**Pleasant Sounds**

The rustling of leaves under the feet in woods and under hedges;

The crumpling of cat-ice and snow down wood-rides, narrow lanes,

and every street causeway;

Rustling through a wood or rather rushing, while the wind halloos in

the oak-top like thunder;

The rustle of birds’ wings startled from their nests or flying unseen

into the bushes;

The whizzing of larger birds overhead in a wood, such as crows,

puddocks, buzzards;

The trample of robins and woodlarks on the brown leaves, and the

patter of squirrels on the green moss;

The fall of an acorn on the ground, the pattering of nuts on the hazel

branches as they fall from ripeness;

The flirt of the groundlark’s wing from the stubbles - how sweet such

pictures on dewy mornings, when the dew flashes from its brown

feathers.

**by John Clare**

**The Day the Dragons Won the Lottery**

The day the dragonry won the lottery

they got staggery, swiggery, blotto-ry,

ziggery-zaggery, teetery, tottery,

proudly swaggery,

draggery faggery,

loudly braggery. Rich or what-ery?

When the dragonry won the lottery.

Oops! A snaggery...Oh no nottery!

Just a tenner is all they gottery.

What a calamity! Sniffery snottery.

This is most certainly not what it ought to be.

Cursery, slaggery, weepery, watery.

Utterly agony. Heckery! Rottery!

When the dragonry won the lottery.

By Nick Toczek

A Martian Sends a Postcard Home

Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings

and some are treasured for their markings..

they cause the eyes to melt

or the body to shriek with pain

I have never seen one fly, but

sometimes they perch on the hand.

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Mist is when the sky is tired of flight

and rests its soft machine on the ground:

then the world is dim and bookish

like engravings under tissue paper.

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Rain is when the earth is television

it has the property of making colours darker.

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Model T is a room with the lock inside ...

a lock is turned to free the world

for movement, so quick there is a film

to watch for anything missed.

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But time is tied to the wrist

or kept in a box ticking with impatience.

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In homes a haunted apparatus sleeps,

that snores when you pick it up.

If the ghost cries, they carry it

to their lips and soothe it to sleep

with sounds. A yet they wake it up

deliberately, by tickling with a finger.

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Only the young are allowed to suffer

openly. Adults go to a punishment room

with water, but nothing to eat.

They lock the door and suffer the noises

alone. No one is exempt

and everyone’s pain has a different smell.

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At night, when all the colours die,

they hide in pairs

and read about themselves ...

in colour, with their eyelids shut

**A Case Of Murder**

They should not have left him there alone,
Alone that is except for the cat.
He was only nine, not old enough
To be left alone in a basement flat,
Alone, that is, except for the cat.
A dog would have been a different thing,
A big gruff dog with slashing jaws,
But a cat with round eyes mad as gold,
Plump as a cushion with tucked-in paws---
Better have left him with a fair-sized rat!
But what they did was leave him with a cat.
He hated that cat; he watched it sit,
A buzzing machine of soft black stuff,
He sat and watched and he hated it,
Snug in its fur, hot blood in a muff,
And its mad gold stare and the way it sat
Crooning dark warmth: he loathed all that.
So he took Daddy's stick and he hit the cat.
Then quick as a sudden crack in glass
It hissed, black flash, to a hiding place
In the dust and dark beneath the couch,
And he followed the grin on his new-made face,
A wide-eyed, frightened snarl of a grin,
And he took the stick and he thrust it in,
Hard and quick in the furry dark.
The black fur squealed and he felt his skin
Prickle with sparks of dry delight.
Then the cat again came into sight,
Shot for the door that wasn't quite shut,
But the boy, quick too, slammed fast the door:
The cat, half-through, was cracked like a nut
And the soft black thud was dumped on the floor.
Then the boy was suddenly terrified
And he bit his knuckles and cried and cried;
But he had to do something with the dead thing there.
His eyes squeezed beads of salty prayer
But the wound of fear gaped wide and raw;
He dared not touch the thing with his hands
So he fetched a spade and shovelled it
And dumped the load of heavy fur
In the spidery cupboard under the stair
Where it's been for years, and though it died
It's grown in that cupboard and its hot low purr
Grows slowly louder year by year:
There'll not be a corner for the boy to hide
When the cupboard swells and all sides split
And the huge black cat pads out of it.

By Vernon Scannell