

# Rhymes for a Reason

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Presented by

*My poetic side* 



## Dedication

*To my inspiration Helen*

## About the author

I live in Hartlepool.i love writing poetry and also reading biographies.

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## We Stand Together

Our thoughts are with the bereaved We must understand their pain We all think that we are safe But  
vigilance we must attain It shouldn't take an act of violence For us to care for one another We  
should cherish every day With mother, father, sister, brother Lives were lost and people injured Due  
to a senseless act This is the ugly face of life Not fantasy but fact We must all band together And  
help in any way we can They are someone's flesh and blood Our kindred fellow man Keep  
Manchester in your prayers Each and every night Pray also for other parts of the world Who have  
suffered the same plight

## A Trip To The Launderette

Edith had to take her washing  
To the local Launderette  
Because every time she hangs clothes on the line  
It starts to rain and everything gets wet  
The machines are dated and very noisy  
So everyone has to talk louder  
Edith hears Mrs Smart who lives in her street  
Shouting that she needs to buy more washing powder  
Sometimes when there are no available machines  
It can be quite annoying  
You have to sit there for ages  
And the pungent smell of conditioner is cloying  
Mrs Smart drops her washing  
And everyone sitting there can see  
That the label in her Berlei bra  
Boldly says forty four double d  
Elderly Mr Croft has washed his shirts  
After too many washes they look quite rough  
And everybody notices the fraying  
On the collars and the cuffs  
Edith sits next to Mrs Bloggs  
Who is wearing a heavy frown  
She's been told they can't get a stubborn stain  
Out of a satin christening gown  
The stain consisted of small black spots  
For which Mrs Bloggs had no explanation  
The assistant said that keeping it in polythene  
It could have been caused by condensation  
Mr Croft said "Ladies,  
Should I re-enact the Levi's Ad"?  
Edith said "keep your trousers on  
You're old enough to be his dad.  
We don't want to see your long-johns

Or your knobbly knees.  
So do us all a favour  
And keep your clothes on, please"  
Mr Croft carefully folded his shirts  
As neatly as he could  
The zip on his laundry bag was broken  
So he did the best he could  
Mr Carson is the local doctor  
He's very popular in the town  
He always wears a three piece suit  
Usually navy blue or brown  
He has never owned a washing machine  
And usually hand-washes in the sink  
He learned his lesson when a stray red sock  
Dyed all his white shirts pink  
His hour and a half at the Launderette  
He does on his day off  
Usually he is approached  
By a patient with an ache or a cough  
He tells them it's his day of rest  
But this falls on deaf ears  
And he usually ends up surrounded  
By several old dears  
Mrs Telford sits next to her husband  
And you should have seen her face  
When he told the doctor in a loud voice  
He had an itch in an intimate place  
He then went on to give the doctor  
A very lurid description  
While his wife sat cringing  
The doctor wrote out a prescription  
When Edith's whole weeks washing  
Was on its final spin  
Edith, Dr Carson and Mr Croft  
Were the only ones left in  
The lady at the counter informs them



That the Launderette closes at four  
So Edith empties her machine  
And she prepares to go  
She says that having to go to the Launderette  
Can be such a pain  
She's barely got the words out  
When it suddenly starts to rain  
Mr Croft boldly asks Dr Carson for a lift  
And Edith thinks he's got a cheek  
The doctor says "the way the weather is  
I'll probably see you back here next week"

## A Week In The Life Of Edith Brown

It's eight 'o' clock on Monday morning  
And a certain someone is on the bus to town  
It's the start of another hectic week  
In the life of Edith Brown

At ten she meets her old friend Pam  
In the Pink Teapot Cafe  
There'll be tea and cakes waiting for her  
And as usual Pam won't let her pay

Pam will moan about her husband Fred  
Who's the laziest man on earth  
Ever since she married him  
He's been more trouble than he's worth

Edith will listen attentively  
But she's cautious to offer advice  
Pam can be very defensive  
Sometimes downright nasty to be precise

When the tea and cakes are drunk and eaten  
Edith and Pam go their separate ways  
No hug as they part company  
Cos Pam's not keen on public displays

Edith goes home and does some ironing  
Then sits down to watch TV  
With a cuppa and a plate of digestives  
On a lap-tray upon her knee

When seven-thirty comes around  
It's time for Edith to put up her feet  
With a steaming cup of hot chocolate

## Watching Coronation Street

She goes to bed at ten-thirty  
And wakes up each day at six  
After a glass of hot water and lemon  
Her fried breakfast she will fix

Two eggs, two sausages and a slice of fried bread  
She eats the same thing every day  
She's just about due for her cholesterol check  
Goodness knows what her doctor will say

Tuesday is the day she bakes  
Cakes she's not supposed to eat  
She uses guesswork for the measures  
And ends up with enough cakes to feed the street

On Wednesday Edith plays Bridge  
With some friends she's known for years  
Sometimes they play in her sitting room  
Other times they play in theirs

One particular friend called Sally  
Plays her cards close to her chest  
She makes up the rules to suit herself  
Much to the dismay of the rest

Whenever she is playing  
She likes a large glass of gin  
And when someone has a bit of luck  
She swears down she's let them win

On Thursdays, Edith goes to the market  
Where there are bargains to be found  
But the site is on a car-park  
Where large potholes are profound

Many a time she's almost dislocated  
Her newly-fitted plastic hip  
Not looking where she's going  
And resulting in a trip

The stalls are full of varied things  
From furniture to lemonade  
Electrical appliances and ornaments  
And lots of lamps without a shade

Friday afternoons, Edith goes to the cinema  
To see the latest blockbuster  
Her favourite film is 'Son of the Morning Star'  
In which Gary Cole played General Custer

At the weekend she takes it easy  
Doing a crossword or reading a book  
She hopes that no-one needs to contact her  
Because her phone is off the hook

She's got tired of cold-callers  
Wanting to know who's her energy supplier  
They pestered her so much  
She felt like disconnecting the telephone wire

She's had a laid-back weekend  
Now it's time to go to sleep  
Before Monday morning comes  
And the start of another busy week

If you pop into the Pink Teapot Cafe  
When you're in the town  
The lady at the table near the window  
Is the one and only Edith Brown

## Day Centre Day

Sally sits in her bay window  
Watching folks go by  
"No-one ever visits me"  
She murmurs with a sigh

She got up at seven  
Had her usual breakfast at eight  
Bacon, an egg and a slice of fried bread  
On her usual Royal Doulton plate

About ten 'o' clock  
The mini-bus will arrive  
To take her to the Day Centre  
She'll be back home by five

Her coat is hanging in the hallway  
It's looking quite well-worn  
With a button hanging by a thread  
And the right-hand pocket torn

She puts on her coat  
And pulls on her woolly hat  
She checks that everything's switched off  
And hears some mail drop on the mat

It's the same old junk  
That comes almost every day  
A catalogue of thermal underwear  
With twenty-eight weeks to pay

A bingo site seen on TV  
Offering her fifty free spins  
She's been on it a couple of times  
But never had any wins

A letter from the council  
About dog-mess in the streets  
It's been years since she last saw  
A dog warden on their beat

A leaflet from a gas supplier  
Says they're going to freeze their price  
She won't be changing over  
Until she seeks advice

Her reading is interrupted  
By the mini-bus beeping its horn  
She hopes that none of her friends  
Notice her pocket is torn

As she steps out onto the path  
She can see the curtains twitching  
Putting her keys in her pocket  
Puts even more stress on the stitching

The mini-bus is half-full  
With the old familiar faces  
Alfie with his flowered shirt  
And multi-coloured braces

Elsbeth in her faux-fur coat  
And jewellery of diamante  
She bought it from a flea-market  
But says she inherited them from her auntie

Doris in her parka  
And her high-heeled leather boots  
With her bleached blond hair  
Spoilt by its dark roots

George in his usual shirt  
With its frayed collar and cuffs  
His brylcreemed hair adorns his head  
Topped off with ear muffs

Sally clammers onto the bus  
And sits in the seat next to Doris  
All the way there she'll have to endure  
Her moaning about hubby Horace

Doris says the same things every week  
They've heard it all before  
Nobody else gets a chance to speak  
So her woes they all ignore

The bus arrives at the centre  
And Doris is first off the bus  
She pushes the others out of the way  
No-one can be bothered to make a fuss

Sally gets seated between Alfie and George  
Then someone says "Let's play bingo"  
She's over the moon and can't wait to play  
She loves to hear all of the lingo

Like 'two little ducks', that's twenty-two  
And 'two-o' that's number twenty  
The caller-out knows all of them  
And believe me there are plenty

Doris is going to play bingo  
And she queues to buy her books  
She wins something nearly every week  
And gets plenty of dirty looks

The bingo starts and Sally  
Needs number fifty-nine  
If the number comes out now  
She's won a single line

Doris is on edge  
She needs number twenty-three  
It's the next number out  
Sally says "How lucky is she?"

Sally then doesn't say a word  
She's quiet as a mouse  
Thirteen is the number she needs  
To win her a full house

Doris isn't satisfied  
With what she's already won  
She wins the full house on twenty-nine  
And the game is no longer fun

When bingo is done  
It's time to go home  
Doris says she'll spend her winnings  
On her cat that's called Jerome

Sally is home relaxing  
In front of the TV  
She wishes she had Doris's luck  
But she knows it's not to be



She's happy and contented  
In her cosy home  
Unlike Doris, hubby Horace  
And the cat that's called Jerome

## Depression Isn't catching

Molly suffers from depression  
She's had it for ages  
It's okay to sit next to her  
What she's got isn't contagious

She sees you look at her with pity  
But that isn't what she needs  
She tries to look after herself  
Her appearance it misleads

She feels constantly tired  
The fatigue it gets her down  
She hopes she might feel better  
If she has a trip into town

She thinks that she might pop  
Into the cafe for a bite  
But since she's been depressed  
She hasn't had much appetite

A good night's sleep  
Is a distant memory  
Going to bed at ten at night  
Then up and wide-awake at three

She feels so worthless  
And waits for the phone to ring  
Usually a family member  
Wanting a loan of something

She remembers how she used to feel  
Before she was depressed  
When she didn't feel so irritable  
And was hardly ever stressed

She feels a sense of anguish  
A let-down to her family  
They all seem to see  
Her depression as a malady

The loss of her old self  
Causes her great sadness  
Her family tells their friends  
That Molly suffers from a madness

They think that it is funny  
But don't realise the hurt  
That they cause to Molly  
If only to her former self she could revert

They ring her up for no reason at all  
They say it's all in fun  
Her depression lost her all of her friends  
At the mercy of daughter and son

Depression is an illness  
That can happen to us all  
No matter how much money you have  
It's something you can not forestall

If by chance one day  
You see Molly in the town  
Why not stop and say hello  
Make her smile instead of frown

Ask her how she is today  
Enquire what she has bought  
Depression is an illness  
Not a disease that can be caught

## Edith's Hefty Handbag

Edith had been suffering from shoulder pain  
She'd developed a stoop and only her left shoulder would sag  
When she went to see her doctor  
He put all the blame on her weighty handbag  
One afternoon she had time to spare  
So she decided to empty it out  
Anything that wasn't essential  
She would leave it out, without a doubt  
When she tipped it out on the table  
She got the shock of her life  
The numerous items were too many to mention  
No wonder shoulder pain was causing her strife  
Firstly, there was a packet of extra strong mints  
That she'd been given by a friend  
The best before date was twelve months ago  
The packet had been left open at one end  
She was rather partial to a mint  
So she thought she'd try her luck  
But the minty taste was no longer there  
So she spat it out after a single suck  
Next she found a mirror  
With a picture of Marilyn Monroe on the back  
She held it up to look into it  
Her reflection was fractured by a diagonal hairline crack  
She'd bought it several years ago  
At a local jumble sale  
First time she'd prised it open  
She'd broken a false nail  
Her cellphone had seen better days  
She'd bought it for a tenner off her friend Sherry  
Sherry had bought the latest i-phone  
So she'd sold Edith her dated Blackberry  
A make-up kit with brushes

Had really seen better days  
The brushes were missing half their bristles  
And the orange powder harked back to her 'Tangoed' phase  
She has quite a few credit cards  
Including Barclaycard, Visa and American Express  
With only stubs left in her cheque book  
She's spending more instead of less  
There's an assortment of loose change  
Two and one pound coins and pence  
If she pays her bus fare with too much  
She knows the driver will take offense  
She has a lipstick-shaped cigarette lighter  
That someone gave her for a joke  
She just keeps it as a souvenir  
Because she doesn't smoke  
There's a USB drive, mp3 player  
and scrunchies for her hair  
Tissues, gum and diary  
she didn't know were there  
Then there's sunglasses, lipstick  
and numerous feet of dental floss  
Hand sanitizer, address book, medication  
And a bottle of perfume she got from her ex-boss  
Edith looks at the table-full  
And only puts essentials back in her bag  
The bag feels so much lighter  
No longer will her shoulder sag  
She went out for a walk the following day  
No more pain in her shoulder  
Her neighbour noticed the spring in her step  
"I've de-cluttered my handbag" she told her

## Granda's Tree House

I'm sitting in the garden  
With my small son on my knee  
He looks up at me with big brown eyes  
And says "Tell me about Granda's tree"

My father planted a tree  
In nineteen forty two  
He nurtured it and hadn't bargained  
On just how big it grew

When I was just seven years old  
I had a love of climbing trees  
Many times mum put plasters  
On my bloodied and skinned knees

I can remember one day  
Wearing my new party dress  
Peering in through the window  
A grubby bedraggled mess

I'd climbed as high as I could go  
Then heard a quite loud crack  
The branch it snapped in two  
And I landed on my back

I'd excelled myself on this occasion  
You could say I'd gone the whole hog  
I'd landed on a little offering  
Left by next doors dog

I remember as a little girl  
My father built me a house in the tree  
A sturdy wooden house with windows

Especially for me

When I was in my tree house  
I could be almost anywhere  
In a tropical jungle  
Or in a cave hiding from a grizzly bear

Hanging onto my rope ladder  
With a plastic cutlass on my hip  
I could be looking for buried treasure  
My tree house a pirate ship

Underneath the carpet  
In the middle of the floor  
My father had lovingly made me  
A little brass-hinged trap door

Whenever I got fed up  
Of being stuck inside  
I'd open up that trap door  
And go straight down the slide

Sometimes I would stand  
For maybe half an hour  
And pretend I was a princess  
Imprisoned in an ivory tower

Some days I'd be a cowgirl  
On a wild west ranch  
And sometimes I'd pretend to be  
A monkey swinging from a branch

One day I picked some flowers  
And mum asked what they were for  
I said "they are for my cottage  
With roses around the door"



My son is looking wistful  
Then he smiles at me  
He says "mummy I would love  
To see my Granda's tree"

Tears come into my eyes  
My son's smile turns into a frown  
I say "The tree's no longer there  
The new owners chopped it down"

My son says it is sad  
That the tree's no longer there  
But no-one can destroy the memories  
That my son and I share

## Grandas Wartime Tales

When I was a little girl  
My grandfather had a tin  
With a sailor smoking a cigarette on the lid  
It was what he kept his medals in

He called them Pip, Squeak and Wilfred  
And I asked him what they were  
He said the nineteen fourteen star, the British war medal and the Victory medal  
From World War One, but they're not rare

He told me his war memories  
Could fill many a page  
Then said he'd been recruited  
Even though he was underage

He told me he'd had a shock  
When on the internet he'd seen  
That a quarter of a million young men had signed up  
All under the age of eighteen

He said recruits had a medical  
To make sure they were fit to fight  
They must have a minimum chest size of thirty-four inches  
And five feet three was the minimum height

He told me he'd heard something  
That had really filled him with rage  
That recruitment officers got two shillings and sixpence  
If they turned a blind eye to someone under-age

He added that he and some old army friends  
Used to spend hours chatting on a bench

Recalling a soldier they'd known  
Too short to see over the edge of the trench

My granda had asked his friend, a fourteen year old recruit  
What on earth he'd signed up for  
He reluctantly replied he had clamoured  
For the excitement of fighting in a war

He told them of my father's brother  
Who had been the first born son  
Blown to pieces at fifteen  
Recruited by passing for twenty-one

He didn't survive to get medals  
His parents thought of him as brave  
Many times since then  
I have visited his grave

No remains are buried  
Just a plaque that bears his name  
A list of lives that were lost  
No bodies left to claim

He also told them about the time  
That my late Grandma spent  
Visiting her beloved Alexander  
As he lay in a fever tent

He had typhoid fever  
And he managed to survive  
The doctors and nurses told her  
He was very lucky to be alive

My grandfather would tell war stories  
That would chill you to the core  
Tales of the atrocities

And casualties of war

## I'm Disabled, Not Stupid

Some people can be so ignorant  
I know they're not to blame  
They see me in my wheelchair  
And say "Aw, isn't it a shame"?  
I say "Hello, I'm fine"  
And you don't know what to do  
Just because I am disabled  
Don't assume my brain is too  
Whenever you get stressed  
You can walk along the beach  
With no facilities for the disabled  
To me it's out of reach  
I'd like to go on holidays  
But I stay at home instead  
Because no matter where I go  
I need a hoist to go to bed  
My bowel and my bladder  
Are affected by my medication  
It angers me when disabled toilets  
Have poor sanitation  
On the bus, the driver puts down a ramp  
And I can hear you whinge  
When your shopping trolley is in my way  
And sometimes my wheels impinge  
I wait at zebra crossings  
And I know my green cross code  
But the timing on the lights means  
I don't have time to cross the road  
My legs may no longer work  
But my brain power is perfect  
So next time you see me in the town  
Please have some respect  
If you'd like to know how I am

Don't be afraid to ask  
My disability isn't catching  
And it isn't a difficult task  
I'll tell you how I am  
And I'll ask how you are too  
Overlook my disability  
It isn't hard to do

## Life Lessons

Don't let the world make you bitter  
Don't let the world turn you cold  
Some things that happen when we're younger  
Can come back to haunt us when we're old

Things will happen that hurt us  
And people we cherish will leave  
But everything happens for a reason  
This I truly believe

We can all be vulnerable  
And our heart can break  
None of us are perfect  
And we all make mistakes

Always be true to yourself  
Don't pretend to be something you're not  
You'll find out who your true friends are  
Who will accept you no matter what

Life will not be plain sailing  
And eventually you will find  
That those who mind don't matter  
And the people who matter don't mind

## Missing

MISSING

Today she walked into your room  
And saw your empty chair  
It has not sunk in yet  
That you are no longer there

She thinks of the good times you had  
Your laughter and your smile  
Your kindness and affection  
Your inimitable style

You were never one to judge  
Treated everyone the same  
When someone had a problem  
It was to you they always came

Always a good listener  
A true and loyal friend  
All who encountered you  
Knew on you they could depend

Six months have passed,  
Six long long months  
No-one knows where you went  
Your bank account has not been touched  
Not one penny has been spent

Are you living on the streets?  
Have you changed your name?  
Did someone else commit a crime  
And you thought you'd get the blame?



Did you have an argument  
Or is it money that you owe?  
Did you feel afraid or threatened  
Why, oh why did you go?

A missing person ad on Facebook  
Has had five thousand views  
Members of your family  
Have appealed on tv news

You may have seen your face  
On a newspaper today  
Please contact someone if your able  
Let someone know you are ok

The room's you way you left it  
But without you it looks bare  
Your mum's greatest wish is to look in  
And see you sitting in that chair

## Mmm Cake

I'm shopping in the town  
near my favourite cake shop  
I need a sugar fix  
so I'll really have to stop

I'm having friends to tea,  
so I think it's only fair  
To buy my friend Patricia,  
a nice chocolate éclair

Connie loves a cake  
and it's always lots of fun  
Watching her dissect  
a pink-coated iced bun

Alice will be coming  
and she'll bring her sister Pam  
They both like nothing better,  
than a doughnut filled with jam

A Battenberg of pink and yellow  
is one of Carol's favourite cakes  
She divides the squares into four,  
oh what a mess she makes

A nice Victoria Sponge  
is Jess's favourite cake  
But the ones in the shop aren't as good  
as the ones her Grandma used to make

Wendy is quite partial  
to a round, plump Eccles cake  
Filled with currants and buttery filling

They're messy when the pastry starts to flake

The cakes are on the cake-stand,  
it's quite a sight to see  
I'm trying to cut down my sugar intake  
But they look really tempting to me

My friends are choosing their favourite cake  
But I don't think I'll risk it  
I'll just sit and watch them, with a nice cup of tea  
And a nice modest Digestive biscuit

## My Grandmother's Hands

My Grandmother's Hands

My Grandmother's hands told many tales  
Of scrubbing steps and broken nails  
Hand-washing clothes in enamel sink  
Red football socks turned white towels pink

When not baking cakes at the old gas stove  
Rag-rugs with old scraps of material she wove  
Pantry shelves filled with powdered egg  
Homemade rice pudding sprinkled with nutmeg

Sea-coal burning on an open coal fire  
Bread on a toasting fork burning like a pyre  
Grandma plumping up pillows from beneath granda's head  
Applying ointment to sores caused by being confined to bed

Hours spent at auctions bidding with her hand  
Buying an incomplete bed wasn't what she planned  
Back home in time for tea, crumpets and homemade strawberry jam,  
I can still recall the smell of it, bubbling in the pan

Switching tv channels with a flick of her wrist  
That's how we did it back then, when remotes did not exist  
Working hard all of her life, meeting everyone's demands

Every line and wrinkle told a story  
On my Grandmother's Hands

## My Mother

My Mother

Sometimes I sense my mother  
When I walk into a room  
Lily of the Valley lingers  
Her favourite perfume

I really wish she was still here  
So I could apologize  
For all the many times  
When we didn't see eye to eye

I had so much troubling me  
But I chose to keep it in  
Now I sit and ponder  
On how different things could have been

I hated seeing her in pain  
It was all beyond my control  
I hope that she passed knowing  
I loved her with my heart and soul

I'm putting down on paper  
What I could not say aloud  
I hope that if she were still here  
I would make her proud

Mere words can not express  
Just how much I regret  
Losing my mum, my role model,  
Who I never will forget

## My Wordy Wedding Cake

Today it is the day  
To choose my wedding cake  
I love anything to do with words  
So my decision was easy to make

I went off to the baker's  
And they had lots of styles  
But I had my heart set on a cake  
Adorned with Scrabble tiles

It was to be iced with red fondant  
And the letters would be white  
With the number of points on the corner  
It had to be just right

There would be a message  
On tiers one and two  
'Words can not describe  
Just how much I love you'

Our initials on the top  
On individual tiles  
I want it to be the best wedding cake  
That's been seen for miles

I've had some ideas  
About the cake board  
I saw one on 'the net'  
I really adored

Green squares of fondant  
With white piping divisions  
What words can go on it?  
Decisions, decisions

How about 'love, honour, respect and trust'?  
All of these details must be discussed  
When my cake is finished  
A photo I will take  
I hope you won't be lost for words  
When you see my wedding cake

## PTSD -My Enemy

Each and every day  
I have people judging me  
But they don't understand  
Why I have P.T.S.D

I have sudden bursts of anger  
But I'll do you no harm  
It suddenly envelops me  
I don't mean to cause alarm

When I suffer flashbacks  
They seem all too real  
Past events come back to haunt me  
Though my fears I will conceal

I suffer sleep disturbance  
So I'm tired all the time  
I fall asleep mid-conversation  
I'm worn-out, is it a crime?

Sometimes I feel like I'm in a film  
And I'm not really here  
I feel like I am a puppet  
My P.T.S.D the puppeteer

I startle very easily  
So make sure I know you're there  
If you evade my line of vision  
Make sure I am aware



I have intrusive images  
Of events from my past  
They dominate my memory  
I have to rest till they have passed

I have problems concentrating  
When watching the TV  
When you come to see me  
I give you the third degree

Asking you what happened  
On my favourite TV show  
You say that you don't watch it  
So I never get to know

I suffer from survivor guilt  
Questioning life after death  
I blame myself for not being there  
When you were breathing your last breath

My nightmares are so real  
I only hope you knew  
The day you passed away  
My heart it broke in two

Writing down these words  
Has been cathartic beyond belief  
My P.T.S.D was triggered  
By the onset of my grief

## Pension Day at the Post Office

Today is Monday, pension day  
Tommy is standing in the queue  
Behind him is his neighbour  
Who everyone calls Nosey Sue

In front of him is Carol  
Who works in the general dealers  
He saw her in town the other day  
In her clapped-out Reliant three-wheeler

The queue is getting longer  
And the odour isn't nice  
It's a mixture of sweat and eau de cologne  
And some guy is wearing 'old spice'

Carol turns to Tommy and says  
"There's a lot of bills that need paying"  
He sees Sue listen attentively  
To hear what they are saying

Sue tells them both  
"Gas and electric are getting dear"  
Carol says "you shouldn't have been listening" with a sneer  
Sue looks put-out and turns her back on them  
A heavy smoker at the front coughs  
And says his chest is full of phlegm

The girl behind the counter says "too much information"  
The man laughs and discloses he's on the list  
For a knee operation

Tommy is tired of waiting  
While others stand without a care  
He sees a woman further back  
Spraying perfume in the air

One of Tommy's neighbours  
Her name is Bernadette  
Though attached to an oxygen supply  
Says she's gasping for a cigarette

Tommy tells her she should pack them in  
But she says with a wry smile  
"It's the smoking that keeps me thin  
It wouldn't be worthwhile"

The queue is getting shorter  
Tommy is almost at the front  
Heavy smoker spits on the floor  
But no-one dares confront

Carol pays her bills  
And bids Tommy goodbye  
Sue gives her a dirty look  
But she has no idea why

Tommy is now at the counter  
His pension to collect  
The cashier hands him the money  
And asks him to check it's correct

Tommy's been given a fiver too much  
And hands the extra over  
Sue comments that if it had happened to her  
She'd have been in clover

The cashier thanks Tommy for being honest  
Sue says she thinks he's mad  
"Honesty's the best policy" Tommy asserts  
"It's a thing of the past and that's sad"

Sue smirks and says "You're a fool, Tommy Jones  
I'd have kept it without a thought,  
Think of all the little treats  
That fiver would have bought"

Tommy says to Sue, up-close so she can hear  
"I may not have that extra fiver, but my conscience it is clear"  
He bids farewell to Bernadette  
Still gasping for a smoke  
And waves his hand to the rest of the queue  
Even though they've never spoke

Sue says "I'll see you again next week  
Or maybe some other time  
And I hope the cashier makes a mistake  
Then that fiver will be mine"

Tommy smiles at her and thinks  
'Will she ever learn?'"  
He hopes the cashier doesn't slip up  
When it is Sue's turn

## Sam the dog and Pearl the cat

Sam the dog and Pearl the cat  
Were sitting on the wall  
They do it every day  
So it isn't strange at all

They have little conversations  
Which only they can understand  
They talk about their little quirks  
And none of them are planned

Pearl goes first of course  
And Sam lets her have her say  
He knows better than to interrupt  
He learnt his lesson the other day

"I scratch my scratching post  
And I chase my clockwork mouse  
I leave my loving mistress  
Little gifts all around the house

I eat all of my food  
Then I use my litter tray  
Or sometimes one of her slippers  
When she looks the other way

I sleep lots throughout the day  
Until about half past seven  
Then I think it's playtime  
Until well after eleven

Each day she fills my water bowl  
But I don't use it for a drink  
I prefer to use the kitchen tap  
While balancing on the sink

I like to lodge my face in things  
And my mistress gets fed up  
The other day I got it stuck  
Inside a paper cup

I've got a lovely padded bed  
For when I need a sleep  
But I sleep in the bathroom hand-basin  
It's nice and cool and deep

I love it on a Tuesday  
My mistress gets her magazine  
I sit my bottom on it  
It's pages sight unseen

One of my favourite pastimes  
Is scratching on the door  
I make her think I want to go out  
Then I curl up on the floor

I put on my needy face  
When I smell nice food  
My mistress never shares with me  
How can she be so rude?

I like to go upstairs  
On the bed I like to lie down  
Nestled in a furry ball  
On a fluffy dressing gown

Sometimes I hide in cupboards  
Then suddenly jump out  
My mistress tells me off for startling her  
You probably hear her shout

I sit on the laptop keyboard  
While my owner tries to chat  
To her human friends on Facebook  
I soon put a stop to that"

Sam now has his say at last  
And looks straight at Pearl, the cat  
"You think you get into mischief,  
Well I can better that

I love going into town  
Though it isn't very far  
My favourite thing is the lovely breeze  
On my head out of the window of the car

Sometimes my mistress brings me a doggy bag  
From her favourite restaurant  
It contains all of my favourite things  
She knows exactly what I want

Last week she took me in the car  
Allegedly to the park  
It was really a trip to the vets for 'the snip'  
I was totally kept in the dark

I do a vanishing act at bath time  
I always hide under the bed  
So I get taken out to the garden  
And end up getting hosed-down instead

Whenever my belly is scratched  
No matter where we are  
I lay on my back with my legs in the air  
As if playing an air-guitar

I love rolling in smelly stuff  
Much to my owner's dismay  
It's one of my favourite pastimes  
I do it almost every day

I'm the master of the head-tilt  
When I smell nice food on the table  
I sometimes get some scraps  
But not from greedy aunt Mabel

Odd times I chase my tail  
I chase it round and round  
Then I spin around a couple of times  
Before exhaustedly lying down

I keep eating grass  
When my tummy is upset  
But sometimes I eat too much  
And I end up at the vet"

It's almost five 'o' clock  
Both hear the rattling of a tin  
That sound means it is dinner time  
Time to be going in

Sam gently says to Pearl  
"See you tomorrow, the same time"  
Pearl preens her whiskers and purrs softly  
Then over the wall she starts to climb



Sam spies a muddy patch  
He'll save it for another day  
Then he'll see his pal, Pearl the cat,  
When she's next out to play

## She is a missing person

Callie is a missing person  
That no-one cares about  
Pregnant at fifteen  
So her parents threw her out

Too young to get a council house  
So she's living on the streets  
Sleeping in a doorway  
Wrapped in filthy sheets

Everything was going fine  
Till her new stepdad moved in  
He had her mother at his beck and call  
Much to her chagrin

Callie had tried her level best  
To get on well with him  
James Thomas Harrison  
Known to his friends as Jim

In mum's eyes he could do no wrong  
And Callie could do no right  
He'd laze about all day  
Then come to life at night

Callie had once seen him  
Bullying a man who was visibly shaken  
She went home and told her mum  
Who said she must have been mistaken

Callie had sought comfort  
In a boy called Andy Kim  
She thought he cared about her

And lost her virginity to him

When she told him she was pregnant  
He said "The kid's not mine. No way.  
You'll have to get the morning-after pill without delay"

Cassie went to the family doctor  
She took her best friend, Paige  
He said no pill without her parents consent  
Because she was under-age

She went home and told her mum and Jim  
And Jim called her a slag  
Her mother reluctantly took Jim's side  
And told her to go and pack her bag

So Callie left the family home  
Not a single word was spoken  
No family support and no money  
And a heart that had been broken

She was worried about her future  
And worried about her mother  
She hoped Jim wouldn't take things out  
On her younger sister and brother

She hitched a lift in a lorry  
And ended up in Hull  
Tried all of the youth hostels  
But was informed that they were full

So she camped out in a doorway  
And had no choice but to beg  
A young man would pass her every day  
He said his name was Greg

He told her she should be a model  
And invited her up to his flat  
She'd seen his type too many times  
She had more sense than that

Greg wasn't used to being turned down  
She said "Just leave me in peace"  
Greg out of revenge  
Reported Callie to the police

He told them she was a prostitute  
And had solicited him each time he passed  
The police believed her story  
When she said she'd been harassed

Greg, from that day on,  
Gave Callie a wide berth  
She was glad he'd got the message  
Her mum would have called him 'the scum of the earth'

After many months of living rough  
One day she caught the sight of Jim  
She'd always wondered if her mum  
Was still cohabiting with him

He glanced across at her  
Then did a double-take  
Why would Callie be sleeping rough?  
There must be some mistake

He approached her and he smiled  
But Callie stood her ground  
Then eventually she spoke and said  
"I didn't want to be found"

Jim stood, hands in his pockets

And said "Your mum's not got long to live.  
Why don't you just come home with me?  
I don't expect you to forgive"

Callie felt a salty tear  
Running down her face  
Jim said "Mum thought you didn't care.  
You disappeared without a trace"

Callie gathered her belongings  
Though it didn't amount to much  
Then quietly she uttered  
"I should have kept in touch"

Jim now had a car  
And said he'd take Callie back home  
She should be at her mother's side  
And would no longer need to roam

Back in the old familiar house  
Callie gently climbed the stairs  
She looked in and saw her mother  
Neath a quilt of coloured squares

"Hello Mum, How are you?"  
Callie softly said  
Her mother smiled her sweetest smile  
And sat up in the bed

"I know that I was wrong  
To take the side of Jim.  
He's been a different person  
Since I stood up to him"

Callie took her mother's hand  
And very gently smiled

Then said "I need you to get better  
To meet your new grandchild"

Jim walked into the bedroom  
With a tray of tea and cakes  
He said "I hope that you'll forgive me.  
We all make mistakes"

Mother closed her eyes and said  
"Look after Tim and Fay"  
Then she breathed a heavy sigh  
And softly passed away

There's a moral to this story  
Don't live life in the past  
Live each and every day  
As if it is your last

Callie, Jim and Tim and Fay  
Still live in the same house  
Jim is a changed man  
No longer an uncaring louse

I forgot to mention new baby Anne  
The family's new addition  
Named after Callie's mum  
In keeping with tradition

Jim now has a new partner  
A young woman named Marie  
Callie just wishes her mother were here  
To see what a good mum she can be

## Sing No Sad Songs

Sing no sad songs when I pass  
As sunlight filters through stained glass  
Though you look upon me as I lay  
In front of you all on this mournful day

Think of times recent and of times past  
Think only of me when you saw me last  
Full of life and fun and love  
Before my journey up above

Think of all the times we had  
Some were joyous, many sad  
The beautiful places that we went  
The camping trip to picturesque Kent

The occasional times when we fell out  
When your mind was filled with doubt  
But our differences we resolved  
When people ceased to get involved

I want to see you all in colours bright  
That will fill me with delight  
I really hope you won't spend hours  
Trying to find the perfect flowers

Donate to charity, learn the art of giving  
In my opinion, flowers are for the living  
Make sure they play my favourite song  
I'd like everyone to sing along

You'll all be upset beyond belief  
Know now I'll understand your grief  
I'll see the tears on your face  
But be assured I'm in a better place

I'm now at peace and out of pain  
Looking forward to when we meet again  
I've gone on ahead, I'll stand and wait  
For you to meet me at the gate

I'll smile at you and you'll smile back  
I hope you won't be wearing black  
Then I'll take your hand in mine  
And we'll be together for all time



## The Birthday Party

Early friday morning an envelope  
Dropped onto Edith's welcome mat  
Inside was a Birthday Party Invite  
Adorned by a picture of a siamese cat

The party was to celebrate the birthday  
Of Edith's old nemesis, Mary  
They'd never really got on  
So the invite made her quite wary

Edith recognised the hand-writing  
Of Mary's daughter Jill  
Who had often taken time off work  
To look after her mother when she was ill

The party was on monday night  
At the local social club  
Edith couldn't understand why that was the venue  
When Mary's son ran his own pub

Then she suddenly remembered  
Rumours of a family feud  
Something about money loaned but never paid back  
Had prompted Mary's Will to be renewed

Edith knew that Mary's other daughter Kim  
Wouldn't be invited to the party  
Because Mary was ashamed of her  
For dressing cheap and tarty

Suddenly the phone rang  
It was Mary's daughter Jill  
She said "Are you coming to Mum's party?"

She really hopes you will"

Edith was lost for words

Then mumbled "We've never seen eye to eye"

Jill shocked Edith to the core

Saying "Mum wants to say her last goodbye.

She's terminally ill

and hasn't got long left.

If you don't go to her party

she will be bereft"

Edith said that she would go

If it meant so much to her mother

She didn't dare to ask about

Jill's sister and her brother

On the morning of the party

Edith didn't know what to wear

But as long as she turned up

Mary wouldn't really care

When Edith arrived at Mary's party

Jill took her to one side

She said "I need to speak to you about mum,

Before we go inside.

Mum was shocked when i said you were coming

After all the bad blood in the past

She wants to call a truce

Now she's on her last"

Edith gave Jill a hug and said

"I'm glad we can make amends,

But it shouldn't take something like this

To make us realise our true friends"

Edith and Jill went into the party  
And Mary was the centre of attention  
There were so many guests  
They'd filtered out into the extension

Mary was seated at the head table  
Downing a glass of brown ale  
The first thing Edith noticed  
Was that she suddenly looked so frail

Mary placed her present on the table  
Then read the nice verse in Edith's card  
She said "I know we haven't got on in the past  
Coming here must have been very hard"

Edith said she'd wanted to come  
There was nothing she'd rather do  
Mary could tell from Edith's expression  
Of her illness she already knew

The icing on the cake had begun to melt  
It had been on the table for hours  
It was a handbag made of fondant  
Filled with edible flowers

Someone suggested Mary should blow out the candles  
But that was a huge mistake  
She pursed her lips, blew and her dentures flew out  
Then landed upon the cake

Everyone burst out laughing  
And Mary was wearing a big grin  
She calmly picked up her dentures  
And put them straight back in

Reverend Smith ate peanuts from Mary's plate

And said they were simply the best  
Mary told him that once she'd sucked off the chocolate  
She had to leave the rest

The party was a great success  
And when Mary had said her goodbyes  
She looked at Edith who'd stayed behind  
With a wistful look in her eyes

"I'm so glad that you came  
And that we've made amends  
If i hadn't been so judgemental  
We could have been really good friends"

Mary took a sip of whiskey  
From a small monogrammed flask  
And Edith told her if she needed anything  
She only had to ask

Jill told Edith her car was outside  
And if she needed a lift home she would take her  
Mary said "Goodbye, dear friend  
Soon i'll be off to meet my maker"

Edith was lost for words  
And felt a tear run down her cheek  
Then said that they should meet for coffee  
Maybe sometime next week

Jill drove Edith home  
And thanked her for being so nice  
Edith thought she'd repay her  
By giving her some good advice

"Try not to bear grudges  
If you can make amends, don't wait

Because one day you'll discover  
You've left it far too late"

## The Cupboard Under The Stairs

If the cupboard under the stairs could talk  
I wonder what it would say  
Would it tell me of those who hid in it  
When there was rent to pay  
What about the poor frightened child  
Back in nineteen forty  
Locked inside it for hours at a time  
Just for being naughty  
It could tell of the granda who sheltered inside  
When bombs landed on Spion Kop  
Crouched inside, hands over his ears  
So that he couldn't hear the bombs drop  
Does the cupboard remember the numerous times  
When gran hid boxes of chocolates in there  
She would go in and eat them on the sly  
Because she was too greedy to share  
We used to have a gas man  
I think his name was Peter  
He came about four times a year  
To read our old gas meter  
He'd open up the cupboard door  
And illuminate the meter with his torch  
He laughed when we told him that Grandma  
Used a match to light a bulb in the porch  
I remember when I was five  
Playing hide and seek in the house  
I was quietly sat in the cupboard  
And came face to face with a mouse  
He left a long trail of foil  
He'd had Grandma's chocolate for a meal  
I got the blame and not the mouse  
Imagine how that made me feel  
During the war, it was sometimes the fashion

To use the cupboard under the stairs  
For food that was on ration  
People appreciated what was theirs  
It was used as a pantry for Bacon,  
Butter, sugar and powdered egg  
Some people had extra coupons  
While others had to beg  
In nineteen ninety seven,  
As I'm sure you are aware  
Harry Potter, young wizard, at four Privet Drive  
Lived in a cupboard under the stairs  
Our cupboard is no longer there  
And neither is the house  
My grandma has passed away  
And the chocolate-loving mouse  
If you still have a cupboard  
And it's underneath the stairs  
Just sit down and think awhile  
What could have happened in there

## The Empty Wardrobe

I look in the empty wardrobe  
And it looks so bare  
I remember all of the clothes  
That used to hang in there

The coat you wore to walk the dog  
And the one you wore for best  
The hat you always loved to wear  
I said it looked like a bird's nest

The blouse with lace you wore for weddings  
And the jacket made of tweed  
The numerous scarves of many colours  
How many did you need?

Your faded wedding dress  
That you hoped one day I'd wear  
The veil to match hung with it  
And the pearl slide for your hair

The purple dress you used to wear  
When you sang in the youth choir  
Strands still remained on the collar  
Off that faux-fur stole you used to hire

Your pleated skirts of navy blue  
Were folded in a drawer  
Belts of matching colours  
Hung inside the door



I look in the empty wardrobe  
And think of what's no longer there  
And I can still picture you  
In the clothes you used to wear

## The good old days

The Good Old Days

Take me back to the good old days

When we were grateful for what we had

Now people have much more than they need

And society has gone bad

Greed is the keyword and money their God

Everyone out for themselves

I remember a time when we thought we were rich

If we had food on our shelves

People have to keep up with the Joneses'

Bigger house, bigger car, better job

But trying to keep up with the Joneses'

Just makes people think they're a snob

They look down their nose at ones poorer than them

Think they're better than everyone else

Just because they've got private health care plans

And the poor have got National Health

I don't know what our ancestors would think

If they were alive today

They'd probably think we'd all be better off

Living life like the good old days

## The House At The End Of The Street

There was a house at the end of my street  
No-one lived there for very long  
During the war, an entire family wiped out  
When an aeroplane dropped a bomb

The family living there at the time  
Amounted to unlucky thirteen  
Mother, father, baby Mary  
And ten children in between

They were a lovely family  
Liked by everyone  
Janet Smithson who was a nurse  
And her hard-working husband John

They were in the front room having tea  
On that fateful day  
When an aeroplane scored a direct hit  
And God took them all away

The whole town was in mourning  
For the Smithson family  
Mother, father and eleven children  
The youngest baby Mary who was three

What was left of the house was boarded up  
Then the tenants would move in  
Off would come the boards  
The walls they were so thin

We'd hear their every movement  
If they slammed a door, the walls would shake  
Wild parties held by young teenagers

Would keep us all awake

A tenant would live there for a couple of months  
Then they'd go on their way  
We'd ask them why they were moving out  
But none of them would say

This went on for many years  
Tenants would come and go  
I asked the landlord what was wrong  
He said that he didn't know

One day I plucked up the courage  
To question a tenant as they were about to leave  
She said "I'm almost scared to tell you  
I've never been one to believe

But there is something supernatural  
Going on in the hall  
When everything is quiet  
We can hear screaming coming from the wall"

She said she'd looked on the internet  
In the local branch library  
And read up on the house's history  
And the sad fate of the Smithson family

After years of squatters and standing empty  
The house it was pulled down  
But what happened to the Smithson's  
Is still remembered in my home town

## The Key

There is a gateway to my heart  
And it is you that holds the key  
It didn't take me long to realise  
That you are the one for me

We've had our ups and downs  
But come through stronger in the end  
You are my rock through good times and bad  
My lover and my friend

We've had our fair share of disapproval  
And found out who our true friends are  
Good friends who are worth their weight in gold  
Whether they live near or far

It took so long to meet my soulmate  
And you know that it is you  
In this life and the hereafter  
You know that our love is true

It was fate that brought us together  
And I hope we'll never part  
Because it's only you that holds the key  
To the gateway to my heart

## The Lady Next Door

Our elderly neighbour passed away  
We went into her house, it looked so bare  
The only thing that remained of her  
Was a shawl draped over her chair

I remember when she moved in  
In nineteen ninety five  
She told us she'd had three heart attacks  
And was lucky to be alive

Everyday she'd come and ask  
If I'd go for her cigarettes  
Or go to the local betting shop  
And put on her horse-racing bets

One day she asked me in  
And showed me a photo of her son Dave  
She said he had an unruly beard  
Because he was too lazy to shave

She had shelves full of biscuit tins  
And said "Biscuits are bad for your health"  
Then took the lid off one  
And said "it's where I keep my wealth"

There must have been at least a grand  
In used ten pound notes  
She peeled two off the wad  
And said "Buy yourself a winter coat"

I refused the money  
To take it didn't seem right  
She said "you need the money more than me,

I've noticed your sad plight"

I asked her what she meant  
And she said it was a scandal  
Me walking around with a tear in my sleeve  
I explained I'd caught it on a door handle

She had an ornate mantelpiece  
With a China dog at either end  
I said "those are probably valuable"  
She said she'd been left them by a friend

She had two porcelain orbs  
Hanging from her window sashes  
I commented that they were pretty  
She said they contained her late husband's ashes

I asked if he'd been her only one  
But she told me she'd had three  
A Butcher, a Tailor  
And the last one would go to sea

She'd heard he'd had a girl in every port  
But hadn't known if it was true  
Then letters from different women arrived  
She'd lost count at twenty-two

I sat in awe of all her antiques  
She said she'd had a valuation  
An offer from a local dealer  
Had filled her with anticipation

She unbuttoned her hand-knitted cardigan  
And reached into her blouse pocket  
She asked me to hold out my hand  
And she placed in it a locket

The locket was adorned with filigree  
And was pretty beyond compare  
She told me it contained  
A lock of her late mother's hair

I said I couldn't take it  
It must be of sentimental value  
She said "Rather you than my son's wife  
Cos I know what she'll do.

She'll be straight round to the jewellers  
And see how much it's worth.  
I can't stand that woman  
Though my son thinks she's the salt of the earth.

She's a right gold-digger  
With my boy just for his money  
When I try to warn my son  
He seems to think it's funny"

I tell her that it's time I went  
And she says "You'd best go home,  
Nobody understands the loneliness  
When you live alone"

I feel a pang of guilt  
But I can't stay there forever  
She says she'll go to bed when I've gone  
Because she's not feeling too clever

Later on that same day  
We all heard an almighty bang  
At her lounge window was an empty space  
Where her curtains used to hang

My father broke down her front door



She lay beneath a wood hall stand  
Lifeless and ashen, both eyes open  
A porcelain orb clasped in each hand

Her son visited the following day  
And stripped the whole house bare  
No antiques left or money  
Just her shawl upon her chair

## The Latch-Key Kid

I am the Latch-Key Kid  
When I go home, no tea on the table  
I manage to make myself something to eat  
The best that I am able

Mum and Dad at work till past eleven  
So I just sit and watch TV  
When they come home they go to bed  
They have no time for me

At eight-thirty in the morning  
My dad gives me a lift to school  
He tells me to do as I'm told  
And not to play the fool

The guy at the desk behind me  
Starts kicking my chair leg again  
I loudly express my opinion  
And I'm rewarded with getting the cane

At lunchtime I sit in the canteen  
And open up my lunch box  
It contains a curled-up ham sandwich  
"Is that all you've got" the guy next to me mocks

His lunch box is laden with sandwiches and crisps  
And a slice of homemade chocolate cake  
I really can't remember  
The last time I saw my mum bake

The school bell rings at three 'o' clock  
And we all make a mad dash for the door  
A bully pushes me over

And I end up on the floor

He looks down at me and says

"Are you going to tell your mam"?

If I stand up I'll get knocked back down

So I might as well stay where I am

My books and homework are strewn on the floor

And they get trampled underfoot

Before the bully leaves

I get a firm kick in the gut

My school has zero tolerance for bullying

But complaints are not effective

If my parents report an incident

They're accused of being over-protective

Finally I get home

After taking the longer route

The bullies have stolen sweets from a timid new starter

And they're sharing out their loot

I have my usual meal for tea

A plate of beans on toast

The best meal of my week

Is when mum cooks a Sunday roast

Later as I lay in bed

I hear the front door slam

I listen for the familiar sound

Of dad arguing with mam

Tomorrow is another day

But for me every weekday's the same

I am the latch-key kid

But I know I'm not to blame

## The Old Lady Down The Street

A curled-up bundle of skin and hair  
Adorns the window-seat  
The sorry remains of Kitty  
The old lady down the street  
To those who saw her struggle daily  
With her heavy shopping trolley  
All of her ignorant neighbours  
And her estranged sister Polly  
To all of the people  
Who used to stand and laugh  
Here lies Kitty, loner Kitty  
Written on her epitaph  
Kitty was a lonely soul  
No family or friends had she  
Only the teenagers two doors down  
Tony, Beth and Marie  
They'd pop in on pension day  
And ask her for a loan  
With no intention of paying her back  
Got money for drugs then left her alone  
Just the other day  
She'd decided to have a look  
In the sideboard drawer  
For her pension book  
The book wasn't where she'd put it  
In the right-hand drawer  
Maybe she'd done like two weeks ago  
Dropped it on the post-office floor  
Mrs Kemp had brought it round  
Said she'd noticed it after she'd left  
She stressed she was lucky that it had been found  
Nearly a victim of I.D theft  
Her state benefit had been cut

Though not told the reason why  
Thinking about rent and energy bills  
She'd often sit and cry  
Tony, Beth and Marie are banging on the door  
What do they want from Kitty?  
They've had it all and they want more  
Kitty is now at peace  
Her maker she has met  
She died alone in squalor  
Her heart filled with regret  
The council fumigated the house  
Used disinfectant till it was replete  
The only evidence of Kitty  
A large stain on the window seat  
There are so many like Kitty  
But no-one cares ask why  
Abandoned by society  
And left alone to die  
All that remained of Kitty  
Was curled up on the window-seat  
The quiet soul with no-one  
The old lady down the street

## The Passing of Edward

Martha was rudely awoken on Monday morning  
With the phone call we all dread  
"Mrs Palmer we regret to inform you  
That your husband Edward is dead"

She thought that it was tactless  
The way she had been told  
Couldn't they have said 'passed away'?  
Instead of being so bold

She dressed in her Sunday best  
It took her ages to get ready  
But she wanted to make an effort  
For her dear, departed Eddie

When she arrived at the hospital  
She was taken to the ward  
Attached to the bed on a bulldog clip  
Was Edward Palmer's medical record

Edward was lying in the bed  
He just looked like he was asleep  
Martha took his hand in hers  
And she began to weep

The patients in adjoining beds  
Said staff had had to disinfect  
Because Edward had taken short  
Had they no respect?

Martha sat at the bedside and said  
"My husband has passed away"  
The patients resumed watching TV

And didn't know what to say

A nurse arrived and said

"It's a shame that you weren't here

When he was asking for you

It's a pity you don't live near

Don't worry though cos I was here

He didn't die alone

Whenever we tried to phone you

All we got was an engaged tone"

Martha suddenly remembered

The umpteenth pointless phone calls

To the lazy 'cowboy builders'

Meant to be pointing her garden walls

Every time she phoned them

It wasn't any use

Sometimes her complaints would be met

By an endless torrent of abuse

The nurse jolted Martha from her daydream

By tapping her on the shoulder

She glanced down at Edward

And noticed he suddenly looked years older

Martha said "I'll be lost without him"

And the nurse gave her a wry smile

Then said "Some people will be coming for Edward

In just a little while

He'll have to be moved

Because we really need the bed"

Martha recalled the other day

A pillow still bearing the shape of a deceased patients head

Martha said "I feel so lost  
I don't know what to do"  
The nurse put her hand on Martha's shoulder and said  
"The receptionist has something for you"

Martha kissed Edward's forehead  
And said "My darling I must go  
I just hope you knew  
How much I loved you so"

She wanted to remember Edward  
When he was full of life  
Now she was a widow  
No longer someone's wife

She waited in reception  
Listening to the constant chatter  
She wondered how long she'd be waiting  
Though now time didn't matter

The receptionist slid the glass aside  
And placed a plastic bag in Martha's hand  
She could see it contained Edward's spectacles and dentures  
And in one corner his gold wedding band

Martha returned to an empty house  
And received not a single phone call  
Of condolence or sympathy  
Just one from the builders about pointing the wall



## The Pub and Its People

Every town, village and city  
Has a certain place I'd call the hub  
I think you'll know where I mean  
Some call it a tavern, an inn or a pub

You'll find so many characters  
Whether the place is familiar to you  
So I thought I'd spend some time  
And describe a few to you

Firstly, we have the regular  
You can set your clock by him  
If one day he misses a visit  
Everybody is worried about him

He sits in the same seat  
And drinks the same thing every time  
A double whisky chaser  
And four pints of lager and lime

Next we have the walking encyclopaedia  
A mine of information  
If you check his facts on Wikipedia  
It'll cause him much frustration

Don't try to contradict him  
Because he thinks he's always right  
He has a friend who takes him home  
When there's an inkling he'll get in a fight

There's that guy in every pub  
Who can't seem to be found  
When it is the time

For him to buy a round

He'll turn up when the round's been bought  
And says he's sorry he missed his turn  
Then makes sure his turn is at last orders  
When will his friends ever learn?

Then we have the smoker  
Who goes outside to have a smoke  
Gets his mate, a non-smoker  
To keep an eye on his drinks and his coat

There's always one clumsy person  
Who'll barge into you so you spill your drink  
Then they go merrily on their way  
Before you've had time to think

You stand there on the spot  
Alcohol dripping from your sleeve  
Then the perpetrator bumps into someone else  
And they're politely asked to leave

Some days you're in the pub  
And end up bumping into your boss  
You've phoned in sick that morning  
And for excuses you're at a loss

Your boss asks for an explanation  
On how quickly you've recovered  
Your face is red with embarrassment  
Because you've been discovered

A group of yuppies turn up at lunchtime  
Boasting of how much money they've got  
Then loiter at the bar  
While the barmaid pours out a shot

Sometimes they just have one each  
But other days they're there for hours  
Taking turns wolfing down  
Small shots of cherry flavoured Sourz

Odd times the pub will get a customer  
Who asks for the best champagne  
Then he settles for sparkling Perry  
Because the high prices make him complain

Sitting tucked away in the corner  
Is an elderly gent called James  
He's known the pub have ten different landlords  
And five different pub names

He still pays the old pub prices  
Because he's been going in for years  
He's almost part of the furniture  
He likes to try the new craft beers

Oft times the pub gets drinkers  
Who are clearly under-age  
So the one who orders drinks  
Is barely old enough to shave

The barmaid asks them for I.D.  
They walk away and slink outside  
The oldest shrugs his shoulders  
And says "At least I tried"

A woman who's a regular  
Says her energy bills have got higher  
So she goes into the pub for three hours a day  
And gets warm on the open log fire

The landlord sees people from all walks of life

In his pub everyday  
They are colourful characters that light up the pub  
He wouldn't wish them any other way  
So next time you visit your local pub  
You never know who you might see  
By the way, the person sat in the corner, writing away,  
Yes, that's me!

## The Rag and Bone Man

I remember when I was a little girl  
And the Rag and Bone man came round  
On his cart pulled by a horse  
All manner of things could be found  
A washing machine with a broken ringer  
And a bicycle without a wheel  
He used to give my grandma two pence  
For a bag of meat bones leftover from a meal  
The bones were used for knife handles  
And the grease extracted used to make soap  
We'd give them to him in a potato sack  
Tied around the top with a piece of rope  
I remember one day the ragman  
Knelt down on the ground  
Searching between the paving stones  
Where horseshoe nails could be found  
Over his tired shoulders  
He would carry a small bag  
It would contain bones and various metals  
Plus numerous pieces of coloured rag  
One of the ragmen who came to our street  
His name was Henry Moon  
If we gave him something for his cart  
We were rewarded with a goldfish or a balloon  
It was a hard life being a ragman  
People now wouldn't see the sense  
In working from early morning till night  
For the measly sum of six pence  
You still see rag and bone men about  
No longer with a horse-drawn cart  
Driving around in short wheel-base lorries  
They have scrap collecting down to a fine art  
They still pick up broken washing machines

And bicycles without a wheel  
But some people still prefer to fly-tip  
Dumping unwanted items in a field  
We live in a throwaway society  
No longer reliant on Mr Rag and Bone  
It's easy to get rid of scrap items  
We just need to pick up the phone

## The Reflection In The Mirror

I look into the mirror  
And who is that I see?  
Someone I don't recognise  
Is looking back at me

The lines upon the forehead  
That are called 'worry lines'  
Are caused by getting stressed  
Far too many times

A line next to the right eyebrow  
It's the liver that's to blame  
Due to excess alcohol  
Or so the doctors claim

The line next to the left eyebrow  
Is connected to the spleen  
So much for thinking the body  
Is like a finely-tuned machine

At the corner of both eyes  
Are very deep crow's feet  
These are connected to all organs  
As they admit defeat

We used to call them 'smile lines'  
But not much smiling has been done  
When you have ill-health  
Life is not much fun

Black bags under the eyes  
Are signalling poor circulation  
Or maybe just a lack of sleep

Nightmares without an explanation

The pancreas could be at fault  
If there are 'laughter lines'  
But they could just be caused  
By laughing numerous times

Lines above the upper lip  
They could be caused by smoking  
But they also indicate spleen trouble  
Those lines are thought-provoking  
Lines upon the neck  
Otherwise known as a 'double-chin'  
Can be caused by too much gluten  
Putting a thyroid in the spin

In the mirrors reflection  
There are so many lines to see  
Then I realise the person in the mirror  
Yes, it's me!



## The Unexpected Visitor

John Smart was having tea with mother Olive  
There was a loud knock upon the front door  
When he answered it, a woman stood there  
She said "I suppose you're wondering what I've come here for?"  
Olive shouted "Who is it?  
Why don't you ask them in?"  
The woman pushed past John  
And said "I don't know where to begin"  
She introduced herself as Joan  
And Olive looked upset  
Then she put her hand on John's shoulder  
And said "We've already met"  
Joan said "I live two streets away,  
I've been there for eighteen years  
Your 'mother' hasn't told you about me  
That is how it appears  
Your mother is your grandma  
It is I who is your mother  
You have siblings you don't know about  
Two sisters and one brother  
I was pregnant at fifteen  
And that woman you call mother threw me out  
She said she'd bring you up better than me  
Of that I had no doubt  
I've seen you almost every day  
But I've had to keep my distance  
My wicked mother Olive  
Has always denied my existence"  
John looked at his 'mother'  
And said "What have you got to say?  
Is this what you were trying to tell me  
Just the other day?"  
Olive Smart looked forlorn and said

"What this woman says is true  
Even though I've raised you as my son  
I did not give birth to you"  
Joan put her hand upon John's shoulder  
And said "I was going to write you a letter  
Then I thought that telling you face to face  
Would for both of us be better"  
A hush fell upon the room  
You'd have heard someone drop a pin  
Then suddenly John spoke and said  
"I can't taken all of this in  
For years I thought I was an only child  
And that Olive was my mother  
Now I find out that's not the case  
And I've got two sisters and a brother  
Do they know about me?  
Do they know that I exist?  
If they don't know anything  
Then I feel I must insist  
That you tell me why you've waited till now  
To turn my whole life upside down  
I've lost count of the many times  
I've seen you in the town  
Often I've seen you watching me  
And each time mam got annoyed  
I used to ask her why you were staring  
She used to say I was paranoid"  
A tear worked its way down Joan's cheek  
And she headed for the door  
Then she uttered the words John had dreaded  
"I don't want to see you anymore"  
John watched her leave without a word  
Then lay his head on Olive's shoulder  
Olive gently held him and she said  
"She'll regret today when she's older"  
John looked up at Olive and said

"My natural mother you may not be  
But unlike your daughter  
You've always been there for me"  
Joan left town for good that day  
On board a number twenty bus  
Not a word to daughters or son  
She didn't want a fuss  
John never saw Joan again  
Never met his sisters or his brother  
But he knew as long as he had Olive  
He couldn't have wished for a better mother

## The Visit To The Library

Edith Brown was near the library  
So she thought she'd pop in and take a look  
She'd always preferred the feel of words on paper  
Compared to the modern e-book

She looked inside her purse  
For her old library card  
But she couldn't find it anywhere  
Even though she looked very hard

She reached into her handbag  
And found a fluffy chunk of Thorntons toffee  
No way was she going to pay  
For a lukewarm milky coffee

She spied her neighbour Mary  
Seated at a wooden table  
She thought she'd try to sneak past her  
But unfortunately she was unable

"Oh well, if it isn't Edith  
The aging spinster of Runnymede  
I'm surprised to see you in here  
I didn't know that you could read"

Edith did her best to keep her temper  
But Mary knew which buttons to push  
She said "Why don't you sit with me  
Unless you're in a rush"

Edith saw someone from her schooldays  
And not a moment too soon  
It was Cynthia who'd moved out of town

Clutching several Mills and Boon

Cynthia greeted Edith with a friendly hug  
And said "Long time no see  
I'd love to have a catch-up  
Please come and sit with me"

Edith glared at Mary  
And Mary glared right back  
Mary had never forgiven Cynthia  
For stealing away her boyfriend Jack

Edith sat at a table  
And Cynthia sat at the opposite side  
She said "I see that Mary hasn't changed  
She always was quite snide"

Cynthia earnestly told Edith  
She'd married Mary's boyfriend Jack  
They'd moved away for a fresh start  
And had no intention of moving back

Edith had often wondered  
If they were still together  
Jack had a Harley and Cynthia rode pillion  
They used to ride past Edith 'Hell for leather'

Cynthia and Jack had set up a business  
And though they had great wealth  
Edith was deeply shocked to discover  
That neither had been in the best of health

Jack had suffered two heart attacks last year  
Then last month he'd had a stroke  
Cynthia said he'd regained the use of his limbs  
But still had a struggle when he spoke

Edith was shocked to hear  
That Cynthia had fought breast cancer and won  
Even more shocked to hear Mary say  
It was penance for what she had done

Edith rounded on Mary and said  
"You only lost a boyfriend, Cynthia almost lost her life  
You seem to get a sick satisfaction  
Out of someone being in strife"

Mary banged her books on the table  
And made her way to the revolving door  
What Cynthia and Edith had just heard Mary say  
Had chilled them both to the core

Edith took hold of Cynthia's hand  
And gave it a gentle pat  
Then said "Mary will get her comeuppance one day  
You can be sure of that"

As the two women parted company  
Edith said she didn't get out much  
Cynthia gave Edith her mobile number and address  
And said they must keep in touch

When Edith reached the bus stop  
She saw Mary waiting without a care  
Edith said "I can't believe what you said  
To Cynthia back there"

Mary stood there speechless  
Wearing a heavy frown  
Edith said "Talk about kicking  
Someone when they're down"

Mary slowly walked away

She couldn't be bothered to make a fuss  
Edith let her go on her way  
Then she went home on the bus

Mary never spoke to Edith from that day on  
When she saw her out, she'd cross the road  
She'd always been one to bear to grudge  
And when she died she was alone

Four people attended her funeral  
Edith plus Mary's two daughters and one son  
The three of them couldn't understand  
What their mother could have done

To have hardly anybody mourn her  
And not a friend in sight  
They hadn't seen their mother  
When she was full of spite

Edith kept the truth to herself  
It was best that Mary's family didn't know  
That as their mother got older  
How bitter and nasty she'd grown

Mary had borne a lot of grudges  
And she'd bore them to her death  
She had cursed the names of Cynthia and Jack  
With her last dying breath

Edith visits the cemetery once a week  
She stays a couple of hours  
After she's visited her late mother's grave  
She adorns Mary's grave with fresh flowers

Carnations, roses and bunches of forget-me-nots  
Mark the final resting place of Mary Elizabeth Scott

## Today I Went To Iceland

Today i went to Iceland  
The supermarket not the place  
Trying to find a short queue  
Turns into a race  
Elderly lady at the back  
Tries to jump the queue  
Those further forward voice their anger  
"Hey, we were here before you"  
The lady shrugs her shoulders  
With two trifles in her hand  
Standing ages just for that  
Wasn't what she had planned  
Trolley at the front of the queue  
Contains enough food to feed an army  
Woman says "Most of it will get thrown away"  
Queue looks at her as if she's barmy  
Small boy in a pushchair  
Clamouring for his sweets  
His mother says he'll have to wait  
They're under the cooked meats  
Man with a tray of lager  
Legs buckling under the weight  
He says they're for his party  
From seven tonight until late  
Someone gets tired of waiting  
Puts her goods back on the shelf  
She mumbles she's going to Asda  
Where she can serve herself  
Girl in the queue decides  
She'll use her phone to pay her bill  
The checkout girl says into her mike  
"Can you open another till?"  
Lager man gets restless



Drops his tray of cans on the floor  
Pushes his way to the front of the queue  
And dashes out through the door  
The small boy thinks he's waited  
Long enough for his sweets  
So he reaches out to the check-out  
And helps himself to treats  
The mother sees what he has done  
And snatches back the loot  
So the small boy retaliates  
With a kick from his right foot  
The queue is getting longer  
And tempers start to fray  
I put my basket on the floor  
I'll go back another day

## Tommy's Wartime Memories

Old Tommy Owens O.B.E  
Fought in the war they said  
Came back to his hometown  
With shrapnel in his head

I was in town the other day  
And bumped into his wife  
She said "Why not come for tea one day?  
And ask Tommy about his life"

I told her that I knew  
He used to own a hardware store  
She said "I meant that you should ask him  
About his life during the war"

A couple of days ago  
I had some time to spare  
I went to visit Tommy Owens  
He was sat in an old armchair

He said "Do I know you?  
What have you come here for?"  
I told him I wanted to hear about  
His memories of war

His wife brought me a cup of tea  
And gently stroked her husband's hand  
Then said "If you don't want to talk about it,  
I'm sure she'll understand"

Tommy reached up and touched his shrapnel scar  
And said "There isn't much to tell,  
But the best way to describe the war

Is it was a living hell"

He firstly told me about the food  
Bread, Bully Beef and Biscuit  
The latter he said could break a tooth  
But if you were so hungry you would risk it

The flour shortage meant that bread  
Was made with turnips dried and ground  
And in the pea-soup cooked in Dixie's  
Horsemeat could be found

He used to trade tobacco  
With his comrade Sam  
For an ounce of coffee  
Or a few ounces of cheese and jam

He told me that the food  
Would be stored in petrol cans  
And the lid of the Dixie cooking pot  
Could be used as a frying pan

He and his comrades  
Would be cock-a-hoop  
When Sam would make Maconochie  
Sliced carrot and turnip in a thin soup

Tommy told me of some soldiers  
On the front-line that he knew  
Were barely surviving on a ration  
Of coffee, Oxo, porridge and stew

When the latrines needed emptying  
He would give it a wide berth  
He'd rather spend time filling sand bags  
With shovelfuls of dirt and earth

He'd have a metal jerry-can  
And a haversack with shaving-kit  
Plus soap, towel, knife and fork  
And other sundry things in it

He knew what the bayonet on his rifle was for  
But he had other plans  
Like using it to scrape mud off his boots  
And opening tin-cans

Tommy and Sam would sometimes play cards  
But Tommy found it hard to believe  
That Sam winning nine games out of every ten  
He didn't have some cards up his sleeve

Down in the trenches  
They would be overrun with rats  
Tommy used to say they were  
As big as the neighbours cat

I'm sipping on my tea  
And Tommy says "Would you like to see my foot"?  
He bends down and removes a sock  
And three toes are kaput

He tells me that when he came home  
He had a bad case of trench-foot  
When his footwear was removed  
Several toes were left inside his boot

His socks had grown into his foot  
The worst case his doctor had ever seen  
Caused by the unsanitary, cold and wet conditions  
And resulting in gangrene

I sat in awe

of what I had been told  
There are many lessons to be learned  
From talking to the old

Tommy tells me before I leave  
Some days he wishes he was dead  
Because of the terrible mood-swings  
Caused by the shrapnel in his head

I tell him that what he has told me  
Has left me deeply moved  
We have so much to learn from our elders  
As my afternoon with Tommy has proved

## Two Days of Doris Day

The weekend is here again  
And if I have my way  
I'm going to spend my spare time  
Watching films starring Doris Day

In nineteen forty nine  
Ten years before I was born  
Doris starred with Kirk Douglas and Lauren Bacall  
In 'Young Man With A Horn'

She appeared with Gene Nelson  
In 'Lullaby of Broadway'  
And played Marjorie Winfield, a tomboy  
In the film 'On Moonlight Bay'

'By The Light Of The Silvery Moon'  
Is a film I'd always wanted to see  
It was a sequel with the same characters and cast  
And made in nineteen fifty three

That same year she made 'Calamity Jane'  
A film I like very much  
Featuring songs 'Secret Love' and 'The Deadwood Stage'  
Not forgetting 'A Woman's Touch'

My late mother's favourite film was 'Young At Heart'  
In which Frank Sinatra played Barney Sloane  
Doris's co-stars were amongst others  
Gig Young and Dorothy Malone

In fifty-six, Doris starred in Hitchcock's  
'The Man Who Knew Too Much'

She first sang 'Que Sera Sera' in this  
It had the Master of Suspense's sinister touch

'The Pajama Game' is one of my favourites  
With the song 'Hernando's Hideaway'  
If Frank Sinatra had accepted the leading man role  
Janis Paige would have replaced Doris Day

My favourites are the ones  
With Rock Hudson or James Garner as Doris's leading man  
Whether shown on terrestrial or cable  
I always try to watch them when I can

I'm waiting for the postman  
He hasn't been round yet  
Because I can't wait till he delivers  
My Doris Day box-set

## Victim

Victim

I remember as a little girl  
On a visit to an aunt's friends house  
I was sitting reading a story book  
As quiet as a mouse

I asked to be pardoned  
To go to the loo  
They were all playing dominoes  
So I knew what I must do

I opened up the door  
And placed my foot on the first stair  
Then I heard someone in a low voice say  
"Are you sure that she's all there"?

I felt a tear run down my cheek  
I was doing what I ought  
Only speaking when I was spoken to  
That's what I was taught

When I'd done what I had to do  
I went back down the stairs  
The domino game was finished  
And there were four empty chairs

They were all in the kitchen  
Drinking cups of tea  
My aunt she turned to me and smiled  
And handed a cup to me



She noticed my tear-stained face  
And stroked it with her hand  
I told her what I'd overheard  
She said I was too young to understand

I was insecure throughout my childhood  
Never felt like I fitted in  
Undernourished because I wouldn't eat  
Now I'd just be classed as thin

From the age of five  
My time at school was fleeting  
Feigning illness to avoid the bullies  
And escape another beating

I remember cowering  
In the corner of the school yard  
Cigarette butts stubbed out on my arms  
Left painful, sore and charred

Name-calling and violence  
Made me feel inferior  
Set upon by bullies  
Who thought they were superior

When I became a teenager  
Things they got much worse  
The bullies were now older  
Younger ones they would coerce  
To taunt me and lie in wait  
And leave me in a battered state

When i got my first job  
The bullying it went on  
Because my face didn't fit  
I was put upon

Got lumbered with the dirty jobs  
That no-one else would do  
Like swilling down the filthy yard  
And scrubbing the outside loo

One afternoon, the manageress  
Secretly asked me whether  
I would do sexual favours for a delivery man  
And I reached the end of my tether

I got my coat and quit the job  
Never looking back  
I later heard that the manageress  
Was found out and got the sack

Now that I am older  
No-ones victim will I be  
I stand my ground, nobody's fool  
And i am happy being me

## What will they do with Grandma?

What will they do with Grandma?

What will they do with Grandma, now that she is old?

No longer able to fend for herself, by her home-help they've been told

She's always been there for her children but now none of them want to know

Keeping a roof over all of their heads, not all that long ago

She's been the peacemaker for all of her kids, when relationships hit a bad patch

They've all forgotten just how much she did, though their partners she thought a mismatch

She put home-cooked food on their tables when their cupboards all were bare

Helped them to pay their bills, though none of them cared for her

She cooked them all good hearty meals, served them up on their own table

Sometimes she went without food herself, putting them first when she was able

Often she would dread the ringing of the phone

A sound that would usually be welcomed by someone who lived alone

But whenever her phone rang, she would feel very daunted

Wondering who the caller was, and what it was they wanted,

Would it be for money or babysitting duties?

Or maybe her knitting skills, making numerous pairs of booties

Grandma had to live somewhere but refused to go into a home

Frail and unable now to live on her own

Jim was asked to take her in, but he said that he couldn't

He'd always been a selfish man, it was more likely that he wouldn't

Katie said she had no room, but conveniently forgot to mention

That her husband, a bricklayer, had just built a new extension

So it was decided, Grandma would go into a home

The family went around and told her, she could no longer live alone

The greedy lots inheritance in their minds was already spent

But every penny that Grandma had saved, for her keep at the care home it went  
Grandma did all sorts for her family, so she couldn't understand  
Why now she's in a care home they never go nearhand,

We now know of Grandma's fate, her story has been told  
A lifetime of caring for family, unwanted because she got old

## Who cares for the carer

My door is always open  
My kettle is always on  
I'm here with a shoulder  
For you to cry upon

You can tell me anything  
Your secrets I can keep  
You can phone me anytime, day or night  
Even when I am asleep

If you live in solitude  
Or your heart is filled with grief  
If you suffer from low self-esteem  
I can build your self-belief

I am everybody's rock  
But who is there for me?  
Who cares for the carer?  
I think you will agree

The more you do for others,  
The less they do for you  
It's the way society is now  
But that is just my view

## Why can't I sleep?

Why, oh why can't I get to sleep?  
I've tried everything like counting backwards  
And even counting sheep

Lavender oil on pillow  
Or a hot and milky drink  
Why is it when I go to bed  
I always lay and think?

Have I locked all the doors  
And switched off all the lights?  
Tired all the next day  
Due to sleepless nights

I really need to switch off  
From the worries of the day  
But things that have happened  
On my mind they play

I need to cut down on my caffeine  
Cos my B.P. is hitting the roof  
It's one of the reasons I lay awake  
I don't need anymore proof

It's a small price to pay for a decent night's sleep  
So now I will finish this rhyme  
Off to Dreamland I'll go with a calm rested mind?  
Till the alarm on my clock starts to chime

## Why Is It So Hard To Be Happy?

Why is it so hard to be happy  
But so easy to be sad?  
When I see how people treat each other  
Sometimes it makes me so mad

It costs nothing to be civil  
To make life easier for one another  
Repaying years of love and care  
To your father and your mother

Everywhere I go each day  
People are in such a hurry  
Trying to make ends meet  
Shortage of money causing them worry

Whenever I am out and about  
I can always find the time  
To hold a door open for someone  
They look at me like I've committed a crime

I was brought up with good manners  
And sometimes people don't understand  
Why when I'm introduced to someone  
I always shake their hand

They look at me incredulous  
As if taken by surprise  
Then I shake them by the hand again  
While we're saying our goodbyes

When someone is taking up a seat  
With their shopping bag on the bus  
I sit in another seat

Because I can't be bothered to make a fuss

I feel sorry for young mothers  
With their pushchairs and shopping in hand  
Their space taken up by a shopping trolley  
So they have to stand

The pushchair blocks the aisle  
And the driver he plays war  
He shakes his head in disbelief  
Can't people read what that space is for?

If I am out shopping  
And I'm standing in a queue  
If someone has only two items  
I know just what to do

I let them get served ahead of me  
Because I'm in no hurry  
The queue behind me tuts  
But I'm not one to worry

Manners cost you nothing  
It isn't hard to be polite  
But sadly many in this day and age  
Don't know wrong from right

The elderly feel insecure  
Even in their own home  
Many of them are housebound  
Afraid to go out alone

Teenagers hanging around on street corners  
Always saying that they're bored  
Making nuisances of themselves  
Often community service their reward



What has happened to family values?  
When people looked out for one another  
Siblings always fighting for attention  
In the shadow of a sister or a brother

I feel sorry for today's generation  
Good manners not being taught  
I hope that by writing this poem  
I have given you food for thought