

Bed

She is that guid tae me so she is
an Am a burden tae her, I know Am ur.
Stuck here in this big blastit bed
year in, year oot, ony saint wuid complain.

There's things she has tae dae fir me
A' wish she didnae huv tae dae.
Am her wean noo, wey ma great tent o' nappy,
an champed egg in a cup, an mashed tattie.

Aw the treats A' used tae gie her,
she's gieing me. A' dinny ken whit happened.
We dinny talk any mair. Whether it's jist
the blethers ha been plucked oot o' us

an Am here like some skinny chicken,
ma skin aw bubbles and dots and spots,
loose flap noo (an yet as a young wuman
A' took pride in ma guid smooth skin.)

Aw A' dae is sit and look oot this windae.
A've seen hale generations grow up
an simmer doon fray this same windae –
that's no seen a lick o' paint fir donkeys.

The Kerrs have disappeared, but the last
Campbells ur still here so Am telt –
tho' hauf the time A' dinny believe her:
A've no seen any Campbell in a lang time.

My dochter says 'Awright mother?'
haunds me a thin broth or puried neep
an A say 'Aye fine,' an canny help
the great heaving sigh that comes oot

my auld loose lips, nor ma crabbit tut,
nor ma frown when A' pu' ma cardie tight
aroon ma shooders fir the night drawin in.
Am jist biding time so am ur.

Time is whit A' hauld between
the soft bits o' ma thumbs,
the skeleton underneath ma night goon;
aw the while the glaring selfish moon

lights up this drab wee prison.
A'll be gone and how wull she feel?
No that Am saying A' want her guilty.
No that Am saying Am no grateful.

Jackie Kay

Bed

She is that good to me so she is
an I'm a burden to her, I know I am.
Stuck here in this big blasted bed
year in, year out, only a saint would complain.

There's things she has to do for me
I wish she didn't have to do.
I'm her child now, with my great tent of a nappy,
and chomped egg in a cup, and mashed potato.

All the treats I used to give her,
she's giving me. I don't know what happened.
We don't talk anymore. Whether it's just
the blethers that have been plucked out of us

and I'm here like some skinny chicken,
my skin all bubbles and dots and spots,
loose flap now (and yet as a young woman
I took pride in my good smooth skin.)

All I do is sit and look out of this window.
I've seen whole generations grow up
and simmer down from this same window –
that's not seen a lick of paint for donkeys.

The Kerrs have disappeared, but the last
Campbells are still here so I'm told –
though half the time I don't believe her:
I've not seen any Campbell in a long time.

My daughter says 'Alright mother?'
hands me a thin broth or puried neep
and I say 'Yes fine,' and can't help
the great heaving sigh that comes out

my old loose lips, nor my crabby tut,
nor my frown when I pull my cardigan tight
around my shoulders for the night drawing in.
I'm just biding time so I am.

Time is what I hold between
the soft bits of my thumbs,
the skeleton underneath my night gown;
all the while the glaring selfish moon

lights up this drab little prison.
I'll be gone and how will she feel?
Not that I'm saying I want her guilty.
Not that I'm saying I am not grateful.

Jackie Kay