at last  
Shows more than rugged tenacity  
Precision chip, jung Green volleys home  
Still believe, no surrender  
The Yankees are on the attack  
Is there enough time, enough strength, to comeback?  
Technique unconcealed with unshackled verve  
Last chance set piece choreography dazzles Devils  
But Deuce can't make deuce dying seconds  
Disappointing Devils far from heroes today  
A nation awake with belief  
Ah – you need feet for this dance  
Do – dare for the gods' delight!  
Boots on the ground, but  
One must win

LVIII.  
GERMANY v FRANCE  
RIO DE JANEIRO

The Germans celebrate  
As if they beat the French  
Set piece a dozen in  
But ball to Deutscher kopf  
Nudging out slack Les Bleus  
Neither side kissed by a Muse  
They slog on and on  
Til Benzema gets his break, late  
    Down the left  
Smash upper near to  
Neuer's hand  
Traffic cop austerity reflex  
No!

This did not seem an elimination  
No Franco-Prussian War  
But just the same  
The Germans celebrate  
As if they beat the French

LIX.  
BRAZIL v COLOMBIA  
FORTALEZA

I miss the blue shorts of Brasil  
Though Los Cafeteros have been more golden  
Home yellow force Colombia red

Joga bonito or be damned

The football finds  
Thiago's thigh  
The golden ring roars

But Brasil betray heritage  
Beneath its very strain  
Brilliant James hounded and harried by foul Fernandinho

Joga bonito or be damned

Foul after foul  
Some called but no cards for caution  
Til James earns for a trifle

Joga bonito or be damned

Sins for their damnation  
James hacked too many times  
Zúñiga knees Hype down to send Neymar

Stretched to the sky  
Damned souls taste bitter victor's wine  
Victors but not vintage

LX.  
ARGENTINA v BELGIUM  
BRASÍLIA

Studied if uninspired

The Flea receives, spins – finds space  
Devils ought not be so lax  
He slices the ball through  
Deflection falls to Higuaín  
This is all the magic we will see  
This studied workshift  
Messidependencia requires just a moment  
Offered another, the Flea is swatted aside  
He's done enough, again

Had Lukaku the nerve  
Belgium might offer a dose of drama  
But this early flash of skill from luck  
Is all Argentine students require

LXI.  
NETHERLANDS v COSTA RICA  
SALVADOR

Dutch chance after chance  
Flags off more than on  
Just one late Tico chance

White Ticos on their knees  
Proud Oranje on their feet  
Two hours scoreless  
Set up this spot test  
Fate left to the gods

Krul confidence leaves Ticos  
On their knees



LXII.  
BRAZIL v GERMANY  
BELO HORIZONTE

No golden 10  
Broken back of the Hyped One  
Dominating babble

Another deafening anthem shout  
Die Mannschaft calm in the soundstorm

Off the corner all alone  
This Müller's tale, a kiss home  
Lethal beauty from surgical precision  
The blitzkrieg's just begun

The gods of futebol exact bitter revenge  
For Brasil's betrayal of jogo bonito  
Boos shower down at the damned full anthem volume by half  
Transformed Germans better embody the ideal  
Brazilian tears rain in Belo Horizonte  
No golden 10  
A beat back for bullyball

This yellow eleven must change

LXIII.  
NETHERLANDS v ARGENTINA  
SÃO PAULO

Tense and tentative til late  
Robben takes a touch too many, twice  
For all the Messidependencia  
No magic moment grants escape  
Studied solid Argentines show rare daring  
Palacio through – rushed header  
A last chance for full-play heroics  
Spot tactics tricksters out of tricks  
Some karma carries Argentines to Final

LXIV.  
BRAZIL v NETHERLANDS  
BELO HORIZONTE

This game should not be played  
Say so many  
From Der Kaiser to van Gaal  
If only pride is on the line  
Hosts have much to play for

But they start where they left off

Torn apart by Dutch precision  
Flat-footed, following play  
Not dictating

Having lived by the sword, deserving  
Punishment from futebol gods  
They sold their sporting soul  
Now pay the price

No jogo bonito, so damned

LXV.  
GERMANY v ARGENTINA  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Man v machine a mantra for Maracanã  
Color omen brings split to mind  
But for all the myth and tradition  
Diese neue deutscher Fußball too fluid for the stereotype  
Winning tradition, both  
But if the dancing divines  
Who have spent the month in samba reverie  
Reward the month's play, white will win

Higuaín gifted through but wastes left  
Harder to miss  
What god guides aside?  
A second chance he finishes, but off  
The lifted flag suspending celebration  
Höwedes header hammers off post at half whistle

Messi through left – a miss right  
Golden sky on Cristo Redentor  
The Cup has no value  
Yet more prized than any objet d'art  
The world is watching  
More than ever  
Now  
One in focus  
One object – the ball  
For another – the cup  
Time ticking, slowing as genius anticipation wearies  
Weakness, some failure exploited more likely  
One must win  
Something must give  
It will  
But when?  
They say, just put it on the frame  
Unless, you just put it on the frame  
After 90, no hero, play on

Pony-tailed Palacio misses left and again  
Harder to miss  
What god guides aside?  
Maschereno, already yellowed, mugs Schweinsteiger  
Still 7 soldiers

Fifteen minutes left  
The world watching  
This sacred moment of unified focus global  
Begs a hero

Bloodied Schweinsteiger battles but  
The gods give us Götze, a goal  
One more chance for Messi magic  
Wasted over bar

Argentine tears at Maracanã  
The end's the same  
Tears of all the nations flow together to one stream

Gods assured  
The best team has won

