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Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website
created for parents and children to make
choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from
Green Glass Beads

Written by
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FRIENDS



Me & You

The long-legged girl who takes goal-kicks
is me,
I loop my 'j' and 'g's.
twiddle my hair
and wobbled a loose tooth
through History all yesterday afternoon.

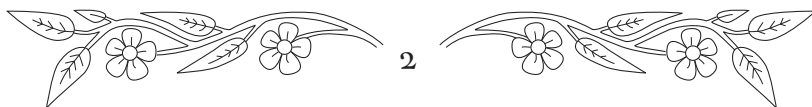
The small shy boy who draws dragons
is you.
You can multiply,
make delicious cheese scones
and when my tooth finally
falls out and I cry in surprise,
you hand me a crumpled tissue.

I will be an Olympic athlete,
Win two bronze medals.
You will be a vet with gentle hands
Who gets cats to purr and budgies speak,

We don't know this yet
but we will be each other's first date.
One kiss.
That's all . . . but
for the rest of our lives we never, ever forget.

In the meantime,
my tongue explores the toothless gap
and you lean over your desk and concentrate
on drawing the feathery,
feathery lines of a dragon's wings.

Mandy Coe

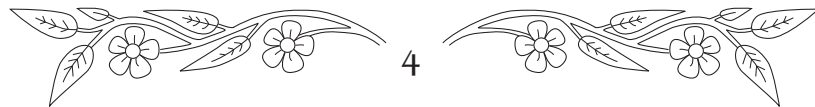


Tunbridge Wells

My turn for Audrey Pomegranate,
all-purpose friend for newcomers;
the rest had had enough of her –
her too-much hair, her too-much flesh,
her moles, her sideways-gliding mouth,
her smirking knowledge about rabbits.

Better a gluey friend than none,
and who was I to pick and choose?
She nearly stuck; but just in time
I met a girl called Mary Button,
a neat Dutch doll as clean as soap,
and Audrey P. was back on offer.

Fleur Adcock



Friends

I fear it's very wrong of me
And yet I must admit,
When someone offers friendship
I want the *whole* of it.
I don't want everybody else
To share my friends with me.
At least, I want *one* special one,
Who indisputedly,

Likes me much more than all the rest,
Who's always on my side,
Who never cares what others say,
Who lets me come and hide
Within his shadow; in his house –
It doesn't matter where –
Who lets me simply be myself,
Who's always, *always* there.

Elizabeth Jennings



Sporty People

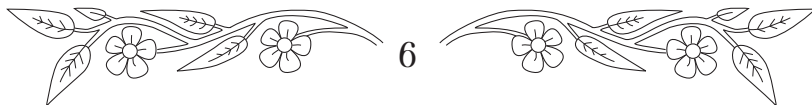
I took her for my kind of person
And it was something of a shock.
When my new friend revealed
That, once upon a time,
She was a Junior County Tennis Champion.

How could that happen?
How could I accidentally
Make friends with a tennis champion?
How could a tennis champion
Make friends with me?

She wasn't stupid. She read books.
She had never been mean to me
For being bad at games.
I decided to forgive
Her unfortunate past.

Sporty people can be OK –
Of course they can.
Later on, I met poets
Who played football. It's still hard
To get my head round that.

Wendy Cope



Prior Knowledge

Prior Knowledge was a strange boy.
He had sad green eyes.
He always seemed to know when I was telling lies.

We were friends for a summer.
Prior got out his knife
and mixed our bloods so we'd be brothers for life.

You'll be rich, he said, and famous;
but I must die.
Then brave, clever Prior began to cry.

He knew so much.
He knew the day before
I'd drop a jam jar full of frogspawn on the kitchen floor.

He knew there were wasps
in the gardening gloves.
He knew the name of the girl I'd grow up to love.

The day he died
he knew there would be
a wind shaking conkers from the horse chestnut tree;

and an aimless child
singing down Prior's street,
with bright red sandals on her skipping feet.

Carol Ann Duffy



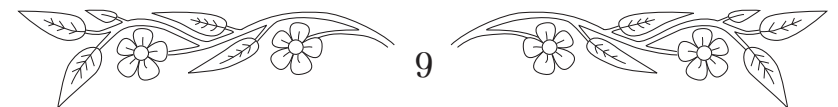
Sassenachs

Me and my best pal (well, she was
till a minute ago) are off to London.
First trip on an intercity alone.
When we got on we were the same
kind of excited – jigging on our seats,
staring at everyone. But then,
I remembered I had to be sophisticated.
So when Jenny started shouting,
'Look at that, the land's flat already,'
when we were just outside Glasgow
(Motherwell actually) I'd feel myself flush.
Or even worse, 'Sassenach country!
Wey Hey Hey.' The tartan tammy
sitting proudly on top of her pony;
the tartan scarf swinging like a tail.
The nose pressed to the window.
'England's not so beautiful, is it?'
And we haven't even crossed the border!
And the train's jazzy beat joins her:
Sassenachs Sassenachs here we come.
Sassenachs Sassenachs Rum Tum Tum
Sassenachs Sassenachs How do you do.
Sassenachs Sassenachs WE'LL GET YOU.

Then she loses momentum, so out come
the egg mayonnaise sandwiches and
the big bottle of Bru. 'My ma's done us proud,'
says Jenny, digging in, munching loud.
The whole train is an egg and I'm inside it.
I try to remain calm; Jenny starts it again,
Sassenachs Sassenachs Rum Tum Tum.

Finally we get there: London, Euston;
and the first person on the platform
gets asked – 'Are you a genuine Sassenach?'
I want to die, but instead I say, '*Jenny!*'
He replies in that English way –
'I beg your pardon,' and Jenny screams
'Did you hear that Voice?'
And we both die laughing, clutching
our stomachs at Euston.

Jackie Kay



When My Friend Anita Runs

When my friend Anita runs
she runs straight into the headalong –
legs flashing over grass, daisies, mounds.

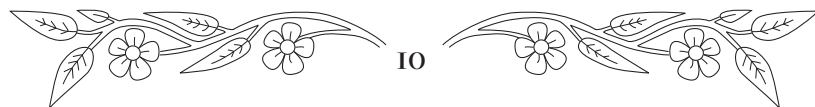
When my friend Anita runs
she sticks out her chest like an Olympic
champion – face all serious concentration.

And you'll never catch her looking around,
until she flies into the invisible tape
that says, she's won.

Then she turns to give me
this big grin and hug

O to be able to run like Anita,
 run like Anita,
Who runs like a cheetah.
If only, just for once, I could beat her.

Grace Nichols



It Is a Puzzle

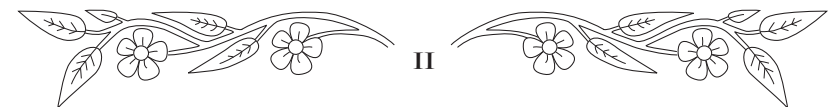
My friend
Is not my friend any more.
She has secrets from me
And goes about with Tracy Hackett.

I would
Like to get her back,
Only do not want to say so.
So I pretend
To have secrets from her
And go about with Alice Banks.

But what bothers me is,
Maybe *she* is pretending
And would like *me* back,
Only does not want to say so.

In which case
Maybe it bothers her
That *I* am pretending.

But if we are both pretending,
Then really we are friends
And do not know it. ➡



On the other hand,
How can we be friends
And have secrets from each other
And go about with other people?

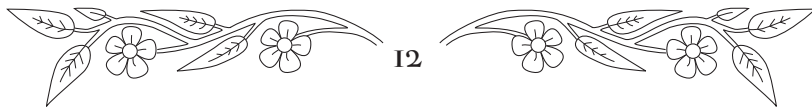
My friend
Is not my friend any more,
Unless she is pretending.
I cannot think what to do.
It is a puzzle.

Allan Ahlberg

Summer Romance

I was best friends with Sabah
the whole long summer;
I admired her handwriting,
the way she smiled into
the summer evening,
her voice, melted butter.
The way her chin shone
under a buttercup.
Everyone let Sabah
go first in a long
hot summer queue.
The way she always looked
fancy, the way
she said 'Fandango',
and plucked her banjo;
her big purple bangle
banged at her wrist;
her face lit by the angle
poise lamp in her room,
her hair all a tangle,
damp from the summer heat,
Sabah's eyes sparkled all summer.
But when the summer was gone
and the winter came,
in walked Big Heather Murphy.
Sabah turned her lovely head
towards her. I nearly died.
Summer holidays burn with lies.

Jackie Kay



I'm Nobody! Who Are You?

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us – don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

Emily Dickinson

Give Yourself a Hug

Give yourself a hug
when you feel unloved

Give yourself a hug
when people put on airs
to make you feel a bug

Give yourself a hug
when everyone seems to give you
a cold-shoulder shrug

Give yourself a hug –
a big big hug

And keep on singing,
'Only one in a million like me
Only one in a million-billion-trillion-zillion
like me.'

Grace Nichols

