

I Am Football

By Becci Sharrock

I am football.

I am the night-before nerves, my lucky shirt laid out and trying to sleep.

I am the excitement of match day.

I am the memory of my first every match with Mam, and the memory of her first with Grandad.

I am the walk to the grounds, seeing fellow fans appear from side streets, climb off buses, emerge from cars, until we become the crowd.

I am the history, the future, I'm this game right now.

I am the thunder of the team, running through the tunnel and out.

I am the tingling, heart swelling, excess energy flooding through me.

I am feet stamping, hands clapping, cupped mouths shouting,

“Come on lads!”

I am football.

I am bright green against light green, chequerboard pitch.

I am purple and blue, against the white shorts of the kit.

I am the trepidation and excitement as the match begins.

I am the first goal, number 9 scores, 21 minutes in.

I am over the net,

off the bar,

a worth-a-try gone wide.

I am the screaming and cheering of the fans from both sides.

I am the second,
and the third goals,
flying into the net.

I am three - nil at half time but it's not over yet.

I am the football in the crowd,
bounced around,
given back.

I am the yellow and black metro rumbling past, on the track,
The wheels chanting, *come-on-come-on-come-on* with the fans.
I am hanging over the barriers, drumming beats with my hands.

I am the fear felt when the other team get one past,
But our team scores again, just as fast.

I am four-two - I am five-two - I can't take any more!
I am hands clenched, legs aching, throat raw.

I am extra time,
holding breath,
is it over yet?

I am, at last, the full-time score of five-three.
I am the body-wide buzz of a match victory.
I am revelling in the win and the hope for next time.
I am proud to be proud of this club of mine.
I am the crowd, I am the team, I am my football family.
I am South Shields FC.

I am football.