

The caretaker

There sits a lone figure
Hunched over morning paper
No sense of headlines in mind
From dawn till twilight
Until bell toll ends his lone vigil

No-one beside him except trees
Tall, trying to scratch the sky above
With thorns and branches sharp
The twittering cooing birds
Arrive early to drink and feast on crumbs

Snacking on crisps and Panini rolls
Sipping dark brown fluid, sickly sweet
From women shaped bottles
The old fountain now deemed not sterile
No more metallic taste of water for visitors

He lies beneath the old ghost tree
That falls when you look up in branches high
Boys call names as he quietly sits
Then away like scattering birds as he moves
Laughing jeering catcalling mobsters

Through trees they dance sniggering loud
The chase is on, in their minds
A loud shout from keepers of the park
They dash out through barred gates
Away into the local surrounds

The solitary reader alone again
Dreams of jungles he fought through
Time long ago in a differing world
Where life was far simpler.
No apple then you could not eat

Rising as sun crosses yard arm
He slips quietly away to his bower
Not seen by custodian or child
Leaving his sanctuary to animal and bird
To haunt this haven by night

Returning as sun sleepily rises on high
To take up station once more
Like an old guard of a hidden trove
Watching over what nature once owned
Till bell toll spirits him away, forever