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opening extract from

Don't Tell the Teacher

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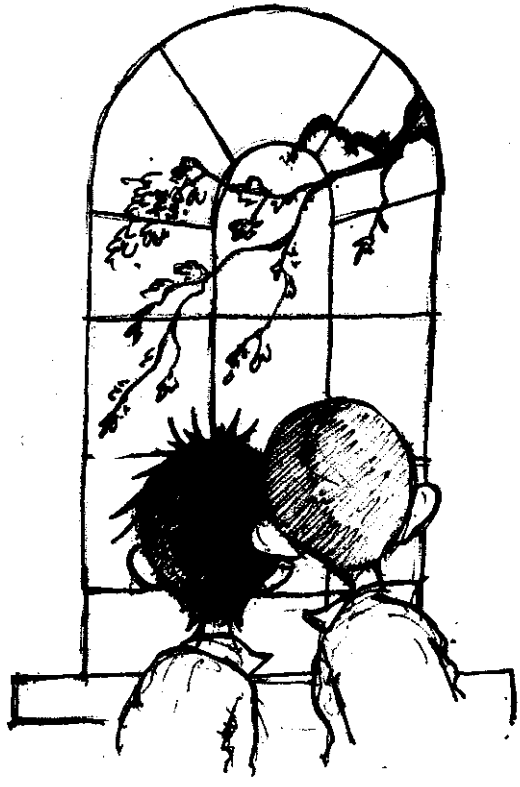
Puffin

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Early Sighting

Matthew saw a grey squirrel,
Poking a curious face
Though the branches of the tree,
Which stood outside the classroom window.
'Look!' he said to Andrew,
'Let's tell the teacher.'
'Don't you say a word,' replied his friend.
'She'll have us write about it!'



Supply Teacher



Dear Mrs Auchterloonie,
I'm writing just to say,
That I'm really really sorry
That you are still away.

The supply teacher has told us
That we have to write this letter,
Hoping that you're on the mend
And that you'll soon be better.

Our new teacher's called Miss Merriman
And she used to teach my mum,
And although she's pretty old now,
She's such a lot of fun.

She reads us super stories
And we paint and draw and sing,
And she's brilliant at outdoor games –
In fact, she's great at everything.

I've got really good at number work
Since Miss Merriman showed me how,
And my writing's so much neater
And my reading's better now.

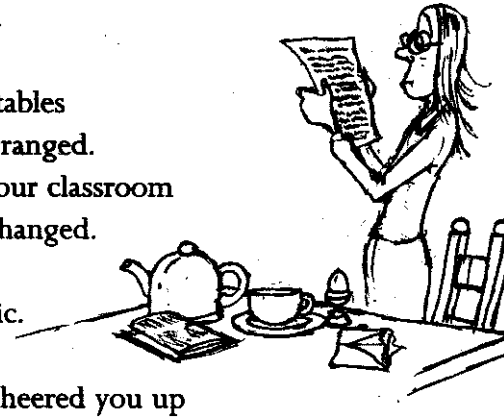
Miss Merriman's put our work up
All down the corridor.
The headteacher says he's never seen
A display as good before.

We do poetry and pottery
And spellings on a Friday.
Oh, and she's reorganized your storeroom
Because Miss Merriman likes things tidy.

She's packed up the computers,
And the pictures from the wall,
And taken all your potted plants
And put them in the hall.

She's emptied all your drawers out,
And put things in a tin.
And she's collected all our workbooks
And put them in the bin.

She's moved around the tables
And the chairs, she's rearranged.
You wouldn't recognize our classroom
Because everything has changed.



Miss Merriman is fantastic.
I think she's really cool.
Well, I hope my letter's cheered you up
And you'll soon be back at school.

My Best Friend

My best friend:

Sat next to David in class instead of **me**,
Talked about **me** behind my back,
Wrote things about **me** on the wall,
Got **me** into trouble with Miss,
Never asked **me** to his party,
Wouldn't look **me** in the eye,
Told **me** I was boring,
Said he didn't like **me** any more.
'The trouble is with you,' he told **me**,
'It's always **me**, **me**, **me**, **me**, **me**!'



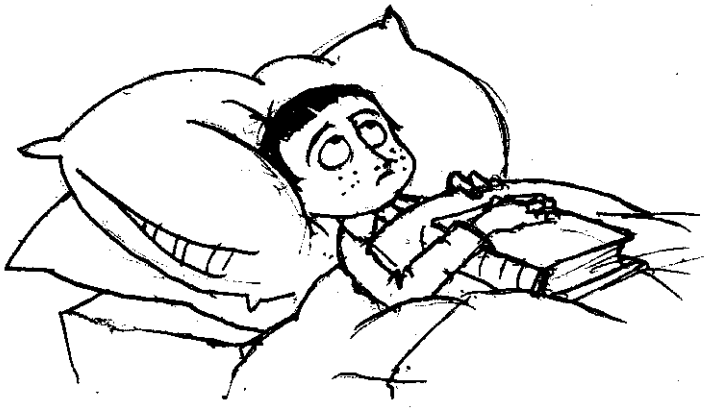
A Close Companion

As you sit all tense in the dentist's chair,
Eyes tightly closed, hands pressed together,
Listening to the whining drill –
I am there,
With you.

As you lie in bed in the shadowy dark,
And outside a cold wind rustles the leaves,
And branches scrape the window like claws –
I am there,
With you.

As you wade in the warm blue water,
Feeling the sandy sea bed soft beneath your feet,
And imagining what creature swims below –
I am there,
With you.

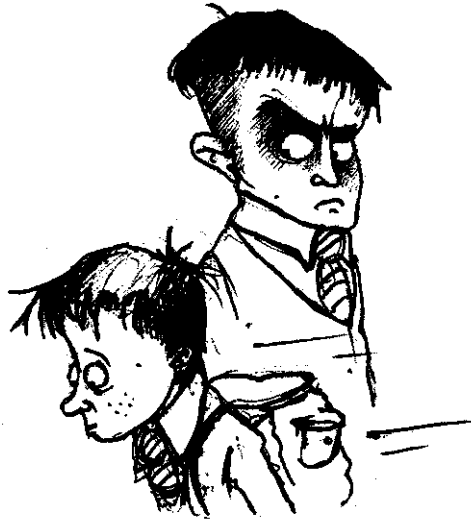
As you prepare to tell the angry teacher,
Who sits glowering at his desk,
That you have not done your homework –
I am there,
With you.



I am the one who
Makes you tremble and sweat,
Makes your heart beat like a drum,
Makes your throat dry and your chest tight,
I am the one who fills your head with the most dreadful thoughts –
And you know my name.

Bully

Bully –
Cold eyes.
Hits me hard,
Calls me cruel names.
My friend says,
'Ignore him.'
How?



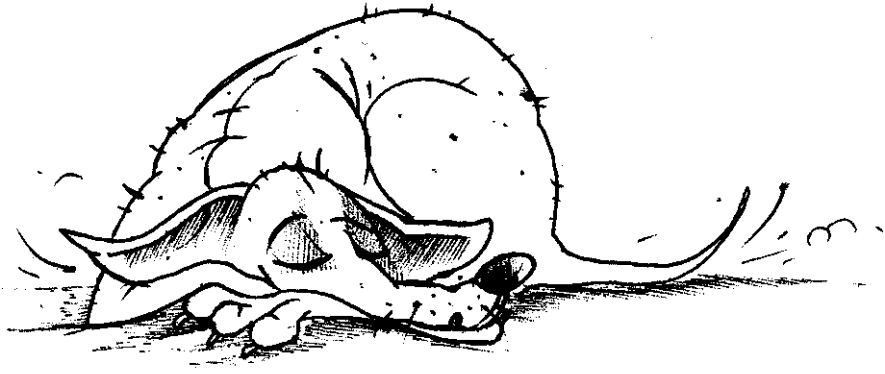
School Inspector

Inspector –
Cold eyes,
Sharp white teeth,
Smiles like a crocodile,
Frightens the teacher,
Who stands,
Trembling.



Dad and the Dog

'It's your turn to take the dog for a walk,' said Dad to Lizzie.
'No, it isn't. I took him on Monday.'
'It's your turn to take the dog for a walk,' said Dad to Dominic.
'No, it isn't. I took him on Tuesday.'
'It's your turn to take the dog for a walk,' said Dad to Matthew.
'No, it isn't. I took him on Wednesday.'
'It's your turn to take the dog for a walk,' said Dad to Richard.
'No, it isn't. I took him on Thursday.'
'It's your turn to take the dog for a walk,' said Dad to Mum.
'No, it isn't. I took him on Friday.'
'It must be my turn, then,' said Dad, reaching for the lead.
'Come on, Shadow. Walkies!'
But the dog was fast asleep.
He had got tired of waiting.



You Are Not Going Out Like That!

'You are not going out like that tonight!
No, you are not going out like that!
Your skirt's too short,
Your blouse too tight,
Your lips too red,
Your shoes too bright,
Your hair too wild,
You look a sight.
You are not going out like that tonight!
No, you are not going out like that!'

'Oh, don't be so old-fashioned,
Don't be such a nag.
You really are a misery-guts,
You really are a drag.
Cheer up, don't be downhearted –
You look so sad and glum.
Just remember you are my daughter, dear,
And I'm your trendy mum.'

