

Poems 2506B

#1 Cream.

Mary smeared her trembling hands,
full of cream, across her face
and over her nose. Down her neck,
too where her wrinkles were.

And towards midnight
she washed away the cream, she did.

In accord, with what the great,
makeup influencer advised.

“Very good for the skin,” she stated.

Mary didn’t want to look at herself
until the morning. She wanted to surprise,
herself, she did. Had a pleasant dream,
she had. A rippling brook against
the bristling reeds. So tranquil, they were.
So personal. So much about the mood.

The wakening was gentle. She rose and took a shower
and dressed. Just one more addition, a pair,
of pearl earrings. They drooped like tears, they did.

Ready for the day she was! A morning chorus greeted her.

After her breakfast, she took hold of her basket.

She strode into the woodland close to her cottage.

She leaned over and picked a mushroom.

She picked more. How fresh they looked.

This was one of the many times she spent
in nature. Nature as it was intended.

Hands for foraging in the clearing, she had.

Bright eyes for seeking berries out, too.

Yes, she picked some more mushrooms.
She was certain they were edible.
She had, a wealth of experience.
She was often around these parts,
foraging. Suddenly, she spied some
wild strawberries. She picked a small
amount. A bush or two further, there were
some bramble bushes. She picked some
and tasted some. They were ready for eating.
Her basket was getting full! She ate a couple more.
That was enough for today, she thought.
She took some time to walk home.
After all, the morning was enchanting.
And dew was still, apparent on the grasses.
She washed some strawberries and sat down.
That was what the great Makeup influencer, had said.
Eat some wild berries and think of your complexion.
Then and only then, turn to face the mirror.
Into her bedroom she stepped, so elegantly, too.
She did as was suggested. Stunned at what she saw,
she screamed. From her neck to her hair,
she was invisible.
There was nothing visible between her blouse
and her slightly greying hair. Not a thing at all!
Only her pearl-drop earrings, were visible,
like teardrops, from nowhere, for all to see.
She found the jar of cream around other
discarded things. She read the label,
Vanishing Cream, it stated.

2. His Last Ballet.

It was to be his last ballet, he knew that.

He couldn't think of leaving without
saying goodbye. After falling like he did.

Perhaps it was, some specks of debris
on the floor. A dancer can't be aware
of everything around him.

His ballerina needed keen attention, too.

To be caught in midair.

He was, a great figure, to cap it all.

Still, he wasn't harmed.

Just the damned embarrassment!

He decided his final ballet,
was to finish with a pirouette.

That's a twirl in French.

To be a little more accurate,
if the dancer is above the ground
the term is tour en l'air.

Or twirl in the air.

A whirl to end his very last performance.

He whitened his face, after all,

It was a ghostly look he was after.

There was a beeping from the left and right.

He entered the stage of whiteish stripes.

A stage he knew well.

Started with an arabesque, he did.

That's a great leap in ballet.

In French of course.

His arabesque caught
other pedestrians by surprise.
How he landed on the midway, section,
How he turned against the sky.
Everyone, was looking at him.
Open mouthed, they were.
He gave it everything he could.
He didn't disappoint himself,
or his admiring audience.
They were transfixed, alright!
He, the ballet dancer did an arabesque,
followed by a pirouette.
That's right, he leapt the ground
and twirled around, he did.
Just like that! before he landed, on the curb,
Only to perform another, arabesque
over the zebra stripes.
Only, this time the beeping stopped
The car and vehicle, drivers started
to blow their horns they did. To no avail!
The pedestrians parted making way
to see the spectacle before them.
More and more people gathered.
The drivers suddenly accelerated
and mowed them all down.
There was carnage alright!
They weren't interested in the ballet.
And they wanted to finish their shift,
or drive home for tea.

Still, the ballet dancer,
made the headlines,
for a couple of days.
Had an obituary or two,
after that is, the autopsy.
Graphic accounts appeared
all over the web. Too gruesome,
to be described, here.

3. A Terrible Thank You.

What did you mean, “No.” So abrupt you were.
So often, too. So you thought, all against you, they were.
Just because they didn’t dance to your wistful tune.
Whatever that was! A pied piper, could be hired,
A fiddler, too, so all of us could dance the hours away.
Wouldn’t that be wonderful?
A look of disapproval crossed your face.
Followed by a frown.
Couldn’t you be agreeable, to anything?
everyone said.
No, and the terrible thank you
that you kept on repeating.
As though, you were, kind of
damning everyone, as with a curse.
People, began to cross the street, they did.
How you looked away as you approached us.
Cut above the rest of us, so you thought!
You spent a long time, you did.
groaning this way and that.

So many paths you crossed.
All those greetings, you ignored.
Why was that? Were you in another world?
and the questions, you just nodded away.
All those nods, with just a feel
of the coolness in the air around you.
And the hesitations that you held for ever.
What held you back? A sense of superiority;
We read the papers, just like everyone else.
A relative offered his home to you. SoWhat!
At least you have a home.
So you have a sense of shame.
There are some skeletons in most people's closets.
They don't mention them for God's sake.
He knows of them for sure. He doesn't want to be
reminded. You can understand that, can't you?
And voices from the past, are those you turned
a deaf ear to. And the sigh you gave,
as you collapsed, there and then. Just like that!
A visitor was about to enter the Post Office.
She stopped and squatted, felt your pulse
and said, "She's going,"
Across the road, some people stopped and stared.
And with your last breath you uttered a terrible,
"Thank you." And your heart stopped its beating.
Just when the local band, had turned around the corner
some ancient pipes a-whistling, drums a-beating,
to the rhythm of a heart. And, what did you do?
You awoke from your sleep. We couldn't call it death.

No, that wasn't possible, was it?
And you asked, "Where am I?"
"You're in the market town of Stroud," a stranger said.
A friend of mine she was.
"Thank you. Can you show me where I live?
That would be so terribly kind."
I couldn't, for the life of me, believe my ears.
And you were so very lucky someone was still there,
on the same, side as you, street wise, that is.
Otherwise, your words may never have been heard.

4. He Said He Would Say It.

He said he would say the words.
Which he did, before he left to go,
Two suitcases in his hands he held.
And a passport in his pocket.
"Goodbye, Write to you I will,
as soon as possible."
He took the train to Harwich
In order to board the ferry.
There was a long wait.
No reason was given,
before departure, or on the ferry.
It wasn't long after the ferry was at sea
that the going got a little rough.
For some time, the ferry, did it sway and roll
over the swells and into them.
He shouldn't have eaten, for sure.
The weather was worsening.

Was it gale force or worse?

He began to feel a little sick.

Not long afterwards, he felt
he was about to vomit.

He went on deck
and leaned over the rail.

He held on tight.

He didn't want to end up
in the North Sea.

There was another man,
quite close to him.

Quite an elderly man, too.
a foot away.

He looked as if he was content.

Was he an old seafarer,
happy with the weather?

The weather wasn't following
the weatherman's forecast.

Rough it was. Boat swaying,
this way and that, it was.

He was on the port's side.

The weather was against him.

he leaned over the rail
he didn't want to throw up,
not over the old guy besides him.

He couldn't help it.

He opened his throat and retched.

How it came out of him. A stomach's worth!

And the taste of it. And the after taste!

Thank heavens for the sea, he thought.
“Thank heavens, I missed you,” he said.
“No you didn’t,” the old man said,
“Some other day, perhaps.”

#5. The Pied Piper.

A pied piper could be hired,
you know. From Hamelin, perhaps.
And, no! He didn’t lure the children
through the blowing of his magic pipe.
No, they were goddam sold.
Too many children. Not enough to eat!
Or, so they said.
“What ever happened to our brothers
and sisters?” Did the children cry.
Oh! A pied piper happened along
and played his magic pipe.
Followed the sound of his awful,
magic pipe they did.
They were led into a cave, all but
for two children, a cripple
and a blind boy.
So the horrible legend went.
Sold for coin they were.
Except, that is, for the two
disabled children.
They couldn’t keep up.
Perhaps, rejected were they,
Or, not anything, worth.

No coin you see!
On that account! Lucky,
to be disabled, I guess.

6. At A Loss.

I said I couldn't write about the subject you suggested.
"You have no alternative except for the subject of nothing.
So, take it to the rafters and run along."
I had to do just that. How to start? So, there was nothing for a day or so.
A day or so later, I woke up at an unmentionable hour.
I pressed on my talking clock to find out the time. It was 06.03. So
how is it today?
Too close for comfort, I guess. It's been that way for some time.
We're in a heat dome they said. Isn't that what we talk about in Britain.
Whatever, the weather is! Except, it's now being talked about all over the
world. Global warming. The thing that unmentionable President is
dismissing. He doesn't want to burden the American public with taxes.
Or indeed people like himself. I know, there isn't anyone like him. There
isn't another American president is there? Never mind how many people
were drowned in Texas when a river burst it's banks. Well over a
hundred and still counting. Many of them children camping out by a river.
Sacked weather forecasters, he has. So, I guess they no longer exist. Is
that a whizz, or not? I can mention something because they no longer
exist. I suppose unmentionables, too, because we can't mention their
names. The Victorians thought they reminded us about sex, especially
when we took them off, which was another unmentionable subject.
Anyway, I don't want to mention them because I don't know if mine need
to go into the wash. So I won't describe them. What else can't you not
mention? Oh, yes! A woman's age. Mind you, I could just write briefly

about the substance she wipes across her face to make her look younger. Which brings us to another subject were not, suppose to talk about, that is us members of the opposite sex. Yes, I've done it again, haven't I? Gossip. It's just so trivial isn't it? Mind you, those members of the opposite sex do talk about it, in that way when it comes to someone rising through the ranks to their position of incompetence, which is where I am, right now, so I guess I must end here.

© Terry Miles 2025.