

Squeezed Out



# Harold Hikins

---

Squeezed Out

Harold Hikins :Squeezed Out

Merseyside Poetry Minibooks Series No.3

First published 1982 by Windows,  
23a Brent Way, Liverpool L26 9XH, Merseyside.

Copyright © Harold Hikins 1982.

ISBN 0 907950 03 5

Windows receives financial assistance from Merseyside Arts



## **BEARS**

Each evening as night draws to  
I climb the stairs up to the loo

And hidden underneath the stairs  
are two enormous grizzly bears.

During the night they go away  
and two more come the following day.

There must be several hundred bears  
who know the place beneath our stairs.

## TRUTH DRUG

I'm not so young as I used to be -  
dribble at the mouth a little, dribble when I pee;  
genitals uncertain - copulation's rough;  
my teeth all broken: the porridge feels tough.

I'm all right; I'm all right.  
Why am I happy? Why do I feel free?  
I've got a slot-meter, no-deposit, colour t.v.

Don't care if the Amoco clogs up the birds,  
the river's reclaimed by tins and turds;  
don't care if the Atlantic gets radiation  
or the red flu spreads through all creation;

I'm all right; I'm all right.  
I'm really contented and I'm really free:  
got a slot-meter, no-deposit colour-tv.

I just lie back and I watch them shoot  
with bombs in Belfast and bazookas in Beirut.  
It costs me a little here and there -  
but I keep my feet right up in my chair

I'm all right - I'm all right  
I tell you I'm enjoying it· I tell you, I'm free:  
I've got a slot-meter, no-deposit,. colour t.v.

The Cubans and the Muscovites, they work like shit;  
they try to persuade me they believe in it.  
Must have been something they got to eat -  
they're all brain-washed from brains to feet;

but I'm all right· I'm all right  
I know the truth, I'm happy and free:  
Got a slot-meter, no deposit, colour t.v.

Well, you can fight if you like for what you think is  
right;  
you can sign petitions from dawn till night,  
put up barricades - demonstrate -  
assassinate Tyndall - destroy the state:  
I won't join in, cause I'm sure you'll fail.  
Get you nowhere, only gaol; -

And I'll sit here in my big settee,  
feet on the chair and pussy on my knee,  
and watch all night till my eyes can't see

I'll stay right, I'll be all right:  
I'll stay happy and I'll stay free  
with my slot-meter, no-deposit, colour t.v.



## FATHER CHRISTMAS SONNET

Rejecting all the friends who told her - No,  
it is a myth. He never did exist.  
she did believe, and knew that it was so.  
And, looking at him through romantic mist  
of tinsel stars and snow in Blackler's store,  
she saw him plain - white beard and crimson coat;  
and whispering all her heart was longing for  
she hugged him, with her arms around his throat.

Later he turned into a gruff old man  
egg-smear'd about the face, with scaly skin  
and unwashed fingers, tattered cardigan  
and dirty collar, and a taste for gin.

But she, at home, and unaware of this,  
knew only that he blessed her with his kiss.

## SUCCESS STORY

Let me record the account  
of Tullus Brattus, prestidigitator,  
who in the year of the four Emperors  
reached the zenith of his competence  
and amassed in a short time a small fortune  
by a trick with wooden planks.  
Not really a trick. A matter of experience  
and careful observation.

Outside the Forum  
he selected a smooth and level piece of pavement  
and gathering his claue of support and his good planks,  
set one of these latter on end, nicely balanced.  
He then placed a second, balanced endwise on its top.  
Turning, he walked away as if to enter the Forum,  
and a ripple of incipient applause, spectators uncertain  
whether the performance had ended, was stilled by a  
gesture

as he swivelled back and sharply raised an admonishing  
hand.

Now he entered the building, and climbed to the first  
floor  
and leaning from a window placed two more planks,  
one first then the other, endwise upon  
their two companions.

It was magnificent.  
No one could recollect such nonchalant dexterity.  
All held their breath, stood tense and silent in the sun,  
watched, and waited, as nothing at all happened.

After eleven and a half minutes, the four planks  
collapsed. Tullius  
bowed brusquely in three directions, picked up his  
planks.  
Departed.

I mention this, at perhaps unnecessary length,  
so that anybody who happens to be interested  
may place it in some sort of official perspective,

like an entry in the Guinness Book of Records, or  
a plaque on the side of the Forum, or  
the site of the humble cottage where Tullius originated.

- Remembering of course that at exactly contemporary  
time

various court officers, governors and magistrates  
were balancing whole counties, provinces, annual  
national incomes,

profits at compound interest and projected future  
harvests

against the possibilities of popular revolt,  
disasters in the way of earthquakes or tornadoes, or even  
bad omens from Delphi or the approved entrails.  
On the other hand, Tullius did it all by himself.

I suppose that my sincere admiration  
can do Tullius Brattus no possible good now,  
and I wonder indeed at my finding the time to-waste on it.  
Except that I have, from time to time,  
performed similar, if less spectacular, feats of balance,  
without even the recognition of a small crowd.

## WOUNDED CRANEFLY

Got wet, poor thing.  
Won't last long now:  
no bones and flesh to cope with such disaster.  
Sozzled and paralytic.

Nobody's daddy  
fine long legs edging  
slowly across a torment of pavestones.

Where now the straddled stride, the  
helicopter poise?

Disgraced among the slugs and rotten leaf dust,  
puzzled by an absence of  
something that there was  
once and  
always.  
Blindly staggering to an endless pitfall  
like an old man  
not knowing  
how to make a joke of it  
or to say prayers  
and go.

## THREE POEMS ABOUT PREJUDICE

1. Our mam says she'll get us a pet pig  
after we all have our birthdays  
this summer. We'll keep it in the yard.  
George wants a pink pig, but I like the black ones.  
Fred wants a saddleback. You know - half and half.  
I don't suppose it matters does it,  
so long as we look after it and love it.  
The colour doesn't matter one little bit.  
It's only a pig after all; isn't it.
2. My friend Sam's not black.  
George and Fred say he is black.  
But he's not black. Not really black.  
He's just, sort of, half way black.
3. In hot Madras Hindus expectorate  
they spit along the street.  
The pools of spittle soon evaporate  
dried by the intense heat.  
  
But how this filthy oriental trick  
disturbs the educated English mind  
which knows such habits multiply the sick  
and spread disease of every kind.  
  
Why don't these Indians, if they need relief,  
cough up their phlegm upon a little rag -  
collect the germs inside a handkerchief,  
stuffed safely in their pocket or handbag?

## UNPLEASANT PERSON

Victoria was a naughty girl  
Victoria's language would make your hair curl.  
Victoria, Victoria, go to Sunday School.  
No no mamma, I'm not such a fool.  
Nasty and rude, rude and nasty, Vic  
's behaviour made everybody sick.  
Vicky you're horrible, and smelly too:  
God is going to come looking for you.

I don't care, I don't give a damn  
I don' care if he tells my mam.  
Victoria got up from her naughty bed,  
she went looking for God, instead.

Vicky looked in the pulpit, looked in the pew,  
looked under the cassocks, and the vicar's loo,  
looked in the organ loft and inspected the drain.  
She looked everywhere again and again.  
She was rude about God, she spat on his image,  
kicked God's creatures all round the village.  
God, said Vicky, he's a bloody mirage.

She took twenty pence from the collecting plate.  
She bought smarties and uncle oojahs and she ate and ate.  
(She gave two smarties to the dog, and one to her mate.)

**HAROLD & SYLVIA HIKINS.  
14. HARRINGAY AVE.  
LIVERPOOL. L18 1JE.  
TEL: 051 733 4497.**

## **COMMUNICATION**

This poem has been written on a piece of white notepaper headed with the author's name and address and the name and address of his wife including the post code and telephone number.

It was inscribed in ink by means of a ball-point pen (in the use of which the author has been proficient since they appeared on the market in 1946), but it can be reproduced in typescript or print or broadcast by speech, or sung, if preferred.

The author learnt the technique of writing in English about 52 years ago, it was fashionable even then. It is his intention to compose this poem to fit into one octavo sheet for the reader's convenience. It is advisable not to try to read the poem upside down.

Read correctly, it will not do you any good,  
and will not get you anywhere.

Where did you want to go?

## POET

He made poems in the morning, he made poems in  
the evening,  
he made poems all the hours in between.  
he never stopped making poems, he was like a poem  
machine.

He lost his job, he wrote poems on the margins of  
letters;  
- it was a pity, he could have done so much better.

He looked over her shoulder, his tears made her skin  
wet:  
he was writing a poem on the coverlet.

Do stop writing poems, she said, it doesn't do you  
any good.  
You don't understand, I have a duty to my art.

They knocked down his house because he was  
failing to look after it.  
Men came with big weights on chains and cranes  
to demolish it.  
How the beams screamed and the walls wept as  
tiles fell into the street.  
He made a fine sonnet out of that.



## MERSEYSIDE POETRY MINIBOOKS SERIES

---

HAROLD HIKINS was born in 1919 and is said to be still alive. Be that as it may, the City Council continues to pay him to work in Liverpool City Libraries, which (after 47 years of this association ) must reflect well either on his brilliance or the long suffering patience of the City Council.

Harold has also had experience of marriage, parenthood and grandparenthood. Also of being a bit part lecturer for the W.E.A. and of being a leftwing political activist. His previous publications include *Empty sheets with poems on the back*, *A Black Look on the Bright Side*, and Harold and Sylvia's Book of Revelations (with Sylvia Hikins) and *The Liverpool General Transport Strike 1911*.

This book is for Helen, Jennifer, Sharon and Sylvia.

*“Immediate, witty, paradoxical,.. Capable of taking up serious themes, but of remaining quick ... Light without being frothy“* Morning Star

### WINDOWS

ISBN 0 907950 03 5