

Notes

David Crystal was born in 1941, works from home in Holyhead, Anglesey. as a writer, editor, lecturer and broadcaster. A professor of linguistics, he has published over 50 books in the fields of language and general reference. His first book of devotional poetry, *Pilgrimage*, appeared in 1988, and a second volume, *Happenings*, is in preparation. Most of his poems are prompted by unexpected daily events, especially as encountered in religious services, and always involve elements of language play. *All the Sixes* was prompted by a priestly announcement in the middle of a Sunday Mass.

All the Sixes

And so,
With all the choirs of angels in heaven
We proclaim your glory
And join in their unending
Hymn of praise,
Number 666.

I caught my wife's eye.
The thought of heavenly seraphim
Hunting through hymnals
For number 666 (of all numbers)
Caused a collapse
Into surreptitious sniggles.

But maybe heaven's like that!
Heavenly bingo
Playing the numbers game
For all eternity.
What did He say?
In my father's house . . .

There are many mansions.
Maybe one's a bingo hall:
Roll up! Cherubim always win.
Everyone always wins.
Ah! That'd be heaven!
In my father's house!

Back to reality.
Eucharistic prayer number 2,
Acclamation number 2.
Everton 1, Liverpool 1.
Religion by numbers
Counting down for final lift-off.

Five, four . . .	four, for the gospel makers
Three . . .	a way, a truth, a life
Two . . .	the beginning and the end
One . . .	is one and all alone and ever more shall be so

One is one and all alone . . .

Alone?
No.
Not alone.
Not now.

David Crystal