

# **OTHER than**

**POEMS**

**exploring the possibilities**

**by  
Jim Bennett**

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# NOTICE

**Patients in this ward should take note of the following:**

**1 - The way wind twists flagpole chords as brown leaves scratch quill sharp points across the tarmac, gentle fingers against bare back.**

**2 - Contrails worm the sky as clouds traipse a backdrop wash that artists never quite get right, and as Radio 2 plays Sinatra, you think about Hoboken and the Mafia.**

**3 - Black headed gulls hang in the air, held aloft by the geometry of a feather, as wings bend, flex and stretch sketching the invisible currents like fingers gently coaxing a breast, seeking out the lump.**

**4 - There is no great beauty to record, it is as ordinary and everyday as a baby's cry or a tear wiped and what you see and hear you will forget. Like the flowers arranged in the vase that you moved from table top to sideboard and back again.**

**5 - Everything has its place. Well nearly everything, some things just have to be excised, discarded like first wives when the blood cools.**

**6 - The way visitors with fixed smiles hurry away, afraid to say goodbye, as you cling to every moment before the silence settles once again among the beds.**

**7 - The way you find new ways to measure time. The morning strands of sun across the floor like prison bars, ward rounds at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. visiting at 7. Temperature and blood pressure taken by a distracted nurse every four hours to keep charts up to date.**

**8 - The sounds of cars out on the street, the clatter of heels, the hushed professional voices as they pass on the vital news that you drank two glasses of water and took a piss.**

## **POEM IN A BOX**

Thank you for purchasing  
THE DAFFODILS EXPERIENCE  
POEM.IN A BOX.

In the box you will find  
FIVE COPIES OF THE POEM  
- one for reading,  
four others complete with directions for helpers.  
100 PLASTIC DAFFODILS.  
Please note; these may be tulips  
as Daffodils are in short supply  
due to the success of this package.  
THREE LARGE MIRRORS  
A TIN RECEPTACLE  
A SMALL CONTAINER OF OIL  
- burning the oil in the receptacle will create  
one small lonely cloud,  
there is likely to be some residue  
and impossible to remove tar  
may be deposited on low ceilings.  
A CARDBOARD CUT-OUT OF HILLS  
AND A VALE  
A SHEET OF FLORESCENT STARS

In addition you will also need;  
A COUCH  
A PEDESTAL FAN  
BLACKOUT CURTAINS

Please ensure that safety precautions are  
understood and followed at all times  
by the rope handlers.  
All ropes and tackle must be  
properly secured  
during the wandering sequence..

**C.R.A.P**  
**Creative Research for Advancing Poetry**

If you are reading this text  
correctly you should be Reading

This text with your left eye

And this with your right eye

it has been written to talk to that  
area of your brain most appropriate  
to what it is saying

on the Wednesday evening  
the poem sat sulking  
on a piece of paper  
in the corner of the third room  
other poems were being read  
but he was left unread  
too late to be included  
and worse  
at the evenings end  
he was left  
to be put in the rubbish

but this poem was different  
he was built of stern words  
and solid stanzas  
and he had  
important things  
to say

right there and then  
he made up his mind  
not to accept his fate

while he was being printed off  
that day  
he had seen  
the TV advertising  
auditions for the x factor

this was his chance  
he would go  
to Manchester  
sing his praises  
convince them  
that here was a poem  
with the x factor

he just had to get  
someone to help

the cleaner came round

The point with the selection of lines is to achieve an effect; you might want to utilize shape to hint at something using a pattern as a gestalt clue to another visual link. Or the lines may mirror your voice. The poet's voice is important it makes all the difference when a reader comes to the poem to be able to hear the poem as the poet intended. In this poetry has much more to do with verbal performance than as literary art. So what if there are no line breaks? What if the piece is written as prose but using poetic devices, particularly figurative language?

Often the reader will interpret the poem differently to the way in which was intended by the poet. In this instance it is important to understand that the reader brings a creative input to the poem or a piece of art when they see or read it. Neither the reader's or the artist's or poet's view is the correct view, all are equally valid. So it is sometimes useful to leave the space where this interaction and adding-to-of the creative process can take place.

We still have nouns that serve the purpose of a verb, gerunds. So words like skiing and cycling while being nouns are also verbs. The idea of noun as verb is not unusual in world languages and one of the functions of a poet is to explore the extent to which language can be stretched and still retain meaning.

picking up glasses  
then picked him up  
the cleaner stood for a moment  
reading the poem  
which lay like a smile  
on his lips  
then he called his mate  
the cleaner read the poem aloud  
and while he did  
the poem felt himself  
balloon in stature  
each of his words  
echoing off the empty walls

the final two lines  
held the key  
to the whole poem  
unlocked its mysteries  
set free a universal truth

the poem listened  
while he came alive  
in the cleaners mouth  
the end was getting close  
he could feel the tension  
building  
like it would for Simon Cowell  
and when those lines  
were read he knew that  
Simon would  
be amazed  
would sit mouth open  
speechless

The cleaner reached  
the last stanza  
stop that you two  
a voice yelled  
I want to get home tonight

The cleaner stopped  
just one line more  
the poem willed him  
but already  
he was starting  
to scrunch the poem  
into a ball

that what they do in here  
the other cleaner asked  
yes I think so  
the cleaner with the poem replied  
load of crap  
the other cleaner said  
sounding a lot  
like Simon Cowell

Our interaction, observation and understanding of the world around us come through our senses. To write poetry that other people will find evocative we need to expose the poem by infusing it with our own sensory experience, whether real or imagined. It is by interacting with our senses and allowing the reader to share that which makes a poem "real" to them. It is also in considering the senses that we help to develop images. Images of various sorts are the real stuff of poetry.

When you dream is it in abstract terms or in images, when you use you memory to recall an incident is it in abstract terms or in images? Abstract terms became a short cut in written language, so for example we might write " it was a beautiful view", but what does that term beautiful actually mean? I suppose it could be interpreted as "when I say that scene I thought it was beautiful" or "It was beautiful to me". When the reader picks up that word, the image in which they interpret it might be a view of Liverpool by night, (which is of course a beautiful view) or a sunny countryside with a fox hunt in full flow (which I find quite sickening, not a political comment, just a personal reaction). All this word beautiful describes is a reaction of the person who did the looking. So abstract terms like this can stand between the reader and the thing being written about and what the reader reads takes them straight to the writer rather than the subject, equally it may lead to a completely wrong association for the reader.

As Simon Cowell said once "It's a load of crap."

## incendiary

words hung out like  
twigs in autumn  
fall and random line  
like  
matches at the barbeque  
last summer  
spilt across  
the patio

found wedged  
months later  
in a wound  
between the flagstones

still turn up  
occasionally

words like those matches  
that can burn  
twice if you remember  
the children's joke

that can strike  
at any time  
incendiary

like the garden lights

not  
like  
twigs  
in  
autumn

they are not  
real lights  
just glow balls  
that punch a hole  
through the darkness  
without  
illuminating  
anything  
as I water the patio pots  
in the dark

it is not always like this  
but it was hot  
last night

and the words we spoke  
were  
incendiary

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I want to talk about the ---  
but the computer will not let me  
every time I write the word ---  
it vanishes  
and I am left with ---  
I can write about ----- and ---  
oh well maybe I can't  
there must be something  
inside the computer  
stopping me  
something put there  
to prevent me  
and everyone else writing  
about the ---  
changing words  
or refusing to print  
some words that  
challenge the -----  
see it's done it again  
----- what a ---- up  
soon I wont be able to

-----

satnd

Cmoe adn satnd hree nxteto me  
yuo cna haer teh smuemr diyng  
lesitn to teh tierd snouds of eevnig  
as the cloo ari dtrfis tugrhoh the gtae

teh drkenass is aoslmt sliod  
a wlal to kepe us in  
or teh wolrd otu  
I neevr culod fuirge otu wchih

bwron leeavs caerp asocrs teh pitao  
warey ienstcs carek adn cclik  
tiehr fainl wkees  
adn I satnd hree wtaiing fro yuo  
to be hree netx to me  
as wrdos fial me

## **fridge poem**

I try to write poems wherever I am  
out walking or jogging or in a traffic jam  
and now I have letters stuck to the freezer door  
and i write poems until i don't want to write anymore  
but i have twO problems wrtng ths way  
the frst s that new pOems wpe Old Ons away  
and th Scnd tht Befr vry lng  
i run ut f Lttrs a cn fn N g

## **POEM IN A BOX (2)**

Coming soon

**CHRISTMAS**

A specially commissioned

**POEM IN A BOX**

by Jim Bennett

complete with

large red plastic bag

with holes for arms and head

cardboard cut out Santa beard

and other attachments

sheets of newspaper

and direction how to cut out

Christmas shapes

for decorations

Some additional sheets as

wrapping paper.

We also include instructions

for making a magic expanding

Christmas Tree from

A copy of The Times

You also get

two copies of the poem

(one notated for Santa's helper)

Not included

Elves, sledge or Reindeer