

AMNESIA by LES BARKER

I was downstairs; I was composing
And for a moment I was stuck,
But I knew if I went upstairs,
I had the answer in a book.

I started up the staircase;
I was halfway to the top;
I thought "What am I going upstairs for?"
This brought me to a stop.

Now if you're a bit forgetful,
You must never stop half way,
To be in a state of inertia
Brings new questions into play,

I find advancing years
Have placed a limit on my knowing
And without the clue of motion,
I thought "Which way was I going?"

My hands were empty, no clue there;
I pondered with a frown.
The odds were fifty fifty;
I chose up instead of down.

I felt a of achievement
When I reached the upper floor,
Though I didn't know if I'd wanted to,
Or if I did, what for.

I didn't need the bathroom;
That had not been my intent,
But it gave my trip a purpose
And so being there, I went.

I returned downstairs; "I needed that,"
Which justified my climb.
You may recall I didn't;
I'd forgotten by this time..

I was downstairs; I was composing;
At that moment I was struck
By the blinding revelation
That I'd been to find a book.

I ran upstairs immediately
And there I quickly learned
I'd been looking for a library book,
Which last week I had returned.

I hurried to the library;

I mingled with staff and with browsers;
I was getting odd looks; I knew something was wrong.
I came straight home and put on my trousers.

Once more, I returned to the library,
Went straight to the desk and explained why I came;
"I'm looking for a book on Amnesia;
I forget author's name."

The librarian shook his head sadly;
"Well," he said; "You've got me there.
We've got a whole shelf on the subject
But I can't remember where.

If you try to find it yourself, " he said gravely,
"There are dangers we dare not ignore;
Unravel this ball of string as you go;
We've lost people like you here before.

I found the book and I made my way back;
I followed the . . . what was it? Cotton?
Perhaps it was wool, maybe it was twine;
It might have been string; I've forgotten.

I walked out to the car
In left hand, book newly-loaned
Drove away in grey Ford Escort,
A type of car I've never owned

I'm sure the owner understands;
I'm sure the owner will forgive;
His car is in the safest hands;
Now let me see . . . where do I live?

It's over now; I'm safely home;
The cars gone for repairs,
And I have got my library book
And taken it upstairs.

I feel a sense of deja vu;
My brain's mislaid a noun.
I'm halfway up the stairs again;
Or am I halfway down?