

Motion

The Trams of Birmingham

RATTLE, roll and pitch and sway. . .
How *would* the tramcar cope today,
Were it but briefly now to come
And see what's happened to old Brum;
Allowed, perhaps, to add once more
Its clanking to the city's roar?

These days, we ask ourselves, just who
Could live with trams whose kerbside queue
Breaks ranks to join the human load
Which likes to stop in centre-road –
A tall and slender can on wheels
At whose demand rush-hour congeals,
While drivers, stuck in hapless jam,
Surrender to the mighty tram.

Mighty? Yes – it surely sowed
Proud memories on Bristol Road
While giving all aboard the thrills
Of whizzing to the Lickey Hills
With roar and rumble, howl and whine –
My God! The thing won't hold the line!
It plummets on from Selly Oak,
Down Griffin Hill with tight-lipped folk
Determined they'll survive and stick it. . .
And make it on their fourpenny ticket.
Such excitement's not revealed
By buses, soft and rubber-heeled.
No single-headlight in the dark
(Aston Cross for Villa Park).
No lurch, no lean, no gritting teeth
(Number eight to Washwood Heath).

Motion

A city may be doing fine –
But what's it lost, along the line?
