

Poems by David Lindsay (monologuedave.co.uk) – Permission will almost certainly be given for use, but please contact him – he’s nose and likes to know where his poetry is getting to!
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I used to start by saying “Sorry”

I used to start by saying sorry
For my choice of verse
For the words I was about to speak
It was really quite a curse

I used to start by saying sorry
That maybe I’d recited this before
Or that another voice had spoken it
And that I could add no more

I used to start by saying sorry
That maybe I was wasting your time
With my attempts to declaim or utter
Some prose, or monologue, or rhyme

I used to start by saying sorry
If I slipped up on a word or two
Or even forgot my place completely
As I’m sometimes prone to do

I used to start by saying sorry
Before the first stanza had begun
And that somehow left the poem ungrounded,
Lost. Untethered. Too easily undone.

There’s a place for an apology
If careless words cause pain
If they whip and wound without context
Or hurt. Or hunt. Or shame.

But I take pride in the words I craft
When I get them to work out-loud
When they trickle together off the tongue
With form and meaning. And proud.

You see, I like reciting Shakespeare
And Burns, and Owen, and Keats
And Barker, Causley, Dahl and Elliott
And sweet scores between them and Yeats

And I love listening to contrasting voices
Of creative spoken word
Of singers and musicians in folk clubs
To talent that is largely unheard

This won't bring fame and fortune
Won't see me at the Albert Hall
But with like-minded folk, like those in this room
It has meaning. So to repeat my call...

I used to start by saying sorry
For my choice of verse
For the words I was about to speak
It used to be a curse

David Lindsay

French Invasion

Since the bloody Battle of Hastings
When 'Arold got killed by French Bill
We've seen an endless invasion of French
And I've just about had my fill

Don't we have enough words of our own
In this wonderful language of ours?
- To seek and find le mot juste
Dunt take much linguistic power

It seems using French has been with us forever
Passed down as a fait accompli
Have we ever really tried to change that?
Or have we always said "C'est la vie"?

But, to think that some long-dead bon vivant
With a certain je ne sais quoi
Used his chic tour de force to put words in our mouths
To me, it's a shameful faux-pas

So, I think we need a tête-à-tête
To form a clique, to mount a coup
Working together, en masse, as a team
We'll swap "Bonsoir" for "How Do"

Then <haute couture> won't be setting the trend
We'll watch racing, not the Grand Prix
No more art nouveau, or cordon bleu
And say "Enjoy your meal", not "Bon appétit"

I never have the soup du jour
Prefer prawn cocktail to poncy pâté
And I'll sit in a coffee house or caff
But never go in a café

Some say I should let it go and relax
Say choice of words is all laissez-faire
But can I stay calm on this bête noire of mine?
No, mes amis ~ au-contraires!

At British Wimbledon let's use "40-all"
Instead of being at deuce
And what's wrong with nil instead of love
Or am I being obtuse?

I know that we'll get nowhere
I sense there's no going back
That it's like being stuck behind burning sheep
Trapped in a cul-de-sac

But I suppose that it is nice to share
Good ideas and a word or two
Like Liberté and Égalité
And that feeling of Déjà vu

And with le weekend, le booking, le check-in, le spam
And countless more, I say with a grin
That when we look at our counter-invasion
Even the French agree that we win!

David Lindsay

Tree Time

Apple, Plum, Orange, Lemon, Lime
All give us their sweet fruits
Alder, Birch, Hawthorn and Sycamore
Spread from solid roots

Elder, Fern, Ginkgo, Hazel
Sweet Gum, Hornbeam, Fig
Bald and False Cypress, Beech
Grow their fearless twigs

There's Holly, Mountain, Ash and Pine
Poplar, Spruce and Yew
Elm, Eucalyptus, Cycad, Conifer
Walnut. Monkey Puzzle too

Japanese Snowbell, Shellback Hickory
Sequoia, Juniper, Larch
Littleleaf Linden, Maidenhair
Maple with darkening bark

Dessert Willow, Pussy Willow,
Weeping Willows drooping low
While Magnolia, Redbud, Whitebeam
Let their colours show

Coconut, Fan, Fishtail, Foxtail
- They're all types of Palm
If you're getting sick of all these trees
We're nearly done, so just keep calm

Air to breathe. Wood to build.
Food to eat. Nature's beautifully bonkers
If I had to pick between them all
The Horse Chestnut wins - with conkers!

David Lindsay

Two Suns

We're orbiting our star, the sun, at quite a decent speed
We've been doing that for billions of years, scientists are agreed
But apparently, many stars we know, have got a twin - they're binary
So if our Earth had two suns, not one - how great would that be?!

Imagine how much warmer and how much lighter it would be
As our two hot globes dance in the sky and we sail fancy-free
Through the void between them, around them or above
It sounds like fun, and twice the sun could mean we double the love

But then, what would happen to the moon? - I like to see her gleam
Would we lose her for a while, when along our path we steam?
If we did, I'd insist we pick her up again on our journey back to base
It's rude to keep a lady waiting, especially in cold space.

What of the other planets, our neighbours round the sun?
Would there be eight or nine of them, or maybe twenty-one?
With double gravity a-pulling, that's possible I'd say
But they'd have to form a queue or they'd get in each other's way.

We'd need some traffic lights in space, to prevent an awful jumble
If Neptune cut in front of Mars, he'd make her trip and tumble
Perhaps I'm worrying over nowt, perhaps they'd all behave
To not do so with two "sun mums" watching would be rather brave!

Back on Earth in the early years, what changes might there be?
Would the tides be any different, would there be more land / less sea?
The plants and animals that grew around could've been so very different
Would the dinosaurs still have come about, to then become extinct?

And what of jolly homo erectus and our other predecessors?
Could they have survived and stayed alive to bring forth the same ancestors?
If so, would we still have, in this fair land, Stonehenge to pave the way
To measure out the seasons and the solstices today?

I could be wrong but 8 seasons a year we'd have - have I got that right?!
And for half the year we'd also get pure days, i.e. there'd be no night
And how long would a year be, how many months, how many weeks?
And without the stars above to count, I guess we'd have to stick to sheep.

I like the thought of two summers, two autumns and two springs
I'm not too keen on winters, but you can't have everything
Without seeing all the stars and having planets all akimbo
We wouldn't have astrology, so no daft TV bimbos!

Would we have sun-signs instead of star-signs, well who knows?
But new calendars would be needed to match celestial do-se-dos

Two darling buds of May and two autumn falls would be quite nifty
But longer years mean we'd leave school at 8 and die before we're 50!

Twice daily sunrises and sunsets would be beautiful to see
So would watching Halley's comet double-looping like a bee
But the whole thing could be chaos, there's a "Goldilocks zone" I hear
Too close to a sun - we'd frazzle, too far - we'd freeze, I fear.

So let us not be greedy, after all, having one sun works just fine
We've one sunrise and one sunset and a good grasp of the time
We've LIFE and heat and daylight thanks to that single golden ball.
I say let's stick to one, 'cause if we try for two, we might not be here at all!

David Lindsay

O-U-S

Most of us find life difficult to avoid, in a way that I find quite curious
Choosing the right path to follow at speed, makes some us quite furious
The answers aren't easy, but O-U-S might just be a key
It ain't the answer to life and everything - say "that's 42!" - I might agree

Well, life has its' ups and downs, it's fluid, we can hardly say it's viscous
At times it can be troublous, torturous or even border-line pernicious
But bad luck is like owt else, it can dangle all precarious
Then it disappears and with three cheers, life's back to being tremendous

Now, there are folk who make me nervous, to the point of being ulcerous
Whose behaviour to their neighbour is villainous and injurious
Some are vulturous, some are dangerous and others felonious
I find them simply treasonous and traitorous to all the rest of us

I'm not sure what to make of those who claim they're the "Righteous"
And I'm puzzled with the superstitious, and those who say they're sorcerous
The world can be miraculous without being idolatrous, I say
Why not respect each other's views, get on with life - go for the middle-way

And while I'm on the subject of being good and kind towards our kin
It's worth speaking well of friend or foe, whether it's a "her" or a "him"
Avoid the language of a snake, it's malicious and poisonous
And could be turned against you, to leave you vexed and anxious

When it comes to diets, take advice (including this!) with a decent pinch of salt
Some are fictitious, some plain ridiculous and their authors are at fault
Whether you're carnivorous, herbivorous, or plain insectivorous
Just make sure your plate's not porous, and tuck-in to food delicious

I reckon it's worth trying to learn new stuff and being conscientious
If you're vigorous and willing to be ponderous and studious
Then ping! The "Big Idea" might come all a-glow and luminous
So that with work you grow it 'til the world thinks you're a genius

It's fine to be ambitious, if you're not too bumptious or overzealous
And get people on your side, don't try to leave them envious or jealous
Be generous and gracious, not pompous and sanctimonious
Might that be the recipe for a life melodious and harmonious?

There are those who strive with all their might, to be prosperous and famous
If that is thee, then good for you, it's a drive I find quite marvellous
To those who seek rapturous applause, and those who are industrious
I say well done, but I like a quiet life - this poem was almost left anonymous!

When you look back upon your life, of course I hope you are longevous
Will you remember all you've done and smile and feel just marvellous?
I'm told variety is the spice of life, so I try to keep mine multifarious
Why have it tedious or mundane, when you can make it so stupendous?

To conclude, there are innumerable paths - some hazardous, some gorgeous
Some require us to be quite rigorous, some down-right polymorphous!
But among the lessons we must learn and pick up in our subconscious
Is that we can't get very far in life without O-U-S - it's obvious!

David Lindsay

A Hug From My Brother

It's a magical connection
It's a greeting, a sweet hello
It's an acknowledgement of friendship
Which says "we're good, you know"

It's a heartfelt appreciation
Of all that's great in life
And speaks an unspoken commitment
That we help each other in strife

It starts and ends our evenings together
It marks the passing time
Of course, it says "I love you"
Often enhanced with a little wine!

A firm grip, or friendly word in the ear
Embellishes this still more
These powerful seconds of connection
Can give the soul a lift to soar

Strengthened by memories - old and new
And experiences - bad and good
It's a sign of the bond between us
Shared history, values and blood

That loving declaration -
May it last the rest of our days
A hug between two brothers
Is a hug that works both ways

David Lindsay

Would You Not Prefer A Chair, Mrs Atwood?

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
I'm sure we have one going spare
You see that pink sofa that you brought with you
Just won't quite fit up our stairs

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
I see you like it on the floor
But the ground, whilst sound for bums big and round
Could make your skinny bottom just sore

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
My! That's a fetching trampoline
But whilst a bounce is good for your health
It'll turn our other guests quite green

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
You're sitting in a bowl of fruit
I'm not one to judge, or to try give advice
But squashed peaches aren't good for your suit

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
Please don't sit on the cake
I know it's delicious and the icing is firm
But it did take me hours to bake

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
That's a smashing helter-skelter
It's got to be said, though it hurts my head
It really is quite a belter, but...

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
I'm wincing at your new choice of seat
That rat and mouse trap, could make your bum snap
And I've just got this place nice and neat

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
Where did you find all those balloons?
44 on each arm and your legs in a hammock
And assisted by 14 baboons?!

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
You've squeezed into a window pane
That's quite a talent, and I'm truly impressed
It's a sight I shan't see again, but

Would you not prefer a chair Mrs Atwood?
I know it sounds boring and dull
Compared to that bouncy castle you've brought
But you see, the room's already full

Ah! Thank you for choosing a chair Mrs Atwood
Please let's make amends
I do like people with random ideas
So, let's sit together as friends
On CHAIRS Mrs Atwood, on good solid CHAIRS
Yes, let's sit together as friends

David Lindsay

5 Miles to Home (written for the Milestone Society)

When I'm out walking and hiking free
A milestone is often a friend to me
They're solid reminders of where you are
And t' next point of interest, they tell you how far

But I've noticed something when around I do roam -
That I've never seen one that says "5 miles to Home"
I've seen "5 miles to Bradford" and "Leeds - 5 mile"
But a "5 miles to Home" one, would make me smile

So I've looked for them everywhere, up and down vale
Searched each nook and cranny - but still I did fail
I had to ponder real hard and ask myself "why?"
Surely a "5 miles to Home sign" in't pie-in-the-sky

So I dug out some map books - no sign there too
And that was the key, it gave me a clue
Of course! Those milestone makers had the nouse
Not to make signs sending all to their house

They avoided the chaos, they mastered their art
And they have won my admiration
And if we're wanting confusion, hassle and woes
We've got Satellite Navigation!

David Lindsay

I Wish I'd Had Candy Floss

In memory of those sunny summer and indecisive days of childhood at Batley and Dewsbury Parks.

At the side of the van with a window
In the park
I've a decision to make

Should
I get an ice rocket
or a cider lolly,
a fab, a funny feet,
or a 99 with a flake?

Candy floss!
The thought flashes and dies
Before I can grasp it

Then my eyes fix on my younger brothers ice cream in it's cone
Mum made his choice for him
as he sits in his pram

My cousins have all made up their minds
and so have our mums, so
BAM!
Suddenly they're waiting for me

Now I have to choose,
Whatever I pick will be eaten in no time
Whatever I pick, I'll lose

I can never make it last,
Not under these blue skies
I want it to, but a voice says
"Eat it quick or it'll melt"
Or "don't you wanna play on the slide?"

Candy floss!

Again the thought was there
But then, how long has that sticky bright pink stuff been there
in it's sad little bag?

Could be 5 minutes, or 5 days.

Do I care? - Er, no!

I LOVE the feeling of eating a cloud,
Even though it's probably stickier, gooier, and pinker than owt that's up there

Maybe real clouds would also
make our fingers glue together
and taste that sweet when you finally get the last mouthful
off your thumb

Dunno.

But I suppose the bag is there to stop the wasps
And the bees
And we've not seen any of them today
So let's be grateful

Safer with an ice cream or a lolly.

Aw, but candy floss!

Then I remember an adult's whisper. Something about 'E' numbers.

And somehow,
I don't really know how,
I've chosen a 99 - a fine choice I'm told.
No doubt with eyes rolling

Dunno.

'Cos I was right - it's gone too soon
Mostly eaten, but a dribble down my elbow

How did it get down there?

But then me brother has tell-tale white all round his face
and mum is going towards him armed with a tissue and spit

And at least I still have my flake!

But candy floss would've been better.

I tell myself, NEXT time, I'll get candy floss.

But I know, I won't really.

David Lindsay

The Word Gremlin

You're in the middle of the piece
You're really on a roll
You've mastered every syllable
And built it to a whole

Every intonation,
Every stress is well rehearsed
You know it inside out and back-to-front
Each chorus and each verse

You even know it side-ways
You've swum through every part
Can add to it your character
Your voice, your mind, your heart

Any lazy alliteration
You can smooth over with a grace
And you can speed it up or slow_right_down
And with comfort, set the pace

Just then, in the smallest pause
The Word Gremlin sneaks in
And quickly digs his sharpened claws
Right into your thick skin

You feel a nip, a tiny pinch
Which you wish you could ignore
But you know fine well what's coming
As the claws begin to bore

You're shocked and stunned
And your brain's begun to panic
Who can blame it?
It thought you knew, but now you're screwed
And knocked right off your game

It'll steal that word right from your tongue
Then dance around with glee
Or he'll hide it from you like an imp
And just sit and smirk at thee

How did that gremlin get so close?
Did it dash in during t'laughter?
Was it hiding before we got in here
Under a table or on the rafters?

I don't know how the beast gets in
I'll find his secret soon,
For now, I say let's work together
And check often round the room

Whoever let that b*stard in
If you know who you are
Buy a pint for each poor sod he got
And keep HIM busy at the bar!

David Lindsay

Very Berry (or some Ribes in Rhyme)

There's Blackberry, Blueberry,
Northern, Bog and simple Bilberry
Lowbush, Highbush and Mountain Cranberry,
Chokeberry, Dewberry, Elderberry, Guavaberry

Bearberry, Cowberry, Crowberry, Foxberry, Gooseberry and Mooseberry

Huckleberry, Jostaberry, Lingonberry, Loganberry, Myrtle Blueberry, Pineberry, Black
Raspberry, Red Whortleberry, Squashberry, Tayberry, Whinberry and Wimberry

Yes, I've written a poem about berries,
But please don't think I'm a prat
'Cos Lennon sang "Strawberry Fields forever"
And who can argue with that?!

David Lindsay

Eggsciting Easter

I'm eggshausted and eggsasperated -
I shouldn't have eggspected less
But in fact it's eggsceded my worst eggexpectations
I've had too many eggs - eaten to eggssess

I'm not one for eggsageration
I prefer to be eggsact
But, I'll eggspound and eggspress myself further
For some sympathy, I wish to eggstract

Well, I took some advice from an "eggspert"
An eggstravigant egghead, called Ed
Eggstremely eggshalted in his field of interest,
I listened. And now wish I was dead

Egged-on and eggscited by Easter
No eggscuses - I ate more than I'd planned
Inhaling chocolate was fine, it felt so divine
But when I eggshaled - I began to eggspand

Eggspelling some air, looking downwards
No eggssamination was required to eggssplain
That the shape I'd become - was an oval
Eggshaped I was - and in pain

Egg-bound - that's to say, in the house by myself
My life flashed before me just then
So hoping to prevent an eggsplosion
I clucked like an old mother hen

I knew eggsercise was a non-starter
I eggsscluded that option right there
"Was I doomed to be eggssiled for the rest of my life?"
I thought, as I rolled off my chair

"No, damn it" I eggssclaimed (note - no eggsspletives!)
"This eggssistance is not for me"
And though Shakespeare's Omlette is somewhat
depressing
I thought "To be, or not to be"

But then, thinking of Easter and Springtime
Of bunnies, of lambs and cute sheep
With my eggsterior resembling a rotund chocolate egg
I lulled myself into sleep

I dream'd of others, who'd been there before me
Others who'd suffered my plight
Of Henry VIII's eggscommunication
Slept the rest of the day, and the night

I awoke at last, and with some relief
I found I was able to move
So eggstatic, I scrambled to my feet,
Wiped the egg off my face, just to prove

That though my life's not eggsotic
Easter Eggs do make me cheer
The Chancellor of the Eggschequer can double the tax
But I'll do it again, every year!

David Lindsay

Leader of the Tribe

He's the leader of the tribe
An elder, wise and true
Blessed, perhaps, with fortune
To live so long
But he knows right from wrong
And does his best for me and you

He's the leader of the tribe,
A hero, brave and bold
Blessed with learned insight
The enemy saw
Brought us through war
With deeds and words of gold

He's the smarmy baby-face
With ego bold and brash
Over-blessed with fortune
A snooty kid
Now making his bid
To get the rich more cash

We get the leaders we deserve
Our history simply shows it
Those who fight for what is right
And those who don't and bloody know it

David Lindsay

Press Pause

Brave was our fight, just to survive
To hunt, to gather, then farm.
Our numbers so small, survival so special,
Don't press pause now, or you'll cause us harm.

Our tribal ancestors rose and spread
Touching and burning each day
Through land and resources, learning some balance,
Can we press pause now? - No way!

Centuries pass, and we learn to master
The nature around with our brains.
Civilisation, industrialisation. Don't press pause now
- for the sake of our capital gains!

Empires. Left and right-wing warfare
Ignoring the poverty gap
20th century pause for reflection?
We're too busy killing - don't talk crap!

Now we number some 7 billion and more
Yet we still refuse to pause.
Mother Nature might choose to blow her whistle
Call time, upset that we broke all her laws

She might pause and take a good healthy breath
Maybe freeze, burn or polish the earth
If we're lucky enough, a few would survive,
And with huge pain and suffering give birth

To a new generation, forgetting the past
Forgetting to pause to stop harm. They'll say
Brave was our fight, just to survive
To hunt, to gather, then farm.

David Lindsay