

# The bear who talked to automobiles

A Hive by Landru

## Fastest across the yard

From the air raid shelter  
To the wall and back  
Walter always won the race!  
In short pants and crayons we ran,  
In the morning,  
The bins alive with orange peel,  
And the fizz of wasps.

Walter always won the race,  
From the air raid shelter,  
To the wall and back,  
In the breaktime sunshine,  
With the shadows from St Anne's  
Gallop across the bricks,  
Gleaming with Autumn yellows,  
And the girls screaming like lions.

From the air raid shelter,  
To the wall and back,  
Past the empty milk crates,  
Glittering on the tarmac,  
Falling exhausted on the floor,  
And drenched in tears.

As we raced across our yard,  
Walter turned, ahead of us,  
And waved encouragement,  
From the air raid shelter,  
To the wall and back,  
Full of life, but out of puff!  
Rolling all over the ground,  
Like fallen skittles,  
Resting,  
Where we least expected.

# Pressing the sheets for Father Peter

With slow and slurring movements,  
Father Peter breaks the bread,  
Bestowing wine, and blessed we drink.

Into the pantry Sister Clare,  
Her feet like summer rain.

I set the board and warm the iron,  
Now the guests have gone,  
Beyond the Friary walls.

With expert hands she grinds the sheets,  
The hard and obdurate fabric of the cloth.  
On the side I place her cup,  
Beside our garden vase,  
Her plain grey overcoat hanging on a chair.

Sister Clare with down brown eyes,  
Gazing,  
Listens to my mixed-up words and phrases,  
Lisping in her native French,  
For hours,  
Standing like an angel,  
Her perfect form,  
And reads my ridiculous note,  
Sighing..."Maybe!"  
Growing younger by the second.

Murmuring in the light by the window,  
Her final words; "Andrew..."  
She stepped forward,  
And kissed me goodbye.

## The primary form of hedgehogs

He led them down,  
The family man,  
To a region of the earth,  
With squealing sounds,  
Stirring and rummaging in the soil.  
“This is how they normally should look!” he winked.

Before the great heel of humanity,  
Has ground them into the road,  
Almost blind in the headlights.

As he stood in the dock the Judge glared at him,  
With sharp and pointed eyes,  
Red with menace.

“No hamming it up in your Court milud!”

“Worst case of its kind we have ever seen!”  
Bristled the farmyard swine.

In the sunshine rain planting seed,  
Digging patiently for hours,  
Throughout the seasons.

## Bartok Duka, Albanian pig-farmer

"Tell me," you said, entering the door,  
"How many people have you raped?"

Your round head and tired eyes,  
The lines down both your young cheeks,  
My young friend.

I helped to write your letters,  
I taught you to play chess and checkers.

And now you have won a game,  
You said grinning...  
"I shall be playing in front of the Queen very soon!"

## Sittin at da back a da bus

I paused, as the bus drew near,  
And stepped right up to the conductor.  
Towards the back I plunged,  
Straight past our Dennis.

A father of seven,  
Sitting quietly for once.

Leant upon his elbow,  
He would smile,  
At the ticket barrier,  
In the brightness,  
Chuckling by his forearm,  
About his days on active service.  
Swinging round at the rear of the jeep,  
Holding on for dear life,  
His feet trailing,  
Gripped to the rear,  
His head in the air.

And now he's silent,  
Perched so deftly quiet,  
Like a single place of origin,  
Pale, yet burning white,  
Staring blindly forward...

Suddenly he turned,  
As I prepared to stand,  
"Hello Andy, are ya alright mate?"

## The Newton enquiry

I strode to the dock in my Air-Jordans,  
Pulled by their shifty eyes.

Judge Corrie shrewdly inspected my notes:

“When you wrote that the pigs past you,  
In two panda cars...  
Did you mean,  
-the slang for policeman,  
-a farmyard animal,  
-or something else?”

“A farm yard animal!” I replied.  
On-the-run.

## Too many questions Mr Chawla

How did we manage,  
Yes, we are locked up,  
Do I have a sister?  
Will we be allowed home for Christmas...  
What time is it,  
Do we have a panic button,  
Is my name Irish?  
Mr Chawla.

Maybe these joggers,  
Do have elasticated bottoms,  
Have I ever been skiing in the Himalayas,  
Do I remember Britt Ekland?  
Mr Chawla.

Did my grandfather fight at Dunkirk,  
What are we having tomorrow,  
Does the Queen pay for the poppies?  
And yes,  
I do remember the little man in Benny Hill,  
Mr Chawla.



## Verses on the harp of midnight

A creature stirred,  
outside my room tonight,  
a rustling of leaves,  
a mutter in the dark.

My father's bed lay,  
in a cowshed,  
on my Uncle's land,  
which didn't belong to him.

It was late when I heard a sound,  
when I sensed him round the corner,  
feeling his way stealthily over the shingle,  
step by solitary step,  
crunching the pebbles of brown and white.

I feigned sleep,  
as hands like eagle's wings,  
cupped their bruised skin against my window-pane,  
gleaming in the moonlight,  
and a face trembled ever closer,  
for the last time....

# Expulsion of the crack-brained flea

I was sent home today,  
Not because I did anything wrong,  
back to the shell of grey moths,  
which looks like an elderly rail-carriage.

The ferric grille of death and bird-dung,  
my one-legged cell-mate,  
who stands over me as I eat,  
chattering incessantly,  
about Cud'orth, cockney Steve and Joan,  
And Charlie Williams.  
Can't even remember what day it is.

Back to the rigid jar of Ovaltine,  
my box of pens, my jug, and my stash of jams.  
To the squalid little rhymes,  
the adamant bed nailed to the ground,  
The Sun-shuffling blogs,  
attempting to shed some daylight,  
on all this cheerless indignation.

Back to the skids on my bedsheets,  
the black pin-heads on my pillow,  
the caves in my mattress...  
Back to my pad and my toothpaste,  
The notice-board stuffed with unrepeatable slang.

To my home without a key,  
bolted on the outside.

Because the teacher,  
didn't want to be,  
in the same room as me, alone,  
Unseasonably sent forward.

# Why I don't like needles

Let me make it abundantly clear to you,  
Just why,  
I don't like needles.

Every morning from our bed,  
Every time she came instead,  
Why I don't like needles.

My sister on the doctor's floor,  
our monthly trips to Mr Spoor,  
Why I don't like needles.

Tales of magic carpets,  
on our journey to the Lakes she read,  
Daughter's lying on the road ahead,  
Why I don't like needles.

Perpignan and Llan-Twit Major,  
the braying of her labrador,  
and why I did,  
Like Helen.

## Held accountable for blushing

If it were a sin,  
then I would walk on hot coals forever,  
passing each cloud,  
as if it were a seething spring.

Shunning each intimate moment,  
Steering clear from every place,  
where people dwell.

Seeing each hall,  
as if it were a Court of law,  
harming every sunlit waterfall,  
and haven.

## Griffin of a thousand days

What became of me,  
when the ground trembled,  
and rocked me from my lair,  
Into the land,  
where monsters dwelt,  
Unto the place,  
where wizards went,  
Into the hills Moon by Moon.

One tenth of my love spilled like a fountain from the dark,  
and banished remorseless time,  
With one touch of the dawn.

Beset by mortal winds I cut the tulips from my throat,  
Growling and groaning in the wilderness,  
like a frozen sunbeam.

The river expanded like a song,  
drifting on an upward stream,  
A cloud above the earth,  
sent yellow fibrils tingling from the sky,  
Like a hand,  
sharing its soul to the world,  
And,  
beating like a Universe of wings.

## The Unicorn of night and day

Heads are grazing in the city,  
Stereos are in their bed,  
A strobe of silver,  
from the Sinner,  
Like a giant butterfly.

Putting on the thorns of summer,  
Seeds of frowning hurricanes,  
Singing while the world is rocking,  
like a crowning sea of haze.

Homeward are the rounds of blossom,  
Quests of thunder,  
Hearts of lead,  
stretching from the deepest forest,  
like a weeping crocodile.

## The mighty brawn of Michael Connolly

There was a lad,  
called Michael Connolly,  
there was a time,  
I knew him well.

I didn't think,  
I'd ever want to be,  
without his might,  
his will, his strength.

I know he could,  
I've seen him easily,  
bear a truck,  
Lift up a dwelling place,  
he even stood between me and Mullaney,  
A miss him now,  
like a blue sea.

## Shadow of the Rose

A roadway,  
swept by dusty leaves,  
wandered slowly in the dark,  
through Cherry woods pale as silver.

Her sky lined face as she stooped to pick her bundle,  
pierced the colours of the night-time cradle.

Pulsating by the river we met,  
half way there and into the fog,  
beneath the brightest dawn.

For notes of discord were pricking my soul,  
casting prints upon this world,  
Crossing the boundary of this life,  
raising flags abandoned in the twilight.



## A Scarecrow of shipwrecked violins

Saffron-shyed and curry-combed,  
I wavered to the bed,  
on a tattered pole of moor-hawks,  
lunge-whipped and saddle-worn.

Whipple tree'd and haggled with,  
goat sea-stormed,  
and curb-bit freed.

Breech-band stringed on nine foot stilts,  
hip-strapped,  
with magpie-geese.

Throat-latch curled,  
and buttress-winged,  
cure-rain-bent and nose-bleed-pommelled,  
brindled in rags and low cantled.

## Sunbeams in wooden slippers

Hair like summer,  
skin like dusts of rain,  
I live to hear you calling,  
Am I blind or am I dead?

When the Universe is healing,  
and the day is feeling parched,  
I flood down to the lakeside,  
escaping from the star.

Plunging in the waters,  
like a shimmering of creams,  
splashing and wading in your dreams.

## In memory of Michael Hart

At the table: Michael Hart,  
gently spoken,  
moves his piece,  
deep in thought he paces back and forth.

Advances his pawn and protects his Queen,  
upon the field of battle,  
Takes a bishop with his horse,  
sends his rooks above ground.

Chafing his head,  
he stands,  
tall and strong,  
fair and pale,  
then shakes my hand.

Leaving the room,  
beaten but not resigned,  
surveying the landscape of his cell,  
leaving this world,  
his sibling and his life.

## Moon on fire

Moons on fire,  
lanterns on each shoulder,  
keep me from my sleep,  
as the dews grown colder.

Seagulls in the heat,  
Summer on my Autumn,  
even as we weep,  
hear my speaking to you.

Worlds on fire,  
Mary's on her pillow,  
even as the clouds,  
fly here from the ocean.

Birds on fire,  
shooting from the darkness,  
every star that was,  
looking for my sunshine.

## The bellowing of Allan Tom

Ochre was his hated clock,  
woad the ridges of his brow,  
red the word-way crammed with chalk,  
the pest of every classroom.

They waited till the banging up,  
dressed in gloves and whites,  
they waited till the coast was clear,  
guarding his bright doorway.

Into the hell-hole Brownie leapt,  
a hit-man, and a Rapist,  
smashing Allan's gawping mug,  
into a wheelchair gaping.

A sound like wind a sound so strange,  
came blurting from his gully,  
spurting from his battered heap,  
like a howling genie.

“Who did this to you?” Gaughan asked.  
“What a wicked fellow!”  
His scarlet face was sheeped in mirth,  
skipping 'long the E-wing...

## Pieces of burnt ash

A little angel,  
stood blushing at our door today,  
Her name was Lydia.

My perfect tin soldier nestled gloriously in her arms,  
she carried it home,  
to her mother.

Pieces of burnt ash,  
crumble like Sinners in my hands,  
the sweet and soulful letters I had written.

## Of green

You release the shard of courage made of green,  
made of green,  
the angry man of money clothed in red.

And walk among the forest made of lime.

Your mind of restless beauty draped in wine,  
amid the starry ocean shaded pine.

But here among the deer among the dear,  
my true friend  
my true friend,  
the woodland,  
gold,  
unwearied made of gold.

## The dog's bollocks

She sings his praises,  
every time they pet,  
in the visitor's den,  
where her cleavage,  
spills,  
and his fingers molest the hem of her dress.

Martin Fungus preens himself in the steely square,  
of the cell mirror,  
squirting Clearasil on his flaking skin,  
wires of dark hair moulting everywhere,  
"You really are the dog's bollocks!" I yelped.

An alien life-form attempted to elope,  
from his neck,  
His bare arms protruded with a leviathan of blades,  
something unpleasant erupted from behind an ear,  
"The dog's bollocks!" I said.  
"Another innocent man locked up in jail!"  
I slapped the desk in disgust.

He stared impassively,  
like a heap of vanilla,  
a nest of love-bites encroaching on his chest,  
"Dog's bollocks!" I said.

"Just because I wouldn't give her any more money,  
for drugs," he enunciated.  
"Bollocks!" I said.  
"It'll cost them an arm and a leg when you appeal."  
A reptilian leer.



# The bear who talked to automobiles

Hard as rock,  
in the garden he stood,  
a lifeless form,  
grizzled,  
in a rusty coat.

Stiff as a gum tree froze,  
as the headlights slowed,  
outside the 'jumping wall...'

The quarter Moon patrolled,  
steep in the window frame,  
she wept...

Sadly in chains,  
the tv danced,  
silently,  
making them tremble like mice.

But as my oaths,  
claw deep into the earth,  
going forth by day,  
and hunted in the night.

## Spyder pig

She snitched on everything I did,  
she watched me hour by hour,  
I couldn't see a single thing,  
I liked,  
from year to year.

I held my broolly,  
in the sun,  
I prayed that she may leave.

And now that she's no longer here,  
I think that I might grieve.

## Little Wing

The blackened branch,  
on which he sang,  
so sweetly,  
at my side.

But as the morning,  
from the land of Giants,  
I awoke.

Carried him,  
so tenderly to the garden,  
in my arms.

## A distraction of beads

I look,  
with wonder to the Milky Way,  
through the half-dark,  
the hazy mist of night-time.

Beads in Autumn,  
beads in May,  
flood the heavens with delicious fruits.

For tomorrow,  
when it pales,  
glittering seedlings,  
fizzing and howling like,  
a squall of fields.

## Streams on the wings of Apollo

It is twilight,  
when you ride by my side,  
demanding I fly to the mountains,  
dazzling fountains,  
hemmed in by trees,  
my wishes like hail,  
sigh on the wind.

Where are the wagons full of blossom,  
the floods of forget-me-nots we have lost,  
all over,  
the drowning ocean...

The dreams we have built,  
and the houses we have flown.

They fill up every day,  
from light into darkness.

## Red sports bag

What I wouldn't do,  
for your sports bag,  
I'd do anything,  
for your sports bag.

She remained expressionless,  
as we walked,  
towards her mother.

I turned to look at her,  
bewildered,  
and feeling sad.

## Hacienda of a broken mind

"Come on, come on, come on!" the copper shouts.  
Shrieking from the screen.  
Another shoot-out bursts my throbbing head,  
the blast of guns.

My cell-mate claps,  
the pounding on the doors,  
as Terry scores,  
a casualty of war,  
I woke,  
just dreaming of the seagulls.

## A galaxy of angels on my tongue

Some say the world will end,  
and we will enter a dark tunnel,  
trudging on together,  
Fading into nothingness.

I say that water being water,  
Wind being wind,  
And all of nature's gallant realm,  
under the stars,  
will forever shade,  
beyond the pale,  
of this indifferent world,  
Every soul that 'ere we met,  
who gave us strength,  
Who gave us love.



## Icarus falling

If one dusk,  
The Sun,  
were thoughtless,  
like...  
A massive gush of warmth.

I would glide,  
for ever downwards,  
Far into the night...

Were the wind to cool my temple,  
soothe my face and dry my eyes,  
The sea would leap,  
forever skywards,  
sprouting words of love.

By the time this grief is over,  
skies will hear and mend their ways,  
hearts will bind,  
forever tending,  
melting generously to earth.

## A natural urge while touching

The way I return to you,  
here in this prison cell,  
Mary.

A microscopic gleam of time,  
in Wymondham,  
where I was happy.

Like a blissful dolphin,  
I flew,  
jouncing over the waves.

Rarer than foxgloves,  
in the depth of winter,  
I touched you,  
my dear Mary.

## Like a prayer-note in the snow

You are there,  
I am here,  
it's midnight,  
and...  
I drink the starlight.

With eyes like two dark beam-holes in the madness.

The wind burning like irons,  
the earth turning like fires.

If only skies had been more unbolted,  
if only rain had been more loving.

## Dare to touch the Sun

Dare to touch the Sun,  
dare,  
to share your lovers,  
Dare to play with moon-beams,  
on the edge of daybreak.

If there should be,  
a sudden teem of swallows,  
a land,  
drenched in a moor of colours.

For we who kiss our sorrows,  
melt,  
before her eyes have risen,  
We who are like arrows,  
birds of the starry ocean.

## Anything but that

Anything but that! He screamed,  
charging up the stairs,  
Anything but that! He yelled,  
looking for his suitcase.

The visitors had hardly left,  
my mother at the doorway,  
He'll have to go! He screamed to her,  
Your son's a fucking loony...

## Fighting many battles

These hills beneath the sunrise,  
the scene of many battles,  
some of them were ended,  
in a painful loss.

When I was a young man,  
I rode upon a stallion,  
I rode upon a lion,  
for many of those days.

My swords were made of silver,  
my lances forged in gold,  
these weapons sometimes moulded,  
by the following of the crowd.

The crowing came from rivers,  
the drowning came from givers,  
the crashing of the tide-stream,  
muffled my war brain.

I acted as a player,  
I acted as a winner,  
loyal to the circus,  
of the visions that I dreamt.

Now I have a lover,  
now I have a quiver,  
a cutlass and a forest,  
for the heartbeats of the Land.

# Alice Eva-Moore

I saw her in the Town Hall square,  
marching with her bag,  
her legs like thundering tree-trunks,  
her cheeks an apple red.

On Saturdays on Saturdays,  
the tardis and the best-of-Cream,  
singing at the kitchen sink,  
with beams from August dreams.

We played our soccer in the park,  
in blue and white and black,  
in summer when the sun was long,  
and sparrows flung in clouds.

She toasted bread and baked the beans,  
in a pan of orange gleam,  
after that we brewed our tea,  
the best of all our days.

My grandad at the window stood,  
his trilby on the stand,  
'they're here at last!' he called to her,  
a tab-end in his hand.

I edged the doorway, bashfully,  
feeling rather timid,  
attacked with kisses warm and sweet,  
I scampered like grease-lightening.

The bubbling of the cooking oil,  
the chips like scaffold timbers,  
I raced around the room like mad,  
My uncle pleads for my surrender.

## The last lion

From the jungle,  
into the plain,  
the last Lion strolled,  
panting,  
on his shaggy paws,  
swaying from side to side,  
all alone.

As the breeze,  
gently scolds each line of hills,  
He passes by,  
his noble form,  
and mane, and eyes,  
sprinkled with a pall of colours.

From shower to shower,  
he shakes, and roars,  
threading through each crest of trees,  
and every beast upon the land...

For people think he will always be,  
and as the Sun goes down,  
to the very end,  
turning inextricably from summer.



## Guerdon of the orange snowman

Here among the dead-men,  
covered in black slime,  
bottom of the bunker,  
smothered in faint rose...

It's dread among the hopeless,  
the ceiling sharp with ice,  
slipping with the moonbeams,  
falling on chill hearts.

The stiff corpse of the swallow,  
freezing on the gravel,  
shivers at my cell-door,  
droned in spits of red.

In the forest of the Snowman,  
together with lost fires,  
the bowl is huge and endless,  
forever for all time.

In the forest of the Snowman,  
there's heaven in the flame,  
giving to the meeting,  
alive alive alive...!

You get there through the Autumn,  
you get there through the heart,  
where rivers are in torrent,  
and true-love never dies.