

Living in the yard.

Poems from my childhood -
up to 8 years old

By Harry Jivenmukta



Lucy.

Lucy lived across the yard
About 80
But for us children
She could have
Been 200.
She had a big clothes chest
In her living room
And when we went
Round to see her
She would ask us if
We wanted a spice.
She would open the top
And give us a humbug.
mmm...
we enjoyed going to her
house and her house
smelled of humbugs.



Biscuits.

After dropping off my brothers
At infant school
I would get back home
To Emily's house hand in hand.
I was four and she
Was ancient.
She would sit me down
On a child's bench
With a child's table in front
And bring me a
Digestive biscuit.
It was a long walk to
The school, at least
300 yards.



Soup.

My mum left us with
Emily and her husband
William
When she went out to work
But never got used to
The British custom
When William would
Taste the soup and put
The spoon back in the pan.
She said it wasn't clean.
The soup was always lovely
Although I never
Understood why he had
To taste the soup
That had come out
Of a tin.



Uncle Jack.

Uncle Jack
Was Lucy's son.
Flashy in his Jaguar
And accompanied by
An Alsatian.
He was Jack the lad
And we would hide
Under the dining room
Table
Away from his dog.
Jack died in suspicious
Circumstances but we
Never knew what they were.



Outside toilet.

We had an outside toilet
And it was in a block
At the end of the yard.
If we had to go at night
My mother would light a
Candle
And come with us
Because we were frightened
Of mice and rats.
Cold it was and
Often we had toilet
Paper made of newspapers



Tricycle.

When my oldest brother
Was riding his tricycle
I stood on the bar
At the back.
A policeman came
And told me that
It was dangerous.
He was huge with a
Uniform
And we had never
Spoken with policemen before.
I was four.
I was terrified
And ran crying to my
Mother.



The Gibsons.

The Gibson's lived next door
And had a dog
That always barked
And sent us rushing
Indoors.
We thought it was vicious.
I was frightened of dogs
For the next thirty years.



Snow.

I had a very bad cold
And didn't go to school.
Outside it was snowing
Till the milk bottles
Were hidden.
My mother came home
At 12 o'clock to check
On me
And brought fish and chips.
They were so tasty.
I curled up in a blanket
On the sofa
And the snow was falling
Outside
And the fire was crackling
In the room.



Chair.

My mother was crying
In the manager's office.
She was leaving
And it was her
Last day.
She was distraught
And the manager
A nice man in a suit
Gave her a chair from
His office to soften the blow.



frederick.

Every full moon night
Frederick, who lived
On the other side of
The yard,
Would come out
Shouting words no one
Else understood
And he would
Swing on the washing
Posts and scream
At the moon.
He died by falling
Under a bus.
No one ever understood.



Michael Lacy.

Michael Lacy would
Come round the houses
Every two weeks or so
When he had no pocket money
And say it was his
Birthday.
Because there was something
Wrong with him
Everyone would give him
A few pennies
Out of pity
And he would go to
Buy sweets.



Ice cream.

The ice cream van
Came every day at
About 3.30.
We could hear the tune
And couldn't wait.
The biggest ice cream
Cost eleven old pence
And was three
Scoops full,
A 99 chocolate
And hundreds and thousands.
And juice.
The Lacy girls used to
Take one lick themselves
And give their cat the
Next one.



Coins.

A motorbike crashed
In the road and
Sprinkled the whole street
With threepenny bits.
The rider wasn't injured
And said that if we
Helped him to collect the coins
We could all have
A threepenny bit as reward.
We worked hard and
Truthfully and in the end
Got our reward.
After he had ridden off
The Lacy children emptied
Their pockets and showed us
All the coins they
Had pocketed.
It didn't even cross our minds
To cheat.



Doctor Fursden.

Doctor Fursden
Our doctor
Bought all the houses
Around the yard.
I don't know why
He wanted them
And in the end he
Had them all pulled down.
For twenty years afterwards
There was nothing there
Except an empty space.



football.

When Emily died
I kicked a football
For hours
Trying to understand
Where she had gone
And why.
The funeral was a long
Way away
And her family didn't
Even think to invite us.
We wouldn't have gone
But they didn't ask.
She had lived for us.

