# Brexeamus igitur



To paraphrase John Cleese's harried headmaster in the film Clockwise, I could take the despair. It was the hope I couldn't stand.

It was the evening of June 23, 2016 — yes, I know it's been a long time since I posted — and I had gathered with a small group of those rare birds, North London Brexiteers, for a "Fiddle While Rome Burns" party. Project Fear, we thought, had done its worst. There were Vote Remain posters in every window but mine and those of my fellow damned. At about 10pm, Nigel Farage all but conceded defeat. And then there was Newcastle. Allison Pearson in the [Telegraph:](#)

> Because Newcastle is a university town and, therefore, full of brainy people who would never be narrow-minded enough to care that up to 50% of their laws are drafted by unelected, foreign bureaucrats, it was assumed that the city would be a comfortable win for Remain. In fact, the margin of victory was alarmingly slight. … Minutes later, when Sunderland toppled to Leave, the MEP Diane James tartly pointed out that the town's Nissan workers had been "ordered to back Remain". The smell of cordite and rank insubordination left all the broadcasters reeling.

Like Allison Pearson, we unhappy few had been about to call it a night. But with the marginal Remain result in Newcastle and the joy of Sunderland, I knew I had to stay up all night. If I stopped watching, Leave would fail. And so it happened. Allison Pearson again:

> Rochford, Forest Heath, Eden, Erewash. Long-lost places scudding across the bottom of the TV screen. Redolent names from the Domesday Book, from Flanders and Swann's Slow

Train. Wealden, Stoke, Stanley, Cherwell, Deane. Something incredible was happening. St Helens, Amber Valley, Arun, Wigan, Broxbourne. In the small hours of Friday morning, we realized with a start that the sleepers were stirring, the forgotten people had gone to their polling stations and spoken. Blackburn with Darwen. Blaenau Gwent, Fylde, Fenland; [they kept on coming](#).

"We do have to face the possibility that Leave will win. It's a real kick to the British establishment," Professor Vernon Bogdanor told the BBC. Good grief, so it was actually happening. "England! awake! awake! awake!"

In his visionary poem of that name, William Blake foresaw the spiritual renewal of a once-vital country that had fallen into a coma but "now the time returns again". If that sounds insanely romantic, then that's because, when push came to shove (and, boy was there shoving and pushing), Britain voted for hope not fear.

What about Adlestrop? Does anyone remember? Then, at 4.40 am, there was this:

Had you fooled for a bit, there, didn't I? The French have their uses, after all.

Never mind the Slow Train, I went home with the milk train — well, the early bus, but let's not quibble. Skipping home from the bus stop I stuck two fingers up at all the Vote Remain posters, laughing at the tears of the vanquished.

Nunc est brexeundum!

But that was just the beginning. I will be back.