

A hero for his time

In modern times we talk of heroes lightly;
Warhol's fifteen minutes seems obligatory
but as Victoria reigned the challenges were greater.
Will rose from poverty via the workhouse,
this set his mental mould to make things better;
taught in the poor school, he made weapons out of words,
bringing hope to the toughest of lives.

From shop boy to blacksmith then cooper,
always learning, often speaking, then cast out for agitation,
raising funds for striking dock workers facing starvation,
supporting the Alien bill against immigration,
returning to his roots he fought for reformation,
his former workhouse made a model for the nation.

A COOPER BY TRADE HE BECAME
A GUARDIAN OF THE POOR.
A BOROUGH COUNCILLOR.
A MAYOR OF POPLAR.
A LONDON COUNTY COUNCILLOR
A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.
A PRIVY COUNCILLOR.

Though a champion for the disadvantaged,
today we might struggle with his language,
to describe the feeble-minded as verminous rats seemed bleak,
but throughout his life he tended for the weak
and now as he lays beneath the cold sod,
not millionaire's row, but his stone stands amongst the people,
Will Crooks, local hero, will forever be home.