

THE SCHOOL PLAY

I'm in the school play this Christmas,
I've got an important part;
So I'm learning and learning and learning my lines
Until I can say them by heart.
When I go on stage I'll be nervous,
I'm sure I'll forget what to say.
You see I'm the front of the pantomime horse -
"Neigh, neigh, neigh, neigh, NEIGH!"

Georgie Adams

MY GRANNIES

I hate it, in the holiday,
When Grandma brings her pets to stay -
Her goat, her pig, her seven rats
Scare our dog and chase our cats.
Her budgies bite, her parrots shout -
And guess who has to clean them out?
My other Gran, the one I like,
Always brings her motor-bike,
And when she takes me for a ride
To picnic in the countryside,
We zoom up hills and whizz round bends -
I hate it when her visit ends!

June Crebbin

NEW BOOK

As you open its lid your mind unlocks.
The book itself is a brand new box.
And you pore that book by day and night,
For the book is a block of pure delight.
Then when you've done and the text is read
and your eyes are tired but your mind feels fed,
you may place that book on the silent shelf
but a bit of the book has become your new self.

Tony Mitton

A SMILE

Smiling is infectious,
You catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me today
I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner
And someone saw my grin.
When he smiled, I realised I'd passed it on to him.
I thought about my smile
and then I realised its worth.
A single smile like mine could travel
Right around the earth.
If you feel a smile begin
Don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick
And get the world infected.

Jez Alborough

THE BOY WHO DROPPED LITTER

'ANTHONY WRIGGLY
SHAME ON YOU!
screeched the teacher
as she spotted him
scrunching up his crisp packet and dropping it carefully
on to the pavement outside school.
'If everyone went around
dropping crisp packets like you do where would we be?'
(Anthony didn't know, so she told him)
'We'd be wading waist-high in crisp packets, that's where!'
Anthony was silent. He hung his head.
It looked to the teacher as if he was very sorry.
When in fact he was trying to calculate just how many packets it would take
to bring Basildon to a complete standstill.

Lindsay MacRae

THE MAGIC BOX

I will put in the box

the swish of a silk sari on a summer night,
fire from the nostrils of a Chinese dragon,
the tip of a tongue touching a tooth.

I will put in the box

a snowman with a rumbling belly,
a sip of the bluest water from Lake Lucerne,
a leaping spark from an electric fish.

I will put in the box

three violet wishes spoken in Gujarati,
the last joke of an ancient uncle
and the first smile of a baby

I will put in the box

a fifth season and a black sun
a cowboy on a broomstick
and a witch on a white horse.

My box is fashioned from ice and gold and steel,
with stars on the lid and secrets in the corners.
Its hinges are the toe joints
of dinosaurs.

I shall surf on my box
on the great high-rolling breaks of the wild Atlantic,
then wash ashore on a yellow beach
the colour of the sun.

Kit Wright

WATCH YOUR TEACHER CAREFULLY

It happened in school last week
when everything seemed fine
assembly, break, science and spelling
three twelves are four times nine.

But then I noticed my teacher
scratching the skin from her cheek
a forked tongue flicked from her lips
her nose hooked into a beak.

Her twenty arms grew longer
they ended in terrible claws
by now she was orange and yellow and green
with crunching great teeth in her jaws.

Her twenty eyes were upon me
as I ran from the room for the Head
got to his office, burst through the door
met a bloodsucking alien instead.

Somehow I got to the staffroom
the doorknob was dripping with slime
inside were seven hideous things
who thought I was dinner-time.

I made my escape through a window
just then a roaring sound
knocked me over flat on my face
as the whole school left the ground.

Powerful rockets pushed it
back into the darkest space
all I have left are the nightmares
and these feathers that grow on my face.

David Harmer

THE THOUGHT-FOX

I imagine this midnight moment's forest:
Something else is alive
Beside the clock's loneliness
And this blank page where my fingers move.

Through the window I see no star:
Something more near
Though deeper within darkness
Is entering the loneliness:

Cold, delicately as the dark snow,
A fox's nose touches twig, leaf;
Two eyes serve a movement, that now
And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow
Between trees, and warily a lame
Shadow lags by stump and in hollow
Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,

A widening deepening greenness,
Brilliantly, concentratedly,
Coming about its own business

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox
It enters the dark hole of the head.
The window is starless still; the clock ticks,
The page is printed.

Ted Hughes

I'D LIKE TO BE A TEABAG

I'd like to be a teabag,
And stay at home all day -
And talk to other teabags
In a teabag sort of way . . .

I'd love to be a teabag;
And lie in a little box -
And never have to wash my face
Or change my dirty socks . . .

I'd like to be a teabag,
An Earl Grey one perhaps,
And doze all day and lie around
With Earl Grey kind of chaps.

I wouldn't have to do a thing,
No homework, jobs or chores -
Comfy in my caddy
Of teabags and their snores.

I wouldn't have to do exams
I needn't tidy rooms,
Or sweep the floor or feed the cat
Or wash up all the spoons.

I wouldn't have to do a thing,
A life of bliss - you see . . .
Except that once in all my life
I'd make a cup of tea!

Peter Dixon

TWO FUNNY MEN

I know a man
Who's upside down,
And when he goes to bed
His head's not on the pillow.
No! His feet are there instead.
I know a man
Who's back to front,
The strangest man I've seen.
He can't tell where he's going
But he knows where he has been.

Spike Milligan

TO THE FAIR

When Dad and I went to the fair
we tried out all of the rides,
we dodged about on the dodgems
and whizzed down the astro slide.
Then we rode the roller coaster
and it gave us quite a scare:
'One thing is certain,' Dad said,
'I'm not going back on there!'

Brian Moses