

OUTPATIENTS RECEPTION

("POLITE NOTICE: Please respect the privacy of other patients" – Notice at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital)

If only, you think. Not much seems private here.
It could be a minor airport concourse
where identities are registered, then slipped.
But hopefully for most, a ford to firmer ground;
for others, a halfway house. Or green room.....

"She's all there with the lemon drops. Pontificates a bit."
"Not much of a reception. They've forgotten us."

Where front-of-house (two shades of blue) mediate
'scripts' from doctor to cast; scenarios are rehearsed,
soliloquies uncoiled (family and friends prompt).
But the shy playwright stays in the wings, rarely
signals his ad-libs and last-minute revamps.....

"Since starting Pilates, I can get mi tights back on."
"I don't know what I'd do without...know what I mean?"

Bright flutters of paper doves at the desk,
which then settle neatly in high-risers.
A cleaner argues with awkward mazes,
as wheelchairs are parked in side-roads, trolleys
slam down straight motorway routes.
Names are sounded. A door swings to a meow.
Talk circles the cushion of the evening's viewing.....

"I've got an Active Waist. These trousers, I mean."
"I need a good gob with someone...See! Those little ducks!"

And eyes trying to avoid eyes, not pry
into futures; hands testing things to grip;
lined faces of books at a charity stall
huddling together like beached refugees.

MAY 2019

A Poppy Appeared in Winter

**You tossed your peachy skirts into the air,
And stood, and shouted, "Look at me!"
Through gales and rains and frost you still stood there
November's blasts made all the trees so bare
But still you stood so proud and solitary
You tossed your peachy skirts into the air.
The other plants around you would not dare
To face this season bravely and with glee
Through gales and rains and frost you still stood there.
You tossed your peachy skirts into the air,
Your urchin heart exposed for all to see.
You dared us all, and passers by, to stare.
You clearly had a message we could share
"Be strong, stand tall, embrace the storms like me."
Through gales and rains and frost you still stood there
Life can be hard, and rarely is it fair
But we can thrive and Poppy helped me see.
She tossed her peachy skirts into the air,
Through gales and rains and frost she still stood there.**



Blake's "London": two versions

A. I wander thro' each dirty street,
Near where the dirty Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet,
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind forg'd manacles I hear.

How the chimney sweeper's cry
Blackens o'er the churches' walls,
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace walls.

But most the midnight harlot's curse
From every dismal street I hear,
Weaves around the marriage hearse
And blasts the new born infant's tear.

B. I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

Versions of Wordsworth's poem, "Daffodils"

A. I wandered sadly/slowly/idly as a cloud
That moves/sails/travels on high o'er lakes/fields/trees and hills
When suddenly/miraculously/in an instance I came across/spied/viewed a crowd,
A mass/field/carpet of waving/dancing/laughing daffodils.

B. I wandered lonely as a summer cloud
That floats on high o'er greening vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a waving crowd,
A glorious host of golden daffodils.....

C. I walked alone by Windermere,
A lake I dearly call my own,
When suddenly I spied a rich
Display of daffodils.....

D. I wandered lonely
As a cloud that floats
On high o'er vales and
Hills, when all at once
I saw a host of
Golden daffodils.....

E. I wandered
Lonely
As a cloud that floats on high
O'er vales and hills
When
All at once
I saw a crowd, a host
Of
G-o-l-d-e-n
Daffodils.....

THE DAFFODILS

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Ilonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A.....,of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
.....and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as thethat shine
And twinkle on the.....way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

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A poet could not but be gay
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For oft, when on my couch I lie
Inor in pensive mood,
They....upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills.

travelled;wandered;journeyed

mob;multitude;host

swaying;waving;fluttering

cars;stars
great white;milk

shiny;glowing;sparkling;shining

jocund;happy;jolly;lively

delight;happiness;wealth

vacant;empty;receptive
shine;burn;glow;flash

Bredon Hill

We have trudged five miles
To this place,
A sky of residual blue,
A tower confined to the follies
Of history,
Folklore confined in memory.

There is beauty in abundance —
Leaves sequined on a patchwork path,
Viewpoint Vistas across the vale,
A river that pythons around
Convoluting contours.

Hardy could have found intrigue
In these rubble-ruined cottages;
And Dickens drawn-out the poverty
From Pershore's aggravated red-brick.
Plot. And counterplot.

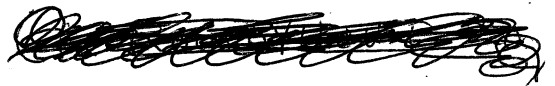
But now, in a tumble-twisted hut,
We put back calories,
Devour lovingly put-together
Egg-and-cess sandwiches,
Covet the lump of cheese.

The suddenness of weather change
Surprises; the entire scrap hazy
Like some breathed-on wine glass.

Soft-timpani of drizzle
On the corrugated roof,
The hapless Gloria of September tints:

To leave only dusk,
Its moon-dog madness —
Clouds flexing sanity,
Hurrying to asylum.

At last I understand
Those yesterday-eyes of Alban Berg —
The fugitive sectioned
In domestic bliss.



A. POETRY 'DANGER' WORDS:

- 'DREAM'
- 'LOVE'
- 'TIME'
- 'SEA'
- 'HEART'
- 'LAMB'
- 'MAGIC'
- 'MYSTERY'
- 'BEAUTY'
- 'DEATH'
- 'MUSIC'
- 'MEMORY'
- 'ETERNITY'

B. POETRY 'DANGER' SUBJECTS:

- identifying/sympathising with the downtrodden
the unfortunates of the world
- believing in God
- loving babies
- appreciating Nature
- pets
- hating war
- loving peace

Good poems say No to:

- clichés
- archaisms
- the 'poetic'
- abstractions
- generalisations
- superfluities
- imitative writing
- clanging rhymes
- bumpy rhythms

And Good poems say YES to:

- the Now
- the concrete
- the fresh and original
- spoken idioms
- the precise
- hints and suggestions
- meaningful rhymes
- rhythmic variety

January to December

The warm cows have gone
From the fields where grass stands up
Dead-alive like steel.

*

Unexpected sun
Probes the house as if someone
Had left the lights on.

*

Novel no longer
Snowdrops melt in the hedge, drain
Away into spring.

*

The heron shining
Works his way up the bright air
Above the river.

*

Earth dries. The sow basks
Flat out with her blue-black young,
Ears over their eyes.

*

The early lambs, still
Fleecy, look bulkier now
Than their shorn mothers.

*

In this valley full
Of bird song, the gap closes
Behind the cuckoo.

*

Fields of barley glimpsed
Through trees shine out like golden
Windows in winter.

*

Though nothing has changed –
The sun is even hotter –
Death is in the air.

*

Long shadows herald
Or dog every walker
In the cut-back lanes.

*

A crop of mist grows
Softly in the valley, lolls
Over the strawstacks.

*

Meadows filmed across
With rain stare up at winter
Hardening in the hills.

THREE RIDDLES

What Am I?

1. Rotary, Pringles and Windex...

Too hard for scratching, too precious to try;
My pump for a lifetime, when not drowned in passion,
I'm digging potatoes for roasting and mash'n.
Four times a prime number, bad luck some may feel?
Just one for each week of the year, that's the deal!

2. Tiny, shiny craters.

My profile as broad as it is long.
Struck at tea time by a careless driver:
A slice of rough luck!
Fortunately chips were on the menu
Which was only fair.
Way beyond the green grass
I felt a whole lot better.

3. The boon and bane of modern life,
Much is excused by my shortcomings.
My periphery is hard;
Where is my core, so soft?
Where is the key?
Reach out!
Connect!
I am there.

RIDDLE 1

Sad how we badmouth you. Or dribble mealy

comfort words like 'sprucing', 'sparkle', 'patina';
deny your travel and camping rights; plan
Spring and pre- and post-Christmas holocausts.

Which you return rampagingly with
holiday and weekend Glastonberries
(invites via your website and corner love-nests).

You and I go back a long way, old friend.
But you never let that Hamlet faze you
when he raised you to some fifth level, nor

that American poet who labelled you
a 'handful', saw fear in you. (Didn't he know
in his smart publisher's office it had been

done - and whatever - by the time he'd arrived?)
Well, Edward Thomas liked you on his nettles!||
You've never taken a shine to my enemies,

and who else would offer free underbed
and board to gypsy moths and spider hoodies,
build Benidorms for beetles? Those planets in

the night sky are just specks of you. And at our deaths,
you move from sink estate secular to sacred
(above your senior cousins - rust, mould, ash);

get the last word in: a Head Office-approved
(God, I mean) final deserved upgrading
to First Class from vicar, priest and pope.

RIDDLE 2

my?

Sometimes you look at them, and think:
were they ever those ~~who once did their own things?~~
In life's skin-and-bone flick,
more like two families of scruffs
from a rundown estate.

rebel porters?

punks + rockers?
or two five-a-sides

But give them their due.
When their clever, squeaky-clean cousins
from the better end of town
have Torvill-and-Dean'd over the keys,
or made melodies with clay,
or grabbed the air as if they own it,
these lower orders will still be
testing water, scouting new territory –
even rising to the posh lingo
of entrechat and pirouette – and then,
out of their tight leather jackets,
partying each night till dawn.

When a child in the bath,
I saw them on my body's atlas
as my own Capes Wrath and Grim. But the truth is:
they help make upright citizens of us,
and daily draw that frontier
where Home ends, Abroad begins.

A Glossary of Poetry Terms

- A**
- a. Accent
 - b. Allegory
 - c. Alexandrine
 - d. Alliteration
 - e. Allusion
 - f. Ambiguity
 - g. Anapaest
 - h. Anthology
 - i. Anthropomorphism
 - j. Antithesis
 - k. Antonym
 - l. Apostrophe
 - m. Assonance
- B**
- a. Ballad
 - b. Ballade
 - c. Bathos
 - d. Blank Verse
 - e. Burlesque
- C**
- a. Cadence
 - b. Caesura
 - c. Cinquain
 - d. Clerihew
 - e. Cliche
 - f. Colloquial (ism)
 - g. Common Measure
 - h. ~~Conciet~~ Conciat
 - i. Concrete Poetry
 - j. Consonance
 - k. Couplet
- D**
- a. Dactyl (ic)
 - b. Diction
 - c. Dimeter
 - d. Dirge
 - e. Diggerel
 - f. Dramatic Monologue
- E**
- a. Eclogue
 - b. Elegy
 - c. Elision
 - d. End - rhyme
 - e. End - stopped
 - f. Enjambement
 - g. Englyn
 - h. Epic
 - i. Epigram

- E**
- j. Epitaph
 - k. Epithalamion
 - l. Euphemism
 - m. Even accent
- F**
- a. Fable
 - b. Fancy
 - c. Feminine ending
 - d. Figurative Language
 - e. Foot
 - f. Found Poem
 - g. Free Verse
- H**
- a. Haiku
 - b. Half - rhyme
 - c. Heptameter
 - d. Heroic couplet
 - e. Hexameter
 - f. Hyperbole
- I**
- a. Iamb (ic)
 - b. Idyll
 - c. Image/Imagery
 - d. Imagism
 - e. Internal rhyme
 - f. Irony
- K**
- a. Kinetic Poetry
- L**
- a. Lament
 - b. Lampoon
 - c. Latinism
 - d. Lay
 - e. Limerick
 - f. Lyric (al)
- M**
- a. Masculine ending
 - b. Metaphor
 - c. Metonymy
 - d. Metre
 - e. Monologue
 - f. Motif
- N**
- a. Narrative Verse

Je

- O**
- a. Octameter
 - b. Octave
 - c. Ode
 - d. Onomatopoeia
 - e. Ottava Rima
 - f. Oxymoron
- P**
- a. Panegyric
 - b. Pararhyme
 - c. Paradox
 - d. Parody
 - e. Pastoral
 - f. Pathetic fallacy
 - g. Pathos
 - h. Periphrasis
 - i. Persona
 - j. Personification
 - k. Pentameter
 - l. Petrarchan Sonnet
 - m. Platitude
 - n. Poetic diction
 - o. Prose poem
 - p. Prosody
 - q. Pun

- Q**
- a. Quatrain

- R**
- a. Refrain
 - b. Renga
 - c. Rhetorical question
 - d. Rhyme
 - e. Rhyme Royal
 - f. Rhythm

- S**
- a. Satire
 - b. Scansion
 - c. Septet
 - d. Sestet
 - e. Sight-rhyme
 - f. Similie
 - g. Soliloquy
 - h. Sonnet
 - i. Spondee
 - j. Stanza
 - k. Stress
 - l. Structure
 - m. Style
 - n. Syllabic Verse
 - o. Symbol
 - p. Synonym

- T**
- a. Tercet
 - b. Tetrameter
 - c. Terza Rima
 - d. Theme
 - e. Threnody
 - f. Tone
 - g. Trimeter
 - h. Triple rhyme
 - i. Triplet
 - j. Trochee

- V**
- a. Versification
 - b. Vers libre
 - c. Vernacular
 - d. Villanelle
 - e. Visual Poetry

- Z**
- a. Zeugma

Something to do over coffee!

(Or ?)

"THE SIMILES/DISSIMILES GAME" !!!!!

Here are two lists of things, randomly arranged:

A

idea
money
poem
sleep
school
television
love affair
exam
hospital
politician

B

birdcage
ship
fist
crocodile
umbrella
garden
empty bottle
desert island
ashtray
game of cards

The object of the game is to invent your own SIMILES by taking any word from column A and, using like or as, linking it to any word from column B. Your resulting similes can be as obscure, mad or serious as you like. But you must indicate the ground for your comparison, as in, for example, 'Like a garden, a love affair needs weeding'.

You may make the words singular or plural, and, if you wish, insert adjectives e.g. 'bright idea'; 'black umbrella'; 'empty school'

And you can reverse: B to A!

Incidentally, Lewis Carroll played this game in his "Alice in Wonderland": the Mad Hatter asks, "Why is a raven like a writing desk?"