

BUS POEMS

BOOK

You must be an object
of value, book, to have
been sliced so thinly, so
deliberately right to

the rind, then wrapped in such
quality paper. There's
a ham from Spain I'd like
to compare you with - it's

served in slivers so thin
they catch in the breeze. Furled
in roses on a plate
or in parcels in the

mouth, there seems somehow to
be more than can have made
up the original
joint — like Saints' bones that's part

of the miracle. The
pigs are known as *olives*
on legs, and their dark fat's
dripped away over months.

It tastes like *wine drunk with*
old friends, then it's gone. But
a book that is savoured
can be savoured again.

POPCORN

I'm so sorry to have
caught you half out of your
jumper, but what does it
mean to write on what's there?

To describe you as *sweet*
or *salty* and mean me,
and mean jealous or sweet-
in-the-human-way? Is

it like when we dress up
Henry as Santa, and
watch him scoot around and
say he hates Christmas? Yes,

how does it *feel* to be the
popcornth of shadow on
the cinema screen, hoiked
into the beamlight that

a stranger's story might play
on – might distorted be
thrown on – your manhandled
but very yours body?

PHONE

I fear I'll be made to
explain to an expert
how I have damaged you,
left you in a taxi,

or turned to find you gone,
or exposed you to some
vile internet thing, how
I tried to fill you with

holiday pictures but
not all that we do is
happy or memorable.
I've heard your blue light keeps

me awake and it's bad
to sleep in the same or
a different room because
of emergencies. You

have ways of letting me
know, but I check on you
anyway. My mother
can play with you, but should

know that I'm watching. My
friends and I are making
a date: we are going
for dinner without you.

BISCUIT

What about a biscuit?
I hold it up like a
compact – is there any
thing I won't use as a

mirror? It's so easy
to say things just like that.
e.g. *there's nothing quite
like laundry – it's either*

*being cared for or it's
caring for yourself.* How
many times have I heard
that soft crunch inside my

own head and wondered if
anyone could hear it –
and never listened out
for someone else's crunch?

BATHROOM POEMS

SHOWER

All of the best bits in
my poems are for you,
like that time I said the
shower head, broken, was

like a cobra, spitting,
and pointed out its hood
and articulated
body, cold blood and writhe

when not pinned by the neck.
I wrote that because you
said (when we were playing
that game) that what you love

about me is how I
see the world *differently*,
and it feels good to live
up to love's version of

you. Would you say receipts
are the ghosts of money?
I can tell from my screen
its a beautiful day.

SOAP

Darling, are we like this
squeezed soap - two slivers cupped
into a useful whole?
Marbled, do our edges

melt in the anteroom
of the working day? Are
we *inextricable*,
adulterated? The

heat and wet of us feels
binding. They say the proof
that's in a bond's a break
as likely anywhere

as the seam. When I think
that I am cleanest, I
am really wearing the
thinnest layer of you.

SPONGE

Is it, our relation-
ship even a thing? Or
do we put it in the
category of clouds,

rain forests, natural
sponges *et cetera* –
that which is marvellous
and strange, but which, close up,

doesn't really exist,
being only raindrops,
individual trees,
discrete masses of cells

– and if we do, does that
mean that there is no 'us',
or that there is an 'us',
but it only exists

in those moments we are
doing things together,
or not doing things, but
thinking of each other?

And, if that is the case,
should we not perhaps be
kinder and do more things?
I only ask because

I'm watching *Saving the
Rainforest* and they've spent
the whole time tending to
individual trees.

BATHTUB

Simply by gathering
in a pool in my hands
the cut-crystal rope it
extrudes from its faucet,

by rinsing my razor
in its outsized bowl,
and rebaptising my face
in its font-waters, I,

kneeling the while on stone
in orthodox prayer,
have transmuted bathtub
to basin, and in so

doing have made myself
appear smaller, more young,
and therefore more brave, as
I do the not-so-brave

things I already do,
and more forgivable,
having done so many
unforgivable things.