

The Number 200: Departing Raynes Park 15:04 The Charge of the Heavy Brigade

by [Paul Martin Freeman](#) (March 2023)



Étude pour 'L'Autobus, Gino Severini, 1913

TfL: Transport for London, the local government body responsible for most of the capital's buses

Half a load, half a load,
Half a load onward,
Powering to Mitcham
Raced the 200.

Trouble with TfL;
Traffic in Wimbledon hell;
Road up at Ridgway as well;
Northeast he thundered.

Get there by four, they had said;
Bloody lights everywhere red!
Wished he'd have stayed in bed;
Knew he had blundered.

Half a load, half a load,
Half a load onward,
Powering to Mitcham
Raced the 200.

Victim of credit card scam;
Password protection a sham;
Now in a godawful jam;
Bank account plundered.

Spoke with ex-wife on the phone;
Shouted he should have known;
Never would leave him alone!
Boyfriend a drunkard.

Half a load, half a load,
Half a load onward,
Powering to Mitcham
Raced the 200.

Eldest lad secondary school;
Shouldn't have been such a fool;
Broke the most basic rule;
Days there were numbered.

Hoped he'd do better in life;
Violence everywhere rife;
Why did he carry a knife?
Everything squandered!

Half a load, half a load,
Half a load onward,
Powering to Mitcham
Raced the 200.

Lorries to right of him;
Cyclists to left of him;
Prospects increasingly grim;
More and more flustered.

Shouldn't have had any tea;
Should have been ready by three;
Problem in lavatory—
Why me? he wondered.

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Paul Freeman is an art dealer in London. The poem is from *The Bus Poems: A Tale of the Devil*, currently in preparation. His book, *A Chocolate Box Menagerie*, is published by New English Review Press and is available [here](#)

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