

FEAR THE STRANGER

Fear the stranger, if you wish,
For we have long been told
Of evil mensch who try
To lure away our children
With empty promises
Of gingerbread and fairy gold.

But for every Evil Troll or Bogeyman
Or Spectre of our darkest fears -
The demon who can drip with gore
Or the sinister stranger in the street
There exists a hundred thousand more;
The *real* abusers of our trust,
The ones you much more often meet
And never would suspect of lusting
After innocents. Beware of them you must !

And they are near these neighbours nice,
Choir masters, dear and friendly lecturers,
Occasionally priests, all ready at a trice,
Even tho' they've had a drop, not really tight,
They'll do a little extra on the side,
Sometimes even at night.

Fear also, please, the more familiar face
Of "Uncle Jack" or your new man
Who sits your daughter on his knee
Or goes upstairs to say goodnight -
Then tries to take advantage where he can.

The child-minder or scoutmaster,
Kindly grandpa or elder brother,
Surprisingly and all too often
Fumble with our children. Thus they feed
Off our blind naivité and satisfy their needs.

Our papers are full of those who steal
And rob or drive away a car !
The crimes of the vandals underaged
Or perhaps the plight of the unwaged.
Yet how often do we read in the holy Press
Of those who feed off those with no redress
As they've no voice.

The abuse that they have undergone
It takes away their choice. Their life's undone.
To protest or cry aloud for all to hear
Is a privilage. Those abused are full of fear,
Confused and often full of shame.
There's one crime more, as often what
They thought was love, affection, trust
Was not. It was all a lie. They must learn
To start again. To learn that if you love or trust
You do not have to pay a bitter price of pain.

But sometimes the friendly professionals
Frighten me much more.

For with their deep insight & training
In their therapy or medicine or law,
And for all their well-honed skills,
Their sensitivity, (you'd think for sure
That they'd not overlook their darker side)
But they actually can very skillfully hide
The facts that they abuse.

They can even justify themselves,
Or "No-one seems to see their point of view".
They can think that they are in the right
And you thought you might be safe
In their trained hands !

There is also another type of real abuse.
For every single hour of every day
The bands of ex-prefects or citizens upright,
Present themselves so neatly dressed
All squeaky surface clean & pressed & white,
Yet again and again and again betray.

All these people thrust their own abuse,
Their warps and twists and needs for power,
Upon the child, or sick, or innocently trusting
client, who then must feed the other's need &
more abusive yet is often made to feel the
blame or has to keep the tyrant feeling right
And feels caught by even thought
Of unknown horrors, guilt and shame
Of happenings they cannot name
And fear that even if they do survive
It will happen all again the same.
They'll carry grief & strife, deep inner scars,
Throughout their days, with black despair
Whilst the perpetrator gets to play his games
Again with someone else's life.

These things are done. You think it fair !
Don't turn away ! It's also a fact that every day
A child runs away from home.
My fear is not where it ends up,
But what it's running from !

The shadow side of Mr Right
Upstanding - Professionally Clean
Is what is very rarely seen
But, I fear, is all too frequent really there.

So fear the stranger, if you must !
But please be also much more careful
Who it is you trust.