

**A.F. HARROLD'S  
POCKET  
BOOK OF  
POCKET  
POEMS**

## Introduction, part one - Why I wrote this book ...

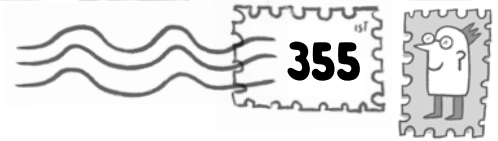
One of the things I enjoy is writing a poem onto a postcard, adding a name and address, sticking a stamp on it, and then dropping the postcard in the bright red pillar-box that's over the road.

Why do I like doing this? I like it because so much of the post we receive these days is either boring, or is just another pizza flyer.

It is a special thing to receive something handwritten, something that is unique to your doormat that morning, that was made for you.

My dad was a postman, and I was postman for a very brief time too, once, long, long ago, and I know that delivering the handwritten letters and postcards, the things that carried a little bit of human heart with them, was one of the things that made it such a good job.

And so I write poems on postcards, (a) because I know they will be a little bit special for the people receiving them to receive, and (b) because I know that the



poems will also be read by the posties who carry them to your doors, and if I can cheer up cold mornings on their rounds with funny poems, then I feel I've done something good for the world.

This means I have made myself a big store of short and very short poems that fit in that little bit of empty space on the left-hand side of a small rectangle of cardboard. And here they are.

(Another reason to like short poems is that they are short and are therefore either (a) easy to remember, if you like them, or (b) easily avoided if you don't. They don't overstay their welcome, unlike some poems, which go on and on and on and on for pages and pages and pages ...)

I encourage anyone and everyone to send poems or pictures on postcards, because this world could do with more art flying around it, unexpectedly, in all directions, for no reason at all.

*AFH, 2025, just after breakfast*

## Introduction, part two - How to use this book ...

When I get a poetry book I like to open it up at a random page and just read a poem, not knowing what I'm going to be getting. Then I can flick to another page and find another random poem completely different to the first one, or maybe a bit similar, or, if I'm really bad at flicking, exactly the same poem. Some people, however like a bit more order in their poetry books.

I've arranged the poems so that they get smaller as the book goes on. That way if you want a really quick poem, dip in near the back ... or if you've got a bit more time, take the plunge right up near the front. (The longest poems are only 60 words long, so even then you'll have time to catch the bus afterwards without needing to run.)

The poems are about all sorts of things, and although a lot of them are funny, some are reflecting on nature or time or life, and some are just a bit odd. And they're all sort of mixed up together, like kittens in a



washing machine, except not as wet or dangerous.

But, just in case you wanted to find a poem on a specific theme or topic, I've made you the following 'Thematic Contents Index List Thingie', with page numbers. If you want a poem about someone called 'Susan', just look in the 'Animals (people)' section, trail your finger along until you reach 'Susan' (just after 'Sisters' and before 'Teachers'), read the page number ('142'), go find the page and read the poem, and 'Hey presto' words alive, you've found a poem that mentions 'Susan' (which is the name of my cat (but the poem isn't about my cat, it's about a different Susan, because there's more than one Susan in this world, as you probably already knew, because you're smart and possibly called Susan yourself)).

Have fun reading, whether you random dip or purposely plunge ...

*AFH, 2025, just before tea*



# Thematic Contents Index

## List Thingie



### Animals (birds)

Albatrosses – 15; Birds in general – 3, 13, 17, 21, 28, 60, 82, 106; Canaries – 129; Chickens – 49, 57; Ducklings – 150; Flamingos – 48; Geese – 145; Herons – 66; Penguins – 9, 38; Pigeons – 111; Ramírez – 9; Robins – 27, 99, 143; Seagulls – 62, 69; Sparrows – 73; Vultures – 75; Wrens – 82.

### Animals (not birds (except snakes))

Anchovies – 40; Ants – 43; Armadillos – 114; Badgers – 25; Barnacles – 44; Bats – 112; Bees – 29, 66, 113, 122, 128; Butterflies – 24, 59; Camels – 30, 150; Cats – 21, 23, 24, 52, 58, 82, 157; Centipede – 62; Cheetah – 145; Cows – 49, 113; Crabs – 75; Crocodile – 135; Dogs – 35, 45, 73, 77, 115; Dolphin – 54; Dragonflies – 123; Fish – 28, 114, 125; Fleas – 75, 157; Flies, various types – 59; Giraffes – 46, 69; Goats – 36, 108; Headlice – 58; Hedgehogs – 52, 73, 115, 141; Horses – 141; Ladybirds – 33; Lambs – 144; Limpets – 44; Monkeys – 7; Mooses – 108; Octopuses – 44; Pigs – 108; Plankton –



114; Rabbits – 65, 77, 135, 157; Rhinoceroses – 121; Sheep – 40; Sloths – 69; Slugs – 14, 129; Spiders – 93; Squirrels – 3, 11, 87, 89, 140; Stoats – 75; Tigers – 52, 87, 111, 127; Wasps – 69, 75, 151; Whales – 103, 114; Wolves – 40, 43, 90, 108, 140; Worms – 21, 50.



### Animals (people)

Babies – 29, 75; Bank Managers – 3; Bill – 67; Boxers – 110; Bridget – 72; Brothers – 2, 70; Charles – 11; Charlie – 107; Clowns – 142; Dave – 16, 59; Dentists – 80; Ethel – 133; Frances – 134; Gaston – 142; Graham – 107; Grandparents – 12, 71, 119; Mrs Hosannah – 91; Jenny – 10; Librarians – 85; Martin – 66; Mary – 144; Mo Finklestein – 10; Monks – 152; Morris – 107; Mr Potts – 33; Mrs Potts – 33; Nancy – 125; Parents – 10, 25, 37, 61, 67, 124, 130; Peter – 107; Phyllis – 142; Pirates – 101, 126; Postal Workers – 47; Richard – 77; Simon – 21, 63; Sisters – 2; Surprises – 148; Susan – 142; Teachers – 18, 31, 40, 112; Vegetarians – 126; Wanda – 149; William Blake – 99; Witches – 125; Zedric – 80.





## Animals (snakes)

Snakes - 1, 6, 69, 91, 97, 109, 138, 153.

## Animals (things that are like people, but different)

Ghosts - 16, 47, 112; Medusa - 148;  
Mermaids - 133; Snowmen - 37, 56, 94;  
Trolls - 108; Unicorns - 104; Vampires -  
112; Werewolves - 160.



## Bodies and Body Parts

Beards - 107; Bones - 136; Bottoms - 7,  
25; Brains - 2, 51; Feet - 87, 153; Internal  
Organs - 5; Knees - 31; Noses - 2, 12, 31;  
Rashes - 58; Scabs - 58; Skeletons - 112;  
Skin - 136; Teeth - 80, 120; Toes - 29, 31,  
55.

## Food

Apples - 24, 51, 158; Berries - 12; Biscuits  
- 118; Bread - 20, 141; Brussels sprouts -  
144, 156; Burgers - 108; Butter - 85; Cake  
- 88, 153; Carrots - 37, 94, 101, 135, 157;  
Cheese - 107; Chips - 122; Chocolate - 97;  
Chowder - 125; Coconuts - 57, 87; Crisps  
- 14, 15; Custard - 132; Dog Food - 155;  
Doughnuts - 5, 80, 97, 105, 155; Eggs -  
49, 53; Fish Fingers - 149; Grapes - 128;



Gravy - 73, 107; Ham - 20; Honey - 29,  
113; Humbugs - 92; Ice Cream - 56; Jam  
- 118; Kebab - 58; Kippers - 23; Lettuce  
- 135; Macaroni - 107; Marmite - 29;  
Mash - 58; Mayonnaise - 125; Milk - 49,  
113; Pancakes - 88; Peanuts - 9; Picnics  
- 43, 53, 140; Pies - 63, 76; Potatoes -  
144; Prawn Crackers - 20; Pumpkins - 47;  
Raisins - 65; Ratatouille - 58; Rolls - 120,  
141; Sandwiches - 125; Sausages - 126, 139;  
Souffle - 20; Soup - 146; Spuds - 144;  
Sticky rice - 58; Strawberries - 34; Tea -  
42; Toast - 25, 59; Toffees - 149; Yorkshire  
Pudding - 144.

## Nature and Outdoors Things

Clouds - 15, 17, 24, 53, 100, 113; Cobwebs  
- 93; Flowers - 6, 24, 98, 143; the Moon  
- 13, 24, 43, 96; Mud - 124; Nettles - 75;  
Rainbows - 15; Rivers - 32, 72; Rocks - 120;  
the Sky - 17, 60, 77, 100, 106; Stars - 77;  
Stone - 95; Trees - 3, 11, 17, 21, 35, 60, 64,  
81, 89, 93, 113, 154; Volcanos - 95.





## Places You Might Go

Antarctica - 9; Airport - 8; Circus - 142; Countryside - 115; Desert - 150; Hospital - 128; Kitchen - 152; Mallorca - 40; School - 12, 14, 18, 43, 96; the Seaside - 8, 45, 56, 62.



## Seasons and Weather

Autumn - 81, 93, 106, 154; February - 27; Fog - 100; Rain - 17, 32, 53, 62; Snow - 24, 27, 37, 39, 43; Spring - 98, 128, 143, 154; Summer - 38, 98; Thunder - 8; Winter - 8, 27, 60, 137, 143.

## Special Days

Bathtime - 61, 62, 119; Birthdays - 22, 148, 155; Christmas - 144; Halloween - 132; Surprises - 148.

## Stuff

Asthma - 4; Athletics - 4; Ballet - 88; Cannibalism - 56; Cuddling - 1, 23, 129; Dancing - 134; Drawing - 102; Dreams - 13, 16, 19, 115; Fruity Smells - 28; History - 18, 45; Juggling - 7; Laughter - 61; Mathematics - 109; Memory - 19, 130; Music - 130; Oblongs - 137; Pacifism - 110; Questions - 10; Reading - 19, 31; Royalty



- 45; Running - 4; Silence - 24, 79; Sport - 33, 85, 147; Squares - 137; Surprises - 148; Washing Up - 42.



## Things (not vehicles)

Advent Calendar - 156; Beds - 50; Blue Things - 6; Books - 24, 51, 85, 115, 144; Boring Things - 84; Bricks - 22, 36, 131; Bubble Bath - 61, 119; Cars - 30; Clothes, misc. - 8; Colanders - 156; Curtains - 71; Eggs - 145; Fireworks - 61, 84; Footballs - 147; Furniture - 78, 150; Glasses - 71, 136; Gloves - 8, 115; Jokes - 61; Kettles - 75; Lamp-posts - 68; Lies - 729; Mirrors - 30, 86, 101, 148; Muck - 86; Mud - 124; Paper - 64, 85; Pianos - 91; Quilts - 70; Sand - 150; Sneezes - 31; Soap - 146; Socks - 8, 31; Spoons - 57, 132; Sticks - 77, 149; Trousers - 8, 25, 52; Umbrellas - 32; Watering Cans - 70; Wellies - 140; Words - 28, 41, 61, 74.

## Vehicles

Aeroplanes - 26, 55; Bikes - 131; Buses - 26, 90; Helicopters - 15; Hot Air Balloons - 15; Trains - 13, 26, 111; Trousers - 8, 25, 52; Zeppelins - 15.





## Snake Poem

The snake that offers hugs and cuddles  
is just the start of several troubles.

The snake that says they'll hold you tight  
is one whose hug's worse than their bite.

The snake that snuggles on the bus  
is probably worth making a fuss  
about.

I've nothing against a snake, you see,  
so long as the snake's got nothing 'gainst me.

## A Nose Poem

Her brother was a dedicated nose-picker.  
Dedicated to the cause.

Each night she'd sharpen his nails  
to claws,  
but didn't say.

After six months  
he'd whittled  
his nose  
away.

He's now working on his brain,  
cos he'll remain  
a dedicated picker all his days.

And she stays  
a wicked sister  
who doesn't know  
when a joke's gone on  
too long.

## Trees Do Like Squirrels Too

The trees are cheerleading the birds.

Their arms are raised.

Their pom-poms are *pom-pom-pomping*.

'Go, birds!' they shout.

'Birds, stay!' they say.

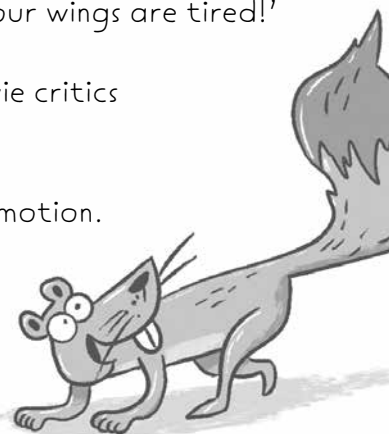
'Build your nests in me!'

'I'm your best tree!'

'I'll hold you up when your wings are tired!'

Bank managers and movie critics  
would have you believe  
wooden things  
can't contain so much emotion.

But they are wrong.



## The Asthmatic Racer

When I run I wheeze.

I run a bit more  
then I lean on my knees  
and wheeze.

When I tell them I'm just resting  
they say that they're drug testing  
and they take away the  
canister from my inhaler

which leaves me  
increasingly wheezy  
which doesn't please me.

And if I run after that  
I tend to fall flat.

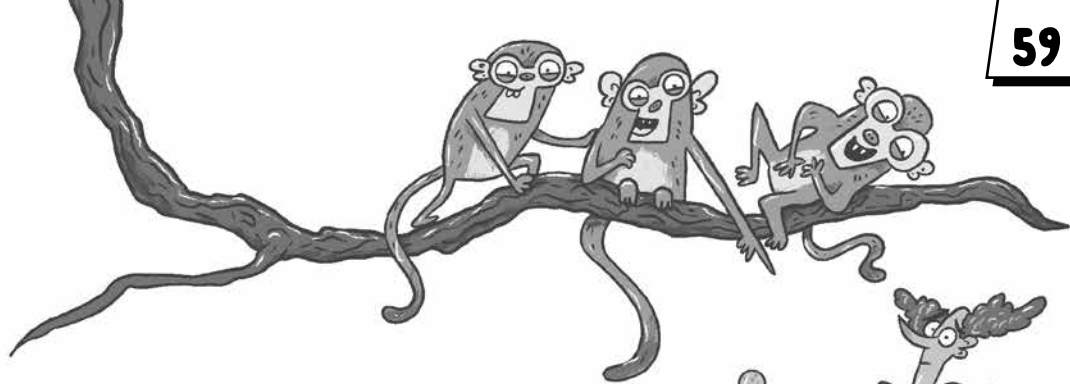
## Donor Card

In my wallet  
you'll find my Donor Card,  
in case my organs  
are of use to someone  
after my death.

You'll also find  
my Doughnut Card,  
in case my packed lunch  
is uneaten.

I promise  
they will be jamful,  
not ring,  
and dusted lightly  
with snowy dreams of hard white sugar.

This isn't a reason  
to run me down.



## Blue Day

The forget-me-nots were blooming.  
The bluebells rang round the forest.  
Over the white cliffs improbable birds flew.

It was a blue day.  
It was a new day.  
It was a Tuesday.

Inexplicably,  
the 's' had gone missing in the night,  
not to be found in the cold dawn light.

A snake went to speak and had a fright,  
silently.

## Juggles

Don't juggle in the jungle  
if your juggling's not great.

Monkeys are judgemental  
and they whisper mate to mate,

saying: 'Cop a lot of that chap  
chucking juggles everywhere.'

And they turn away, embarrassed,  
showing bottoms that are bare ...

which is, it must be said,  
just the sort of thing

that distracts a trainee juggler  
from their trainee juggling.

## Are You Ready for the Weather?



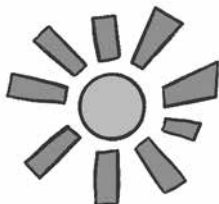
At the airport  
they have a windsock  
to see where the wind is going.

At the beach  
Dad wears a sunhat  
to keep his bald head from glowing.

In December  
I put on my raincoat  
to keep me from getting wet.



But as far as I know  
there aren't any thundergloves,  
or snowshirts,  
or unexpected heatwave trousers,  
or peasoup fog pants ...  
yet.



## The Penguin

Ramírez was a penguin.  
A penguin with a peanut allergy.

Were Ramírez to eat a peanut  
he'd swell up like a balloon

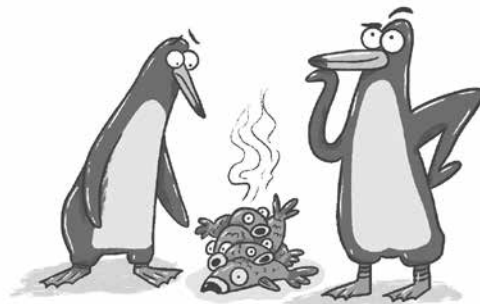
and pop.

Ramírez did not know  
he had a peanut allergy

because he was a penguin  
and lived in Antarctica.

All he had ever had to eat were fish.

Unfortunately, he was also allergic to fish.





## Questions, Questions, Questions



Jenny asked her mother, 'Why?'.  
Her mother said she didn't know,  
but went and asked Mo Finklestein  
in case he wished to have a go  
at answering the question, 'Why?'  
He didn't. And so to this day  
Jenny hasn't got a clue.  
What can you do? What can you do?  
What, as they say, can you do?



## Can't See the Tree ...

Charles made a tree  
out of bits of wood.

It looked pretty good.  
It had leaves.  
It had squirrels.  
It was in the forest.

It was so good, in fact,  
when he turned away  
and turned back  
he couldn't tell  
which tree was his.

Which was quite annoying  
since he'd put  
so much effort into making it.

## Very Berry

The fruits were so very tangy  
on grandad's brambles  
he called them blackverys.

Nothing beat  
the steamed scent  
coming out of his crumble.

So sweetly sticky  
it stuck in your  
nose hairs.

You took it to school with you  
the next day,  
and in boring lessons

you'd travel away  
on the blackvery memory  
of his blackvery crumble.

## Dawn Choruses

It's dark outside  
but the birds are singing.  
The moon's still up  
but the day's beginning.

The empty train  
welcomes the driver -  
that lunchbox-clutching  
early arriver.

Back home someone's  
noisily snoring,  
dreaming the day  
while it's still beforeing.

It's dark outside  
but the birds are singing.  
The moon's still up  
but the day's beginning.

## Poem About Riding a Slug to School

Riding to school on the back of a slug  
will make you (a) late  
and (b) unpopular with the slug

(especially if you offer to share  
your ready salted crisps,  
as a reward,  
when you finally get there).

So probably best  
to not test out  
this method of eco-friendly locomotion,  
if that was your notion.



## An Exercise in Taste

I've tried helicopter  
and hot-air balloon,

and I've tried albatross  
and Zeppelin,

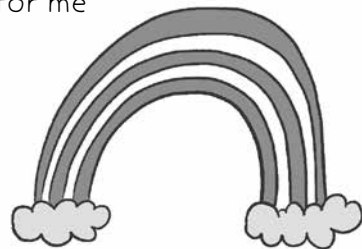
and I've tried cloud  
and rainbow,

but at the end of the day,  
I have to say,

for the best taste of the sky,  
so fast and vast and high,

cruising sedately  
with an in-flight movie ...

it's plane crisps for me  
every time.



## Dave's Stories

Dave whispers  
ghost stories  
in your ear  
when you're asleep.

He does it so quietly  
you'll never wake up,  
but will dream them.

It's like a magic gift he has,  
this dream-whispering  
ghost story  
skill.

I have often slept  
at his house  
and the dreams have been ...  
terrifying.

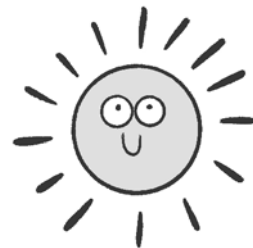
In conclusion,  
Dave is very annoying.

## Sky Poem

There's so much spare sky  
some trees consider it a challenge  
and live long lives  
trying to fill it.

Others grow birds  
on their long limbs  
and send them off  
to explore the wide blue space.

Either way  
the sky never gets full  
and clouds  
still have room to lilo around,  
leaking occasionally.



## School

In my day school was very different.

For one thing,  
there wasn't so much history to learn.  
Lots of things that have happened now  
hadn't happened back then.

For another thing,  
the teachers were much younger.  
Look at your teacher  
and take twenty, thirty years off ...

why,  
they were probably just kids themselves.

## Remembery

I remember  
things that never happened.  
I remember  
people I've never met.  
I remember  
paths I've never gone down.  
I remember  
promises no one made, or kept.

I remember  
silences I've snored through.  
I remember  
views I've never seen.  
I remember  
meals I've never eaten.  
I remember  
the dark outside the dream.



## Edible Arrangements

If you go to sleep in a hammock  
made of ham hock,

or a bed  
made of bread,

or on a sofa  
made of soufflé,

or on a futon  
made of prawn crackers,

then I wish you the best of luck  
stuck,  
as you are,  
in a life weirder, even, than mine.

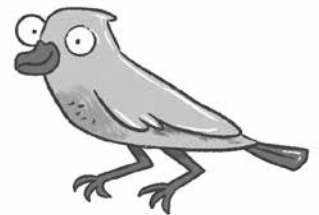
## Birdlife

Impressed  
by their singing  
their feathers  
and their flying  
Simon climbed  
his garden's tree  
and built a nest  
in the branches.

He gobbled worms  
and sang joyously  
at the sun's rising.

He flew arms out  
with enthusiastic  
amounts of flapping.

Nevertheless  
featherless he fell  
and, caught by the cat,  
that was that.



## To Be a Brick

To be a brick,  
playing your part  
holding up a house  
where little kids live.

The things you'll see,  
the things you'll share.

The laughter,  
the tears,  
the birthdays,  
the fears,  
the only getting to go on holiday  
when the house falls down.

Oh! What a thing,  
to be a brick.



## This Poem is Not a Red Herring

I cuddled a kipper.  
It was a cold kipper.  
It was all alone.

The cuddled kipper's  
no longer cold.  
The cuddled kipper's happy.

It's been cuddled.  
It's been warmed.  
It's a cosy cuddled kipper.

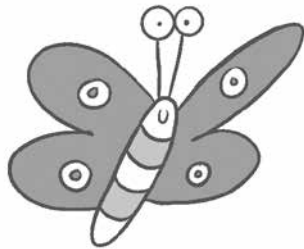
Now my jumper smells of kipper.  
I'm being followed by cats.  
Perhaps they want to cuddle me.

## Silences

Cat paws through the garden.  
 Butterflies in flight.  
 Morning daisies yawning.  
 The slowly falling night.

Snow before it's trodden.  
 Books before they're read.  
 The moon when freshly risen.  
 A secret left unsaid.

Clouds not ready to rain yet.  
 Fresh-stretching apple pips.  
 That moment between tick and tock.  
 Your finger-hushed lips.



## My Special Mother

'Darling,'  
 my mother said,  
 'put your trousers on  
 before you eat your toast.'

This is the advice of hers,  
 I think,  
 that I appreciate the most.

She also sometimes said,  
 'Never look a badger in the bum.'

I wonder why?

What had the badgers done  
 to so upset  
 my mum?