

Hole
Collected poems 1970 to 2004

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HOLE

A hole is nowt,
So what's about,
And then a shout,
"Oy mate, look out!
Too late John,
Poor bleeders gone."

- a comment on building sites -

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LOVE

Touch me lightly
For the pain I feel now
Is the pain of love

- those first few seconds of falling in love -

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LIFELESS HAIR

She split her eyes at ten am,
Shrugged her body out of bed,
Scuffed across the cold, cold floor,
Stood at the sink and nailed her head.
The coils hung down - limp and dank,
She knew it needed washing now,
She popped her tongue and told herself,
She wouldn't do it anyhow.
The coils slid round her dirty throat,
And as she choked upon the floor,
She wished she hadn't left it now,
Should have washed it long before.

- sylvia's hair -

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LITTLE LACEY

Little Lacey Tickle tumbles,
Falling down gives a laugh,
Scooping suds upon her head,
Smiles at mum while in the bath.

- a friend's first child -

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THIRTY ONE

There was a house, cor what a dive,
And a neighbour shouted, "Man alive!
What is this noise, this deep, deep beat,
That roars out over Dodson Street?"
His friend shouts back, "Don't worry son,
It's all those bums in thirty-one."

- my flat in waterloo, london -

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DISTORTED ECHOES

Last week I bought a pig called Peter,
a present for my wife, but she didn't want it.
Last week Peter bought a pig for a present
but my wife, she didn't want it.
Peter bought she, a present for my pig
but last week I didn't want my wife.
Peter bought the wife a she pig
and last week it was a present.
Then the pig ate my wife.
Now there's a fucking present!

- drunk & disorderly -

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TIGER - TIGER

The tiger's coming darling,
Cast your hearing over there,
See the sights - the black-gold stripes,
The eyes that seem to stare and stare.
See the way it smells you darling,
Look, the grass is moving there,
Smell the musk - the cat like odour,
See the claws that tear and tear.
Feel the way it wants you darling,
As it pulls you limb from limb,
You'll not wander anymore,
Now that you are inside him.

- that'll stop her fooling around -

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A PECULIAR MAN

I like to walk in the woods at night
And sit by myself in the dark
I like to argue all the time
And stand on my head in the park
I like to dress in clothes so gay
And laugh and sing when I can
I like to do these things and more

'Cos I'm a peculiar man

- well that's what all my mates say -

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POT LUCK

Me brother John sniffed glue like
Yeah, glue and gas and stuff
Trouble was 'e didn't know
When 'e'd 'ad enough.
Not me, I got more sense like
Don't want me nose to rot
Snotting lumps of Evo-Stic
Yeah, fink I'll stick to pot.
'Cause pot don't do yer 'ead like
That's what me mates all say
If only John 'ad smoked it
'E'd still be 'ere today.

- good ol' flower-power -

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PRETTY LITTLE THING

She was a pretty little thing
Some said a genius
Who could talk to many nations
But I didn't trust her
For come upon her quietly
And you could hear her whisper
"Come quick, come quick, come quick."
She was a pretty little thing
Some said a mystic
Who could talk to long dead people
But I didn't trust her
For come upon her quietly
And you could hear her whisper
"This world, this world, this world."
She was a pretty little thing
Some said a Healer
Who could touch a person healthy
But I didn't trust her
For come upon her quietly
And you could hear her whisper
"Kill them, kill them, kill them."

- an idea for a short story -

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ANSWER

I wanted to see everything
I wanted to understand all

I wanted to be everywhere
So I built a cage
A large cage
A glass cage
And in the cage I sat
And as I sat I pondered
And the conclusion was this
If I am to see everything, I must be everywhere
So I built a nest
A large nest
A glass nest
And I slept within the nest
And as I slept I was devoured
Piece by piece
Fed into the mandibles of knowledge
And upon nine legs I walked
To roam and see with a million eyes
Viewing all in tiny parts
Which added together equalled one
And when my wanderings were done
I found I had the answer

- further education -

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IT'S WET OUT AGAIN

It's wet out again,
and your tears run down
the windowpane.
Touching them brings you back.
Damp patches on my fingertips,
cool receptacle of our love.
Your tears are salty
as I savour their memory.
Salty, soft and tentative.
This one, our wedding day;
your face is reflected in its shape,
framing your beauty from within.
Here, our child's first hurt.
You cried with her. I,
not being there, cried later.
The harsh taste of your mother's death;
as she gave up her struggle
and left you behind.
All things wiped away now
With the edge of a curtain.

- my first divorce -

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GOLDEN BIRTH

My incubation took aeons
for buried deep I was.

Deep in the desert sands.
Hidden away from sight in a hot, grainy bed.
And as I grew I dreamt.
Dreamt of a life when I would be free.
For three thousand centuries I grew,
flexing half-formed muscles within my shell
while above me the world turned.
Over the years life crawled,
ebbing and flowing across my land.
Many confusing thoughts carried to me,
hateful thoughts, primitive thoughts.
Urgings and longings that called me up,
straining for the sky,
so the sun might warm my golden skin.
My time is now, I feel it.
I am.

- a rather peculiar dream -

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SAGGING SEATS

Piled high in twisted surrealism,
gaping doors rusted and broken,
gutless machines brood;
broken dreams on buckled wheels.
The slow drip of oil,
as a split axle cries,
makes echoes of pain.
And all the while, the bloody dashboard
and broken glass
makes echoes of life.
Wind slammed doors move gently,
whispering stories on their sighing hinges.
Small pieces of scalp
flutter lifelike on the breeze.
What dreams were carried on these sagging seats
now spilling foam from gaping smiles?
What dreams that called with such urgency
none could wait to embrace them?

- scrap-yard of dreams -

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SUPER BABE

More dangerous than a speeding bullet.
Smellier than an unwashed tramp.
Able to disrupt life with a single smile.
Is it a dog?
Is it a cat?
Is it even a good idea?
No - it's superbabe!
Its five year mission - to boldly mess
where no babe has messed before.

More troublesome than a Poll Tax Form.
More noisier than a Lada car.
Able to redistribute food with a single puke.
Is it lovable?
Is it laughable?
Is it even worth it?
Of course it is - it's superbabe!

- that 4am feeling -

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UNCLE BERT'S LAST TUNE

The women work quietly in the back room
I sit with his life across my knees.
They laughingly wash his cold body
I lovingly stroke his worn and battered tuba,
And recall a resplendent uniform.
The women stand by his bed
While I place his life by his side,
His cold stiff fingers on warm brass stops.
Then his body settles and plays his last tune.
A slow, resounding fart.

- a friend's funeral -

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DEATHLESS CARESS

Death caressed my face in passing
but didn't stop that night.
I sat confused amid tinkling glass,
A drawn-out silence, hot ticking metal.
I tasted the encounter in warm blood,
smelt it in the petrol fumes,
saw it in the twisted wreck,
and was frightened by the suddenness
of our meeting.

- a head-on, resulting in a cracked cheekbone -

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THE DAY THE HOOVER BIT BACK

Do you recall what you were doing
the day JFK was shot?
It was like that when the Hoover bit back.
I was relaxing in a hot tub
when my wife's scream shot me through the door.
She stood in a corner; eyes wide
while the hose waved back and forth
like some demented snake.
I watched, mouth agape, as it struck.
She elongated and disappeared.

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