

POETRY BY THE PEOPLE OF



H C R O S S L Y



CLOSE SHAVE

It used to remind me of seaside rock;
That twisting pole outside the barber's shop:
And the cardboard figure at the door,
With black shiny hair and clean-shaven jaw,
Always looked friendly with nothing to hide;
But it wasn't the same when they'd got you inside.

Then it was "Sit yourself down lad and take a seat,
And don't you wriggle or move them feet,
And non of that screaming and none of them tears
'Cos if you play up, we'll cut off your ears!"
Then they'd strap you down with a great white sheet
Which they stuck into your collar so you could hardly speak;
And pushing you forward, they shaved your head,
Not letting up till it was sore and quite red.

Then they'd take up the scissors and go snipping away
At the locks on your head for what seemed like all day;
And when you'd been shorn like a convict from hell,
They'd stick it all down and make it all smell
Like something your mum used to put down the drains,
Or dad used to keep for removing old stains.

And the hair from your head now stuck to your face,
Or itched down your back in a terrible place
That you longed to scratch but you just didn't dare,
For the fear that the barber might lower your chair
Down to the depths of the basement below,
Where Sweeney was waiting for someone to show.

From the mirror in front, you just couldn't hide
The fear on your face coming up from inside:
And then, with a final brush and a check,
They puffed white powder all over your neck,
So you looked like a clown with short back and sides;
But all of your mates saw through the disguise
And ribbed you and teased you for a week and a day,
Till one of them, too, had their hair snipped away.

Alan Kingshott