



Hooks and Hangers in Halls

How useful are hooks in halls
and hangers in hall cupboards
a handy place for anoraks
where jackets and coats wait to be worn
a place that is halfway outdoors
where overcoats can hang at leisure
and raincoats drip onto sturdy floors
umbrellas wait for rainy days
and walking sticks lean against the walls
boots and shoes, jumbled, stacked
ready for outings, business or pleasure
trips to local shopping malls,
nips to the post and doggie walks –
leads also hang on the hooks in halls.

Rosemary Jones

Members' Poems cont.

Family

The train pulled my heartstrings
taut across a bridge
humming with love's vibration

Lynne Nesbit

In the Kitchen

All the big bowls are washed and tilt
against each other on the wire tray:
Pyrex where the eggs were beaten,
French salad bowl where the dried fruit
soaked, big yellow all-purpose mixing-
bowl with hairline crack at the base.

A nylon sieve, propped on the window-
sill to dry still smells faintly of ground
spices shuffled with the flour.
The wooden spoon, worn lop-sided
by decades of right-handed stirring
is stained pink from jam-making.

Flour dust is brushed away. All surfaces
are clean. I sit down with a sigh and gaze
on my infant cake in its paper-lined cradle.
Through the slightly-freckled glass I can see
its tender dimpling skin. Yes, still breathing.
A cinnamony scent lifts on the warm air.

The oven light shines like the sun,
too bright for sleep. The body beneath
already looks tanned. Three hours to go.
Dark fruits gleam below the surface.
I lay a coverlet of grease-proof paper.
We both relax, breathing and dozing.

Margaret Seymour

For A Ripple of Laughter

Keep Dancing

My first partner led me a merry dance
and swept away with the music

I rose on my points too soon.

It broke my toes.

The second revealed the value of more sober steps,
slow, slow, quick, quick, slow,
classic but dull.

I much preferred a cha cha cha,
or wiggling my hips in a rumba.

Then number three rocked me around the clock
and we had a ball.

A Scottish fellow followed with a kind of Highland fling,
on the rebound from that athletic chap
and his awesome Argentine tango.

I waltzed about for a bit, then partnered what's his name.

Good for a time, but the choreography
left a lot to be desired.

And then of course the latest,
who put on a tape, moved chairs to the wall
and taught me tap on the kitchen floor.

He liked to beat it out on bare tiles.

I drew the curtain, out of breath.

Seven partners is enough.

I'm tired of walking backwards,
shedding my veils.

Nowadays I dance strictly alone.

Angela Pickering

For A Ripple of Laughter cont.

On visits to Texas I like to shop in Mexican stores where you can buy tinfoil Christmas tree decorations all year round. Normally these are images of indigenous flora and fauna but have of late been getting less geographically specific. On my last visit I found a kangaroo.



The Mexicangaroo

Those Mexicans and Mexican'ts,
their cousins, nephews, uncles, aunts,
with each clever mum and savvy dad
ensuring a feliz navidad
by making it their goal and their mission
to hold on fast to those traditions.
All year they labour and they toil
for decorations of tinfoil
to hang upon their Christmas tree
and fill their children's hearts with glee.
Shining animals there to please us
around the crib of baby Jesus.
There they hang and there they stand,
animals indigenous to that land.
The penguin, hippo and impala,
the polar bear and the koala,
the elephant and the giraffe
the hyena with his scornful laugh,
the blue whale and there at the back
the chimpanzee and the yak,
that empty space where they planned a
rhinoceros and a panda.
Pride of place in this hispanic zoo
is the mexicangaroo.
Those demands of modern retail
will entail a laxity of detail,
you might wonder if it's all a myth,
that night of the 25th.
December's borrowed money spent.
Black Friday is the new Advent.
Bearing gifts from far we come,
Lo from darkest Amazon,
to praise this bright new rationale,
the lord my shepherd and PayPal.
Traditions, tales from days of yore
rendered now as metaphor
in undisciplined zoology
clustered round the Christmas tree.

Roger West