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Opening extract from

A is Amazing

Written by

Wendy Cooling

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Bored

To Pass the Time

When I'm bored I count things:
Cornflakes, cars,
Pencils, people, leaves on trees,
Raindrops, stars,
Footsteps, heartbeats, pebbles, waves,
Gaggles, herds and flocks,
Freckles, blinks per minute,
The ticks
Of clocks.
Eighty-seven lamp-posts
Line our street.
Did you know a wood-louse has
Fourteen feet?
And – two vests, four pairs of pants, six shirts, two
T-shirts, one pair of jeans, two other pairs of trousers,
one pair of shorts, three belts, three pullovers, one of
them without sleeves, a raincoat, a jacket, two pairs of
pyjamas, one glove, one tie and eleven socks are
The clothes I've got
In five drawers and one wardrobe:
I'm bored
A lot.

Richard Edwards
UK

Careful

Little Girl, Be Careful What You Say

Little girl, be careful what you say
when you make talk with words, words –
for words are made of syllables
and syllables, child, are made of air –
and air is so thin – air is the breath of God –
air is finer than fire or mist,
finer than water or moonlight,
finer than spiderwebs in the moon,
finer than water-flowers in the morning:
    and words are strong, too,
    stronger than rocks or steel,
stronger than potatoes, corn, fish, cattle,
and soft, too, soft as little pigeon-eggs,
soft as the music of hummingbird wings.
    So, little girl, when you speak greetings,
when you tell jokes, make wishes or prayers,
    be careful, be careless, be careful.
    Be what you wish to be.

Carl Sandburg
USA

Friendly

Oath of Friendship

Shang ya!
I want to be your friend
For ever and ever without break or decay.
When the hills are all flat
And the rivers are all dry,
When it lightens and thunders in winter,
When it rains and snows in summer,
When Heaven and Earth mingle –
Not till then will I part from you.

Anon
(China)

Good

My Sari

Saris hang on the washing line:
a rainbow in our neighbourhood.
This little orange one is mine,
it has a mango leaf design.
I wear it as a Rani would.
It wraps around me like sunshine,
it ripples silky down my spine,
and I stand tall and feel so good.

Debjani Chatterjee
India/UK

Huffy

Huff

I am in a tremendous huff –
Really, really bad.
It isn't any ordinary huff –
It's one of the best I've had.

I plan to keep it up for a month
Or maybe for a year
And you needn't think you can make me smile
Or talk to you. No fear.

I can do without you and her and them –
Too late to make amends.
I'll think deep thoughts on my own for a while,
Then find some better friends.

And they'll be wise enough to see
That they should behave with proper respect
Towards somebody like me.

I do like being in a huff –
Cold fury is so heady.
I've been like this for half an hour
And it's cheered me up already.

Perhaps I'll give them another chance,
Now I'm feeling stronger,
But they'd better watch out – my next big huff
Could last much, much, much longer.

Wendy Cope
UK