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Opening extract from

Vanishing Trick
Poems by Ros Asquith

Written & Illustrated by

Ros Asquith

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For John, Fred and Leo
and my mother, Vivien Asquith

and special thanks to Cheryl Moskowitz,
Helen Mackintosh, Polly Pattullo
and Rachel Hodgkin

JANETTA OTTER-BARRY BOOKS

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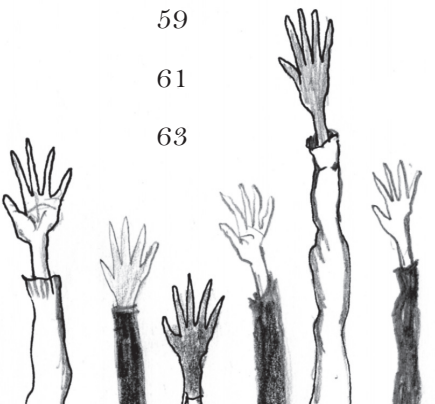
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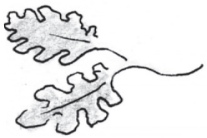
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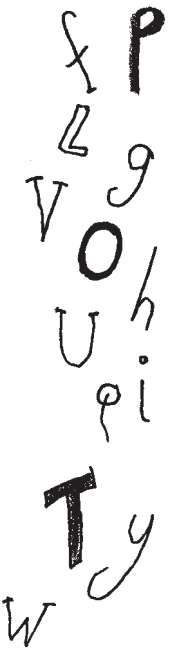






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Line

I thought I would drop you a line.
Look, it's not very hard to define.
It's thin and it's dark, a discreet enough mark,
You can see its potential in mine ———————

Now that I've dropped you a line
You may do with it just as you please.
You may, if you wish, employ it to fish
Or to set up a tightrope for fleas.

You may choose to stretch it from here to there
Or to coil it up tight like a spring.
You may choose to knot it or whirl a lasso,
Or to loop it up into a swing.

You may want to write me a letter
Or draw ANYTHING nice with your line.
For this line makes a tree, a circle, a bee.
Oh, how I wish it were mine!

But this line is yours now forever ———————
It's as long as you want it to be.
Take it or leave it, thread it or weave it,
It's a line of poetry.

My Mind

In my head's a journey that only I can take,
there is no one else can ever read my mind.
I must tread carefully, for all the thoughts I make
must be mine alone, not lost upon the wind.

Inside are paths and mazes.
There are caverns, pits and keys.
There are wolves and saints and crazes.
A wave, a storm, a breeze.

There are patterns, wonder, colours.
Music, thunder, voices.
My mind is like no other's –
Only I can make my choices.

Mind out, that is, if you don't mind,
I must be gentle, treat it kind.
Your mind is your own, I think you'll find.
One day I hope to know my own mind.





Words are hard,
I don't mean talking
I don't mean chats,
I mean when words are walking
All over the page.
Then they're hard
they're bats
I'm in a rage.

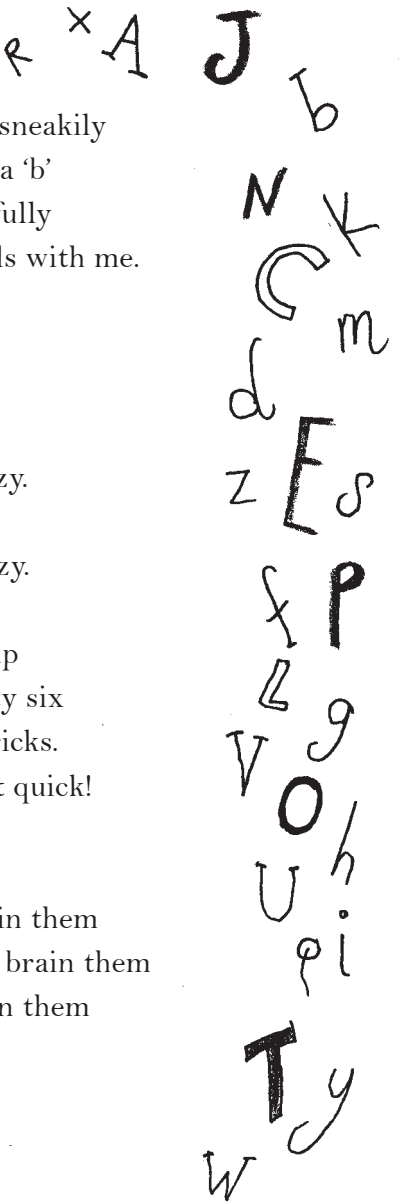
Letters are mad things
they swirl about
daft as brushes
in and out
they won't stay in the book
they stops, then they rushes
there goes one! Look!
I'm thinking carefully how
I might just catch an 'a'
I think I've seen one now –
But zaaaaaaap. It flew AwAy.

I'm going to creep up sneakily
Now watch, as I lasso a 'b'
MayBe if I tread carefully
I can make it Be friends with me.

But it's gone, see?
It's gone all hazy
into a 'd'
No NO NO I'm not lazy.
It isn't me
The ALpHaBEt is crazy.

It needs to be locked up
all of it, yeh, all twenty six
letters, to stop their tricks.
Catch them now! Do it quick!
Before they all split.

Lock them up and chain them
knock them down and brain them
tame them and restrain them
put them in a border
put them all in order
they make me sick.



My teacher's sighing
my mum's crying
I ain't lying
I *am* trying.

But I'm about done with reading
I don't think it's reading I'm needing.
It's racing and chasing
and rushing and swirling
and gushing and whirling.
And circling and soaring
and floating and roaring.
Just like letters.
But better.





Adams

There's three Adams in Mrs Turner's class,
Adam B, Adam W, Adam T,
and three Adams in my class,
Adam F, Adam R, Adam D.

Adam B is sporty,
Adam W is good at sums,
Adam T is naughty,
Adam F's got double-jointed thumbs.
Adam R can wiggle his ears.
But Adam D never comes.

Miss Pole does the register.
'Where is Adam D?
Has anybody seen him?
Wherever can he be?

We've written to his mother,
We've written to his dad,
We've even asked his brother.
It's really very sad.

We've tried hard to discover
why he will not come,
but his parents and his brother
say that he's struck dumb.

Can YOU find out, Evelyn?
He's very fond of you.
Just pop round after school, please,
and try to ask him, do.'

So I went round to Adam D's.
He lay upon his bed.
'Why don't you come to school no more?'
And this is what he said.

'Too many Adams.'

Well, would you Adam and Eve it?



'Adam and Eve it' is Cockney rhyming slang for 'believe it'.

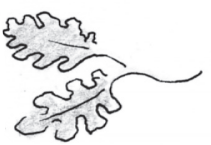
Jane Lee

Little Jane Lee
climbed a tree,
said, 'It's here I want to be.'
Mrs Lee said, 'Goodness me,
come down from that scary tree!'

'I was down before, I was feeling quite down,
now I'm high in clouds with a view of the town.
I think I'll stay, for I do believe
I like it here, up among the leaves.'

'Stuff and nonsense,' said Mrs Lee.
'You'll be down in no time, just you see.'

But no time passed and still Jane Lee
perched on the branch of the old oak tree.





She'd nuts from squirrels, crumbs from birds.
Not long before she lost human words.
Not long before, in the coldest weather,
she felt an itch – and grew a feather.
A sparrow's first, then a robin's, a crow's
and fine eagle feathers in golden rows.

Listen to Jane Lee! Hear how she sings!
And people are saying that she's grown wings.

'Where's Jane?' asked her sister, and Mrs Lee
said, 'Away with the fairies if you ask me.'
Or, 'She's joined the angels,' (which grown-ups say
when people die, or 'pass away').

But you and I know that little Jane Lee
sings, and flies, and sleeps in a tree.



