

Playing In The Snow

We would run and hide
But always find our way home
We would talk in class
But always do the work
On the way to school we
discussed the latest comics
And we always ended up laughing

Every other day
There'd be somebody's new joke
Someone would be on
And we would have to get them
In the dinner queue we
were cheeky to the older kids
And we always got big helpings

In the summertime
We would play at war
Joining in a line with
Twenty other friends and
Scaring all the girls we
Thought that we impressed them
And they always mocked and pointed

What if I could now
Tell that kid its story
As it ran around
And built its snow defences
Playing in the snow
Is all we ever dreamed of
Hiding behind snowy walls and waiting

A Modern Poem

I'd love
To write a modern poem
I'd love to feel
The
Freedom flowing through my pen. Like fuel
No stanzas would I
Being
Young
Have for
What use have I for them?
I would prey
Upon my life
Giving
No excuse
For my muse.
I would write of my toaster
Sleek and black and my toothbrush
Which hangs
Rocking
In its rack.

Not art or life or love for I

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Eschew
The tools of romance. What use have I
For it?
Nor heroes of literature
Myth and verse
They make my rhymes
Worse.
For inspiration I would go to the front
Door
And look out.
Not to books
Do I look
Or a painting or two
Well, maybe a canvas
All covered with blue.

I do not need to feel
Pain
To be able to write
Not I
I look to a
List
For shopping
And revel in its bliss imaginary
Thinking
This is a poem
As true as Keats.
As brave as Yeats.
As full

Meaning is meaningless
I abandon all thought of it
A poem is what you want it to be
What does it make you feel?
What does it say
To you?
What can you gather from its
Tangle of words
Is the key.
If you ask me what is its meaning
What is its point, its reason for being
You will be shown a smile.
Whatever you want
Friend
If you ask me isn't
This
A cop-out
I will reply
This is a
Modern poem.

The old
Rules do not apply I have no need for punctuation, wit or verve or anything chiefly which will
make for you this a poem to cherish and
Love

Rhyme is a sin
Isn't it?
Unless
I wish to make a point.

Alliteration adds mystery
To
My meaning
When
By happy chance
I implement it.
Nothing to swoon
Over
Here.
My everyday
Trials
Are
Laid
Bare
For
Your
Interest.
What is most interesting is

If you look
Closely
At
My modern poem
You will see
A collection,
Merely
Of sentences
Cut up
And
Splashed
Across your page
Randomly.
Like
A cup of spilt tea.

On The High Wire

You up on the high wire
You're so well balanced, so brave
You're the one they all aspire to
You walk a perfect way

You up on the high wire
You're so skilful, you're so strong and
The way you gently walk that wire
I see nothing is wrong

But when you come down to earth I've seen you
I've seen you crying
Because he's gone away, gone and left you
He's left you all alone

You up on the high wire
All in sequins, you're a picture
Everybody's got their eye on you -
Holding their breath for you

But when you come down to earth I've seen you

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I've seen you crying
Because he's gone away, gone and left you
He's left you all alone

Up every night, every night
My sweet child, you haven't got a choice
But to come down, down, down

You up on the high wire
Your faith is a slight wire
Your face is a white fire
Don't you ever think of him

Don't let him win

An Unruly Lamb Speaks Out

Mum
(What now?)
What are you doing?
(Eating grass)
Why? You're always eating grass.

Is there anything else to do around and about?
(I don't know)
Well, everyone just seems to eat grass all day
Do you like it then?
(You'll learn)

Mum
(What is it?)
There's a funny man looking at me
(He's just a rambler)
He's got a camera. He's coming towards us and seems to be pointing and talking
(Just ignore him. Look away)
I'm coming to stand underneath you for cover, get out of his road like
(Yes, that's it)

I'm just going over there now
(Where)
Over there, into that field
(This is our field)
But I wondered what's going on in that field, you know
If there's anything else to do
(Like what? Don't wander too far)

Mum
(What is it now?)
I've been into that field
(Right)
There are some cows there you know
(*Fascinating*)
Are you still eating grass?
(Er, yes)
But you can't still be hungry surely, can you mum?
(You don't understand a sheep's vocation)
What's a vocation mum?

Will I be a sheep one day?
(With luck you will. With skill, ingenuity and cunning. Just keep eating the grass. Don't look anybody in the eye, that's the thing)
And will I eat grass all day mum, like you?
(Whether you want to or not my son)

Don't you ever get sick of it?
Have you ever thought of eating anything else?
Hey - a bumblebee. Look. Look at him!
I can play with him
(I don't think he likes it)
(No. I don't think he liked that, did he. Stay close to me)
There must be more variety to life. Is there, mum?

Mum
(What do you want now?)
I'm just going to play over there by the woods
And see what's up there, you know
(You'll soon come gambolling back. You always do)
I just thought I'd find out if there's anything up there, you know, in the woods

I couldn't get through the gate. It was all locked up with padlocks
(Surprise, surprise. Come over here)
It's not fair being cooped up like we are. Are we locked in mum?
(We like it this way)
Yeah, you and all the rest of the sheep. Look at them munching away

What about us lambs, eh? What about us?
I hope I always stay a lamb
(One day you'll be a sheep. I hope)
"Then I'll understand..."
(Then you'll understand)

Come Inside Love

Come inside, love
It's getting cold out there
What are you looking at?
There's nothing to see

I'm looking for a spaceship
I saw it on TV
I saw they're advertising
For a pilot - that's me
I want to fly out of this house
And miles into the sky
Because there's nothing here for me now
And everything to see

Come inside, love
Your tea is on the table
Your father's home and he's hung up his hat
He's sitting down with his paper

I'm looking for a new life
And a voyage beyond the stars
I'm looking for take-off and danger
And missions into Mars

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I want to fly into the galaxy
And far away into another world
Because there's nothing here for me now
And everything to see

Come inside, love
Your father's getting impatient
He'll clip you on the ear
If you're not careful, lad
He's waiting for his dinner
And we need you here with us
Oh, won't you please come inside, love
And stop making a fuss!

I'm going to Neptune and planet Venus
I'm manoeuvring my ship
And if you want to come with me
You're going to have to leave me be
Because I'm Captain of my spaceship
And I'm on my way to Mars

I'm speaking quickly, Mum
You're fading - and your image is fading fast
I'm leaving now
I'm leaving now
And over and out

Keep Going

I went to school, well everybody goes to school
My favourite teacher was a guy who set good books
I found the hardest thing at school was how to spell
And I'm appalling now, especially when I'm tired

My mother worked and brought me up
We were friends until I turned fourteen
Then she found herself a man to love her, she would say
He was nothing like you, nothing like you

I got married aged nineteen, not to my first love
I'm divorced now and a mother to my boys
They keep me sane these two, I wouldn't have it any other way
And we don't see him any more

I left my second job to have my first son
I'm working all the hours I can get
I've always kept our head above the water's edge
Stopped the water's ruin

I went north, at first I lived in a cheap place
Until a friend was kind enough to put me up
So I went looking for a job, and I found work in engineering
Something I have always loved

I got my own house and made a friend
It's never easy when you're moving on

You'll always need to find a person somewhere
You can call upon

She brought her girls and all their things and all her clothes
We settled down and made a life that wasn't hard
We lived as any couple would with two young girls
We had our ups and downs like anybody else

Though they were my joy, growing up
I couldn't help but think about you
And every day that passed I lost another piece of you
Like a fool

One day I'd like to meet the one who'll sweep me from my aching feet
Who'll take the ends and make them meet
If he exists, that is, my friends say he does not exist
But I've always been quite the optimist

If they call I will come running
I will walk through fire forever if they ever want me to
It seems that we have lost the time we needed that could make us friends
And I do not know what to do.

Overboard

Under the trees
I can see the train arriving
I know you will be waiting for me
But I know I won't be gone
And the temperature is rising

I brush aside the flies
From out of my eyes
In the barren waste of a town
That was never any good for me

You've got to understand
It isn't my fault
This time
I'm sad, but I can't go that way

Coming, you're
Walking slowly up the hill
With a weight of expectation
I can't possibly fulfil
Away beyond the trees
I know you won't hear me so
I know you can't see me and
I've got to go

You've got to understand
It isn't my fight
This time
I'm sad, like you never went away
Never went away

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My life had gone astray
And your coming back has made me see that

Now
I only wanted to be yours
I wanted to be only yours
I'm overboard
Overboard

Speaking German

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abholen? is the only German phrase I know
Which is great if you want a lift back from somewhere

But not so useful when:

Buying stamps in the post office
Booking an appointment at the dentists
Ordering a pizza from a company using the phone book
Or buying a ticket for the cinema

After three years of German lessons I decided not to take it any further
My acquaintance with the language all but ended then
Apart from one phrase

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abolen? stayed put, and lodged itself in my mind
I would love an opportunity to use it for real

But could I reply to:

Fine, but where do you want dropping off?
Yes, it'll be ten euros
Well, I'm going on somewhere and you're welcome as well, but I won't be driving home till
about three at least so -
I'm not sure I'm going your way. OK go on

Vocabulary tests followed one another like a herd of wildebeest
Escaping across a plain of blank faces, in flight from the smirking teacher (who spoke only
German during lessons)
I found myself lost, stuck but for one phrase

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abholen? always would stand me in good stead
Stated with conviction, at sensible intervals, it brought a breath of authenticity

But what if he asked:

Have you learnt your vocab list?
Are you booked on the German trip?
Have you brought your money for the deposit?
Why don't you just listen and pay attention?

Now when I recite the phrase to friends as part of schoolboy past
It brings a look of wonder and, oh you've done well to remember that, I don't know any French
and I studied it for five years
I can't help feeling that four hours a week for three years could have taught me more than one
phrase

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abholen?

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Yes, but do you want sugar with it?

Very Old Apple

I've got an apple in my fridge
I'd never eat it, no
I don't know what it's doing there
And wish that it would go

When Soldiers Came

How long will they be in our town
Will they be staying overnight
And will they try and take us down
Will all our men take up the fight

I watched them enter, made no sound
Was breathing quiet as a mouse
I ran up to the burial mound
And saw them stop outside our house

The din they made upon our door
Before you could get up they broke
A window, knocked you to the floor
With batons made from polished oak

The trial was short and hurt me
A deserter from your army life
The general was amused to see
The faces of the child and wife

I kept a diary every day
That you were kept away from me
And when one year had passed away
I threw your clothes into the sea

And watched them sail away, away
The other shore would call them home
I sometimes see you when I pray
With clothes of grey bedecked by foam

Buying Things

There are dandelions growing
In the wooden framed greenhouse
All the glass has gone now
But you can put some more in

The roof of the house will need
Attention shortly
I'm only sorry that I
Didn't have the opportunity to do it

Would you like a cup of something at all
Or must you be
Yes we must carry on

My son bought me that
Grandfather clock there
The case is mahogany; the hands are ebony
I never thought I would have owned it

The kitchen is below stairs
I can hear the girls laughing
As they cooked on a summer afternoon
If I listen very carefully

So I think everything is okay
You'll let me know
If you need any help, won't you?

Of course I'll keep the paintings
They're going into storage
I wouldn't think of selling
What has taken me such an age to buy

This one is a cousin, well loved
It's a pretty painting and the detail is there
A very clever likeness
Yes, a clever little painting

I'm very grateful for
The renewed interest you have shown
In my house

On Toblerones

Because Toblerones taste better
At room temperature
I leave them on the side now
To get a bit warm

Their funny shape responds somehow
To the moderate heat of Economy 7
On an ordinary March day

I found out to my cost
As being keen to keep my comfort foods fresh
The fridge is where my Toblerone - 400g, big is not the word - was kept

A mistake that I won't make again in a hurry

Some chocolates
Such as easter eggs - to name a good example
Are infinitely better cool
And respond to the chill of the fridge
And taste much nicer with a crunch

No one likes a soft easter egg

Direct Debit

Monday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat
He said, 'Have you got a minute' to help these problems
He told me when I did stop that the problems were getting worse
He told me I could really help if I paid by direct debit
He asked me if I'd pay by direct debit

Tuesday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat
He said, 'Have you got a minute' to help these problems
He looked kind of cold as I said 'No thanks, sorry'
He didn't tell me about the direct debit
No, he didn't really get to the bit with the direct debit

Wednesday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat
He said, 'Have you got a minute' to help these problems
I felt really heartless as I tried to ignore him, just walk past
I knew he wanted to tell me about the direct debit
I didn't want to get into the thing with the direct debit

Thursday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat
He said, 'Have you got a minute' to help these problems
I was on my lunch hour, I was in a rush to buy someone a birthday card
He looked at me and in his eyes could be read 'direct debit'
He'll just have to wait for someone else's direct debit

Friday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat
He said, 'Have you got a minute' to help these problems
I thought, 'I have got time for people. In fact, I do help. And I like volunteering'
But I think he only sees in me a direct debit
Is he paid commission on the number of direct debits?

I Have A Rose

I have a rose lain in my drawer
I keep it there in case you leave me
On that day I'll offer it
To you to prove I love you still

You don't know yet about the rose
It's hidden with some crumpled laundry
Lain upon the softest cotton
Quietly waiting for its purpose

I bought the rose and hatched this plan
When all was peace within your arms
The time will come though soon I know
When it will be a useful ally

And at the moment when I hold
My hand out with my secret flower
And colour surges to your face then

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You will know I love you still

Lonely Star

There's a lonely star shining in the sky tonight
A lonely star shining, breaking up the night
I knew you were watching me from the carousel
It would've been easier if your friends weren't there as well

Could you see me as a poet or an impossible dreamer
Do you see me as one of life's lack-lustre politic old schemers
I thought of myself as nothing until I met you
Did you think the same as me or were you just passing through

You got into a discussion about Tolstoy and Descartes
The only cards I knew about were the ace and queen of hearts
It's only my intolerance that stops you getting through
Did you think the same as me that night or were you just passing through

Kicking open a door you found me asleep in your old chair
I wouldn't have been so idle if I'd known you'd find me there
Sleeping on the job, my excuses couldn't prove
That I'd never met a girl who looked as beautiful as you

Packing up my case that night you had no right to be so calm
I'd have stayed if only once - just once - you'd tried to twist my arm
My heart was breaking. So long - you couldn't watch me go
I would've gone before if I knew then what I now know

So goodbye lonely star. Goodbye to all your friends
And all the people watching me lose who are chewing their tobacco ends
Goodbye from me. I hope you can sleep.
And forget you ever knew me because I seem to have lost that need

Official Tour

It is said that Mary Queen of Scots
Was imprisoned in this house
I think if you look up there at that casement
You can see where her face would have probably looked out

She stayed in many of the famous country homes
Up and down the country
I can't think that her life was all that bad
What with all the banqueting and jousting

Did they have jousting at that point?

Public enemy number one was Mary
Not a particularly lucky lady, but nice I should think
As we wander back around to the garden area
We can see the stables where her horses probably waited

We think that she was moved from house to house
For her own personal safekeeping
In my own humble opinion I think it was more a case of

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Look who's coming round to dinner

Did she actually eat with the other noble ladies?

As you all know of course she was eventually beheaded
A cry would have surely rung up from her native land
Of course Scotland was her first love and I'm sure always remained so
Where she probably wanted to be laid to rest

If you would like to gather near the car park
Just there - yes, that's it - we've nearly finished
Can I say how much I've enjoyed this tour today
And ask you to please stop in at the gift shop before you go to your coach

No, I don't think they would have had a gift shop in Mary's day, no.

Stowaway To Moon - Latest

When I got home my TV was on
I turned it off when I went out
It gave the same pale light as the moon
I heard a voice trying to shout
A woman's face came on the screen
She made me catch my breath, she looked straight at me

There's a girl lives alone on the moon
Nobody knows, I'm the only one
Only wants to come home soon
Tired of being far from everyone

She told me everything about her life
How she'd stowed away in '72
On the last ever rocket to fly to the moon
So young, didn't know what to do
As she watched it blasting away
All alone, no one ever came back her way

She spent some years by the Sea of Tranquillity
Then made a stranded satellite tune into earth TV
She picked up signals, all she got was me
And for quite some time now she's been trying to make me see her

I asked her, "How on earth do you cope, living all by yourself on the moon
Too hot by day, too cold at night - with no friends, atmosphere or food?"
She said she just kind of lived with it
Eating moon rock, drinking water from hot springs

She has a face as pale as moonlight
And dark eyes, darker than the moon's dark side
Shines all day, though sunshine hides her face
I knew I had to help her to rejoin the human race

So in the dark, in the garden next door
I made a net the size of four small stars
I cast it, aimed directly at the moon
To my delight I caught it, dragged it down to earth
I pulled it closer and heard a sweet sound -
The music of the spheres - then she leapt down to the ground

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I let go and the moon span back into its orbit
She dazzled me, she was glowing - her eyes, her smile, embrace, her kiss
On my way home I couldn't have dreamed of this!
And that's the whole truth - I'm not trying to lie - I've given you the gist

Trees Keep Their Secrets Like We Can't

Trees keep their secrets like we can't
Long after we are dead they stand up tall
Silently growing, strengthening, spreading
Watching solidly as we fluctuate, rise and fall

Trees cling to each other like we don't
Huddling in gangs with strong high branches
Patiently sending themselves to heaven
Gossiping in groups and mocking error

Trees know instinctively what we don't
How cold it is going to be, when rain will fall
Keeping one another notified, tuned in, their knowledge spreads
Secretly, tearfully glistening in their light dewy pall

You Can Only Go Where Your Heart Leads

She calls me up to tell me she's leaving
I ask if it's in a hurry but she says she isn't grieving
And that sometimes when you're suffering
And which way don't like no way, you can only go where your heart leads

It's a mystery that I for one can stand and watch and see her go
But when she smiled and shook her head I felt like anything but low
And when we met last Saturday, after the last train had gone,
I got down on my knees and asked for her to stay
I said, "You can only go where your heart leads"

And somewhere through the hazy coffee smoke she spoke
I heard her voice but no noise broke the chill
We agreed to meet after the fourth of July
And I got a pretty good picture of how the land was lying
Because she was crying

Summertime brought a new perspective on the way that I felt
She was calling me but it did not feel real
I heard a warning bell, but well, all she did was dispel my fears, and all my tears
She said, "You can only go where your heart leads,
And you can only go where your heart feels".

That Same Attraction

I only came because you made me
I wanted not to call you
But I guess that same attraction was there even then

You promised me a dinner
Then we'd walk to the Counter
Along the river, and watch the sun go down

At what point did we go wrong
Our plans were carefully set
Everything we could have done
Was done to keep us falling
From ourselves and the rest
At what point did we go wrong

We both knew that we shouldn't
Be married or together
Who could say fairer. At least we both knew that

A definite arrangement
What sorrow sweet as parting
Standing there my own eyes met yours and I fell transfixed

At what point did we go wrong
Our plans were carefully set
Everything we could have done
Was done to keep us falling
From ourselves and the rest
At what point did we go wrong

A miracle had happened
As you know we both were friends
Our sheer imagination had contrived to make us fools again

I take your hands . . .
I hear a sound . . .
A sound like "Please forgive me - let me go"

I kiss your face
And I start to fade
Back into the furniture
Is this our fate?

I kneeled before you
I gave you my hand
Why can't we go our own way
And leave it at that, as we planned?

Motor Moped

Can you give me an assurance that you mean what you say
Will you have sold it when I come back later today
I've always wanted a moped, and this is my big chance
A brown and solid gleaming motorcycle romance

I don't care if you laugh at me
I don't care if I can't really speed
Because the person on this moped is me
The person on this moped is me

I will polish her politely and touch her body lovingly
Won't cover her with stickers, or treat her slovenly

We'll be set free as we drive along together
And all my friends are saying "Can't wait to see you in your leathers"

I don't care if you laugh at me
I don't care if I can't really speed
Because the person on this moped is me
The person on this moped is me

Oh what could have made you sell me down the river
It's disgusting and childish and makes me want to quiver
Say you haven't sold her - please keep me not on tenterhooks
I want my pretty moped - don't want any fender books

It's breaching your honour how you put someone on her
And watched him ride away - another sale, another day
What can you be thinking - my baby's gone and left me
My baby's gone and left me - bereft

I don't care if you laugh at me
I don't care if I can't really speed
Because the person on this moped is me
The person on this moped is me

Wednesday a.m.

Wednesday a.m.
Sitting on the steps of my lover's house
Looking to the sky for inspiration
Dreaming of a dry wind to melt my perspiration
And I wonder, if things could ever be the same
And I wonder, if you can even recall my name
Or what I said last time we met

I love you, baby
I love you, baby

I love you, baby
I hope that maybe
We can go out tonight

At weekends
You were always the one who let me hold your hand
Running for the last train after midnight
Keeping all my hopes and expectations water-tight
And though sometimes I feel that I can take the pain
I'm so tired, because all you want to do is play
And I can't stay with you that way