

Poetry Series

**Francesca Johnson**  
**- poems -**

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## Francesca Johnson(I'm a metal tiger - there's your clue)

Happily living in a world of truths and open-ness.....nothing rocks my boat any more. Except my man.....

## **\*\*work Till The Grave...**

You WILL work till you're 70,  
all you sloggers.  
My government can't afford  
to pay you a pension,  
and I'd like to mention  
I need my expenses  
and recompenses.  
And those poor young things  
pushing buggies and things  
need food  
and fags  
and we need to support the dads  
(if we know who they are) .  
Asylum seekers,  
foreign speakers,  
benefit tweakers  
and the like  
need a hike  
into comfortable living.  
So you'll need to be giving  
your ALL  
for all.  
Poor dears,  
no jobs or careers,  
they can't live on fresh air, you know.  
So off you go,  
work till the grave.  
We will shave  
every penny off you.  
I have people to support  
and I don't want to be short  
of a bob or two myself.

Gordon Black, MP.

Just off to claim my expenses. I'm entitled to mortgage payments on my mansion...em I mean house...in London. And I need to carpet my house in the country. My cars need replacing and how could I do all that on a measly MP's wages, I ask you?



## **\*anger?**

Anger?

Don't languor  
under the name of 'soft'  
or 'sensitive.'

Just explode.  
It's what you do best.

Curse and swear,  
go spare,  
put the dagger in  
if you dare  
(and you do) .

Don't spare the pain.

Do it again  
and again  
and AGAIN.

But not with me.....

Francesca Johnson

## \*baptism

I've heard it said  
that you have to fall in the water  
ninety seven times  
before you're a REAL boater.

Having done it only once  
I must be two months old....

Francesca Johnson

## \*bread

Long gone.....

Moving on  
to better things.

No more 'I love you's'  
so glibly given,  
tossed out like stale bread  
for starving ducks.

I wish you luck,  
old friend.

By the way.....  
there are no starving ducks here.

The bread is fresh!

Francesca Johnson

## \*enigma Variation

Two muntjac  
and a security guard.  
Barrier.  
Well-tended lawns.  
Parkland.  
Lake.  
Mansion.  
Room for expansion, you say?  
Please NO!  
Leave well alone.  
Part of our history  
with its air of mystery  
and secrecy.

The Churchill room,  
a private collection I presume.  
Precisely labelled  
and set out.  
Well thought out, I thought.

And codes and codebreakers...  
Loads of codes.

A delightful episode  
for a sunny afternoon.

Francesca Johnson



# **\*naked People**

It's a community spirit.  
A matter of giving  
to those living  
alongside.

We take, with thanks also.

NO, NO, NOT money!  
Nor expensive gifts.  
We give and take time  
and help  
and respect  
and conversation  
and a coffee in front of a log fire.

These people.....  
no fancy clothes  
no pristine make-up  
nor stiff hairdos.

We're naked people.

What you see is what you get.

We're a happy lot  
us naked people.  
Unfettered by untruths.

We say it - WE MEAN IT.

Caring and sharing.

We live in each other's skins.

We're totally naked.

Francesca Johnson

## \*socks

One washing line.  
Four black socks.  
Four days.

Forecast  
for the next four days?

Four black socks.  
One washing line.

Fine!

Francesca Johnson

## ....Alaties

You can have...alaties  
in every aspect of your life.

You don't need to go to college  
and get an...ology.

You can have an...ality  
in actuality,  
in reality.

Even in generality.

...alities  
are our specialities.

Francesca Johnson

# A Pure White Poem And Empty Shops

I asked a dog-walker for the short cut  
to the local centre shop.  
She told me 'Walk to the village green  
then turn right. A skip and a hop.'  
'Thank you' I said, unknowingly  
that the village green WASN'T green..  
Everything was blanketed in a coat of snow,  
it was WHITE where the green had been!

I followed the tracks and got to the shop  
where crowds were milling about lost.  
The bread and eggs they were looking for  
could not be bought at any cost.

The shelves were bare, reminded me  
of reports I'd seen on the telly.  
Thirds World countries, very little food,  
youngsters with hunger-swollen bellies.

Ah well, it's pasta for me tonight  
and tomorrow again, no doubt.  
Those tomatoes in cans will be useful and, I expect,  
the tin of beans will eke it out.

Francesca Johnson

# A Temporary Man

A temporary man  
can  
be a good distraction  
when filled with action  
of the physical sort,  
a real sporty sport.  
Any port in a storm,  
so they say.

But

a permanent man  
can  
be a true mate,  
her best friend  
who's willing to lend  
a helping hand  
day or night,  
do what's right,  
hold her tight  
and just love her,  
and love her,  
and love her.....forever.

Francesca Johnson

# A Whole Lot Of Holes....(1)

There are a whole lot of holes  
in Bletchley.

On the whole.

I've been looking for more  
to avoid.

But I've been told  
by someone old  
that you can't see holes,  
just the perimeters.

So I'm looking for perimeters  
to avoid.

(Francesca Johnson)

## \*\*\*\*A Whole Lot Of Holes.....(2)

On the whole  
The parameters of the perimeters  
To their relevant extent  
Appears to be a problem.

The perimeters of the parameters  
Need to be found.

As a member of the council  
I can inform you  
That as no holes have been found  
The parameters of your comment  
Require no cement  
To filter the perimeters  
To fill the holes  
That appear not to exist.....

(George BernardBloodyShaw)

OH, SHUT UP! ! ! !

Francesca Johnson

# Barry Of The Cut

He lives a life alone on his floating kingdom,  
A Dutch barge of immaculate neatness.  
Barry left a life of greed and falsehoods  
Many years ago  
To start a new life on the Cut.  
His old, grizzled and wrinkled face  
Resembling Vespasian in all his madness  
Belies the gentleness underneath.  
The scowl he wears turns into a beam  
When our paths meet.  
We share coffee and music,  
Played expertly on his organ  
In an atmosphere of complete peace.  
The inlaid mahogany and carved hardwoods  
Of the interior  
Are lovingly maintained and proudly exhibited  
To all who care to share  
And appreciate true artistry.  
Barry talks of portholes and how they must be the right ones,  
And how to tell if they're not,  
Of wildlife and water  
And the washing away of the banks.  
The glass of lemonade he carries around  
As if a beloved baby  
Contains a shot or two of vodka,  
Well hidden in its clarity.  
And the cigarette hanging loosely  
From his mouth is taken up  
Every so often, by his gnarled old hands  
To flick and return once more to his lips.  
Then he disappears into the bowels of his barge,  
Soft lighting emitting from round spaces  
Along its length,  
Bidding goodnight to the world.

Francesca Johnson



# Cardiff

She said she came from Cardiff.

He thought she was a rare bit.

She said she liked that, isn't it.

Francesca Johnson

# Coalville

One day I'll go back to Coalville  
and whisper you a hello.

I'll see again those twinkling blue eyes,  
no longer cold in death.

And that curved mouth  
sending a flashing smile to all.

I'll tell you that I remember you  
when your own children don't.....

And I'll place a rose on your grave  
and bid you sleep in peace,  
dear Lily.

Francesca Johnson

# Crossing A Line

I will cross that line  
between then and now,  
past and present.

I will not allow myself  
to carry unnecessary baggage.

I have peace  
and happiness here  
and will not cease  
to enjoy  
what is around me....

People.  
Places.  
Wildlife.

...and what is within me.

Life is a masterpiece,  
made up of brush strokes,  
each with their own intensity,  
their own smudge of colour  
but fitting together  
beautifully.

Get the picture?

Life begins again.  
NOW.

Never look back  
except to take  
those wonderful treasures  
and keep them in your heart.

Take the next step.

The other steps are easy.....

It's a matter of  
crossing a line.

Francesca Johnson

# Dennis, You've Got To Go.....

Dennis, you've got to go.

I don't know who you are  
or where you came from.  
All I know is that you have to go.

Your name inscribed on my work surface  
is detracting from the beauty of the wood.  
I can put up with the knife cuts.  
Just.  
And the ancientosity of the wood.  
Very easily.

But your name has to go.  
It doesn't fit in here.  
So I'm sandpapering you away.

Rub...rub...rub...

Francesca Johnson

## De-Piping The Hash...

His 'n' hers  
corned beef hash.

Got the mash  
for that dish  
but I wish  
they wouldn't leave the pipes in!

So forks at the ready  
while I steadily  
dissect  
the meat  
till the treat

is de-piped.

Francesca Johnson

# Diesel And Dust

Diesel and dust,  
flaking castles and roses, and spots of rust.  
Who said living on a narrow boat  
would be glamorous?  
But it's a life  
of balance.  
Lowered standards, it's true  
but don't forget, there's another view  
to be taken.  
We're not stirred or shaken  
by the negatives.  
There's always a helping hand  
and trust is a must.  
There's deep love, I've seen it,  
between brother and brother,  
and water mother  
and daughter.  
Humanity is the song they sing.

Francesca Johnson

# Doing Pennants

I'm doing pennants.  
Multi-coloured and  
blowing in the wind.  
It's a Tring thing.  
An annual fling  
for us boaters.  
Bank to bank floaters  
enjoying the community,  
an immunity  
from the rat race society.  
Except water rats  
because that's us....

Pennants and flags,  
Soft Machine and fags,  
barbecues smoking,  
laughter,  
choking  
on smoke and fun  
in the fun  
of this Bank Holiday.

I'm doing pennants/.

It's criminal.....

Francesca Johnson



# Dollie And Jack Of The Cut

Dollie, petite, slim and with hair that flows blondely  
And wildly, in a kind of disorderly fashion  
About her small shoulders.  
A smile to welcome and calm even a bulldog.  
And eyes of subtle blue, like the old Wedgwood cups  
She shares her coffee in.  
She carries an aura of peace and tranquility  
From head to dainty toes.

Jack, a quietly spoken man, a perfect match  
For his lady, Dollie.  
Unruly dark hair tied roughly at the back of his head  
And a grin that reveals perfectly white teeth  
Amongst the many gaps.  
His language is colourful and raw  
But holds a friendliness and welcome  
In every word.

Jack seeks Dollie's hand  
In a loving and natural way,  
His grubby fingernails a reflection  
Of the hard life he lives.  
She, with tiny hands untainted by varnish  
Takes soft hold of his.

Two people living side by side in perfect harmony  
With each other, and with the Cut.

Francesca Johnson

# Don'T Ask Me Questions When I'M Breathing In

He said:

'I'm only a man.  
Can't multi-task.  
Don't ask  
me questions  
as I'm breathing in.  
I have to concentrate.  
Please wait  
until I breathe out.'

I said:

'OK.  
So what do you want for dinner?  
I'm doing a bit of hoovering and dusting,  
adjusting the muck (I need a fork lift truck!) ,  
while peeling the spuds.  
Take your time answering,  
dear man,  
I don't expect a flash-in-the-pan reply.  
I know you try  
hard.

After all, you're only a man....

Francesca Johnson

# Don'T Beef About It...

Don't beef about it.  
Those sausages are NOT cooked,  
I've looked.

They're still PINK!

I think  
they need a few more minutes.

Give them time to fry.

Time flies, they say.  
And so do pigs....

But hey!

Your sausages need time.

(NOT metricated time, either)

Francesca Johnson

# Don'T Shoot Sean

Sean is not a sheep  
to be shorn.

Don't be woolly-headed, mate.  
Put down that gun before it's too late.

Lamb to the slaughter?  
You hadn't ought to be using that gun  
in the presence of your son.

Don't shoot Sean, please  
be careful.

Oh, \*\*\*\*  
Sean's shot.

Surely not?

(Using a staple gun with children about can be too hazardous)

No sheep were harmed in the making of this poem.

And Sean lives on....

Francesca Johnson

# Drowning

Us boaters  
have the knack  
of drowning  
inanimate objects  
through no lack of care.

It's a risk we have  
to take,  
when on a lake,  
river or canal.

May sound banal  
but  
water is our enemy  
and our friend,  
and in the end  
we must respect it.

My generator drowned today.

It's the latest  
in a list.  
Mobile and radio phone  
I've kissed  
goodbye.

Now my source of 240 volts  
halts  
its output.

A knock on the bathtap  
caused a mishap.

My tap poured  
and poured.  
Genny in shower  
(storage place, you see)  
drowned in an hour.

(My generator's booklet said 'Keep it clean and dry. I got it half right! !)

Francesca Johnson

# Dumpling

You little dumpling...

So fluffy and endearing,  
floating on that sea of brown,  
appearing  
as a bloated whale.

I won't be interfering  
with your buoyancy.

Won't even be peering into the pan.

I'm waiting for the moment  
when you, dumpling, are dumped  
upon my plate,  
plumped by the gravy  
and surrounded by meat  
for me to eat.

Yum yum.....

Francesca Johnson

# Eating You

It's eating you,  
beating you  
into submission,  
soaking  
into every pore and cell  
of your being,  
like a germ,  
making you squirm  
and sweat.

It's flowing through your veins  
like liquid poison,  
and being exhaled  
with every breath.  
It's a foreign body.  
Unwelcome.  
Killing you quietly.

You need an antidote  
to grab it by the throat  
and promote  
what was there before.

Before THAT  
started eating you.

Francesca Johnson



# Edge Of A Cold

I'm on the edge of a cold.  
Will it take hold?  
Grab the tissues  
before THEY issue  
A licence for sneezing!

Francesca Johnson

# Epigamic Presense

Put on that sark with flambuoyant print.  
Buttons undone so we get a hint  
of taut, rippling body, brown from the sun  
(or as you would call it 'the currant bun')  
and atop your head, made from a roo  
your battered old hat, such a part of you.  
Hands on the tiller, Soft Machine blaring out.  
Epigamic presense. That's what it's all about.

Francesca Johnson

# Epigram

'Are you going to serve up epigram and chips? '

'Yes, I'm going to make you eat your words.'

'It's a witty or sarcastic utterance' he remarked,  
poetically.

'Oh no, my dear, that isn't right.  
It's food' she proclaimed energetically.  
'Bits of fish and so forth  
encased in crispy crumb  
is what they are.  
And just to prove this  
why not ask my Mum! '

'So are you going to serve up  
epigrams and chips? '

Incensed she said 'I'll make you eat  
your words.....with chilli dips.'

Francesca Johnson

# Glow

'It's everlasting' he said.  
'Its glow will last forever.'

That's clever!

So now I'll endeavour  
to catch my prey  
at night.

Rod's out.  
Float's about, I see.

Thanks mate.

Francesca Johnson

# Grey Day

From my bed in the early quiet of the morning  
I see those stark, bare branches  
of the tree,  
etched onto the backcloth of the dirty grey sky.

The year is dying.

Everything is empty.

The tree has no green-ness,  
the sky is devoid of clouds,  
the air is filled with silence.

I am alone.

Then.....  
the slow chug, chug of an engine  
whispers into the deadness,  
growing into my ears,  
and I see the young man  
with the black dog  
glide past in the gloom.

He is alive  
and brings life back onto the cut  
with his presence.

Another human being.

The day is no longer so grey....

Francesca Johnson

# He Bimbles

He bimbles from the minute he gets up  
until he goes to bed.

Nothing better to do  
than bimble.

A pleasant occupation is bimbaling  
and it suits him.

Francesca Johnson

## Heard In A Gp Surgery.....

'Sorry, sir, you can't die yet  
until our requirements have been met.  
You can always use the alternative  
and take yourself down to the vet.'

I could continue.....

'Please pick yourself up off the floor  
and fill this form in quickly.  
I'll pass you a pen so you can write  
and in a few days you can be sickly.  
Until then you must stay alive  
to be on our doctors' books.  
We need to process all details.'

My answer? This place fooks.....

Francesca Johnson

# Icing On The Cut

Frozen over  
like a frosted glass window pane,  
beautiful and calm,  
unmoving,  
ethereal in the dampness of the morning.  
A joy to see, to inhale  
the smell of frozen water.  
A rarity.  
Stillness.  
Silence.

Two ducks crash land and  
confused by its hardness  
skate and slip  
and fall about like those drunken sailors  
then fly off in disgust.

The sun rises and glares at the ice,  
casting its yellow eye over the arrogant brittleness  
that dares to challenge it.  
Slowly, slowly,  
like truth amongst lies  
it wins through.

The illusion dissolves,  
melts,  
and the canal is back in the here and now,  
liquid,  
living,  
soft to the touch.

Fascinating though it was,  
the ice will soon be forgotten.

Francesca Johnson



# Isis And Orisis

Isis and Orisis,  
brother and sister  
with the same mother,  
married to each other.

Isis would be  
her own children's aunt  
and Osiris an uncle to them.

The children, though sisters and brothers,  
would be cousins, too, to each other.

Auntie Mum and Uncle Dad  
in our society would be considered bad  
and against the law.

But was this a flaw  
in THEIR time?

Francesca Johnson

# It's Half Past Midnight

It's half past midnight  
and the wind's getting gusty.  
I'm rusty,  
not lusty.  
The skin on my poetry  
is becoming dusty.  
It needs moisture, life, inspiration  
but sitting alone  
causes mental constipation.  
Give me some passion.  
It's not out of fashion  
but I'm not getting my fair ration  
of oomph...  
So I'll crawl into bed  
and hope that my head  
becomes a collection box.  
That it rocks  
with the weight of some words  
strung together in an orderly manner  
and not dropp a clanger  
by filling it full of puerility.  
What futility!

Francesca Johnson

# It's Quarter To Nine

It's quarter to nine.  
It's ALWAYS quarter to nine.

'That's OK' he says  
'because everyday  
it's right

....TWICE'

Francesca Johnson

# I've Been Zapped.....

I've been zapped....  
Drained of all energy  
and vigour.

She's a figure  
of magnetic force.  
Drags that source  
of life  
out of me.

I'm a deflated balloon,  
a crescent moon,  
an empty spoon.

Even the fire has lost its heat.  
It's beat.  
She took that, too  
in just three hours.

Thankfully  
I was able to give my grand-daughter back....

Francesca Johnson

# Jim Of The Cut

Jim sits alone in his cottonwool world,  
a man without a recent memory.  
The shaking of his hands  
caused not just by the vodka he consumes  
every day  
but from the cruel disease  
he inherited from his family.

Martina works hard for a meagre living  
and has a little one to look after  
but she will check on Jim each day,  
making sure that the prostrate body  
seen lying on the settee  
through uncurtained windows  
is still breathing.  
And she will gently remind him  
in her soft Irish lilt  
that the food he left outside two days ago  
may no longer be fit for eating.

Barry checks Jim's boat  
and makes sure that it is safe  
to be on the water.  
He will roll up his sleeves  
and help clean up the mess  
left by a failing mind.  
And he will open up the tobacco packet  
proffered by Jim  
whose own hands are unable to grip.

Nigel will help  
whenever he can.

I will make him that omelette  
he hinted at  
when I spoke of the eggs and bacon  
I have on my boat.  
He told me of the sausages  
he thinks he has, too.

Jim will trundle along the towpath  
looking for company  
and find it.

He will tell us of things  
which never happened,  
and we will smile.

And he will, too.

He'll talk of ex-wives  
and childhood happenings,  
remembering the details vividly  
but will not remember those things  
he did this morning.

It's Jim's birthday today.

He'll have company  
to celebrate it.

Happy birthday, Jim.

Francesca Johnson

## Let's Get Sirius

I await the days when Sirius draws near again,  
hanging from Orion's Belt  
to delight us with its red hue.

I gaze at the Dog Star,  
whose radiance is far greater than the sun  
and wonder why it fascinates me so  
when there are hundreds  
of other stars about.

Get Sirius!

Francesca Johnson

# Life And Banks

Bah!

(or baaaaaa..)

Gimme lamb shanks.

One could bar banks  
and get those shanks  
on my own fire.

The banks could be the buyer.

They freeze money.

Chill out, guys.  
I'm thinking of MY milk and honey.  
I don't care about all that.  
My stove's going.  
I've nothing owing.

Just give me the shanks,  
thanks.

(in collaboration with George BernardBloodyShaw)

Francesca Johnson



# Lightweight

This poem is lightweight.

It weighs 6 grams,  
took 2.487 metric minutes to write,  
and used 61 centimetres of ink.

Danke schon.

Francesca Johnson

# Lord Ledgie Of The Cut

Lord Ledgie, paintbrush bristling in his hands  
Introduces himself,  
"You can call me Ledgie, John or anything you like  
but I'm known as Lord Ledgie, " he says.  
Tall and imperial with long flowing locks  
And a battered old hat,  
Sartorially inelegant but suitably attired  
For his stature and eccentricity.  
His Peacock lies still, silent, purple and proud  
A testament to his talents  
And a reminder of his lost loves.  
I wobble myself in through its tiny door  
And step onto a fragile box blindly  
To enter the brilliance of the interior.  
The purple and pink and turquoise  
Slap me in the face, happily.  
Lord Ledgie talks about God and spiritual healing,  
The price of houses and how to keep a fire burning,  
And, in a hushed tone, about the rules of the Cut  
Which must be broken or bended ever so slightly.  
He tells me that it is better to give than to receive  
And then asks for a cigarette  
Which he smokes out on the towpath  
Beside his can of lurid paint  
Before he continues his work on the mural.  
Richly poor and madly sane  
John is known to all along the Cut  
As Lord Ledgie.

Francesca Johnson

## Memories.....

I told him about my memory stick  
I'd bought for my PC.  
He asked me where I'd put it.  
Red-faced, I felt a right tit  
Cos I've forgotten...mmm...

Francesca Johnson

# Mothered Or Smothered?

I know he was ill  
but still.....

Below the surface  
I feel that you smothered him.

You mothered him  
in the best way you could  
as any mother would.

But in the end  
it did no good.

He could no longer live with those demons.  
He wasn't a free man.  
They were always there.

But the cotton wool?  
The kid gloves?

With your overpowering love  
could you not have seen  
what was to be?  
And set him free?  
Just a little?

He was imprisoned  
by his and your emotion.  
Too much emotion,  
making him out to be different,  
special,  
above all others.

You had others!

Six others.  
Did THEY get the attention  
they needed?  
Did you feed them

the time and praise  
needed by children  
as they are raised?

How do they feel about this 'god'?  
Their brother,  
revered and pedestallised  
by their mother  
with such passion?

And how did HE feel  
to be the main focus of YOU?  
Was he split in two?  
God or man.  
An idol.

Was it fair  
To share your time  
90 / 10?

10 for them.  
The little ones.  
Watered-down time,  
in between  
those chimes of panic  
and fear.

Or might it be  
that being the mother you are  
you care  
for the runt of the litter?  
No bitterness  
from the others.

Does love stretch  
to encompass all?  
All those children  
who call. And need you  
because you're Mother.  
Did you smother?

Or was your heart so big

You loved them all?

Written in response to Danielle Steel's book about her son Nick. Well worth a read.....

Francesca Johnson

# My Eyes Don'T Like The Sun

My eyes don't like the sun

which is a pity  
because it's pretty  
when it shines.

I can't convince my eyes at all!  
They seek the shade.

My body,  
on the other hand,  
does like the sun,  
the warmth on my skin  
and the good feeling within  
generated by its rays.

So I'm in a dilemma.

Sun? Shade? Shade? Sun?

I can't please everyone.

Francesca Johnson

# My Man's Lady

My man  
has a beautiful lady,  
not shady at all.

Skirts flared.  
Who'd dare  
to NOT look  
at my man's lady.

Graceful  
and sleek  
but don't call her meek  
because she's throaty,  
throaty and floaty,  
elegant, strong,  
sailing along,  
head up high,  
face to the wind  
cutting through the breeze.

Butter wouldn't melt?  
Don't go there.....

She may be tough  
but she ain't rough.

She's a lady.

My man's lady.

(Close to my man's heart but not human. Guess.....)

Francesca Johnson



# Noggin

'It's a noggin' he said,  
when I asked him what that object was.

'It's to keep evil spirits  
away from the entrance to the room,  
a centuries old tradition.'

It hangs.

I suppose it COULD be a noggin.

It looked more like  
a locking device, to me.....

Francesca Johnson

# Old Ted Of The Cut

You don't want to talk to Old Ted!  
He has a bite almost as ferocious as his Rottweiler.  
People give him a wide berth as they pass  
His rotting old narrowboat,  
Rusting and uncared for.  
Just like Old Ted.  
Blackened portholes adorn the sides  
And a collection of old pieces of metal  
Lie gathering dust and cobwebs  
On his stern deck.  
He emerges into the sunshine  
At regular intervals  
To move pieces about and clutter up  
The towpath.  
Addressed with a "Good morning"  
Old Ted will look right through you,  
With mad eyes and down-turned mouth  
And mumble some obscenity,  
His dirty skin and grubby grey clothes  
Making the passer-by move more quickly  
Stepping gingerly past the thick-necked dog,  
As quietly as they can.  
Seen only to leave when hunger gets the better of him  
Or to urinate in the bushes  
Old Ted is left alone.  
Was he ever someone's son?

Francesca Johnson

# One-Eyed Scottish Golliwog

One-eyed Scottish golliwog?  
I've got one from my youth.  
But can I mention my old toy  
even if it's the truth?

I tear my hair out with 'PC.'  
I cannot read a rhyme  
for fear of discrimination!  
Anything's a crime.

What happened to free speech, I say?  
I remember paper gollies  
And Robertson's would surely cringe  
and so do I.

Who's the whallies?

\*\*My thanks to Jeremy Clarkson, Carol Thatcher and the Queen's souvenir shop,  
for inspiration.

Francesca Johnson

# Party For One

She's having a party,  
a party for one.

The cake sits there  
with one candle on it,  
all ready to be divided  
into one piece.

The music's on,  
the drink is waiting to be poured  
into one glass.

She will sit amongst ghosts  
and toast her life

with tears.

Francesca Johnson

# Peace Reigns...

Moored up against an island  
in the middle of nowhere  
.....is paradise.

Sunshine to warm me.  
A waterfall to fill my ears  
with the sound of the natural world,  
its diamonds cascading endlessly  
to break into chips at the bottom.

Butterflies and dragonflies dance,  
taking their nectar from the rosebay willowherb  
and common ragwort  
on the river banks.

Greater burdock hang, batlike, from the ceiling  
of the boat,  
drying out to adorn a winter afloat.

Peace reigns.

No pains,  
No chains to bind me,  
No fetters,  
What could be better?

Peace reigns.

Francesca Johnson

# Piecing Together

You can't see the wood  
for the trees?  
Or maybe there are  
too many logs?  
You should know  
you're the bees' knees!  
I can hear the whirring  
of cogs  
As you try to figure  
everything out.  
Those branches you push  
to the side  
to glimpse of the lives  
of others!  
So what do you think  
they hide?

Huh?

Francesca Johnson

# Putting Me Through The Mincer (A Meaty Poem)

I won't mince words.  
I'll tell it like it is.  
I'm being put through the mincer.  
Are they taking the pizz?  
It doesn't matter that I'm dying  
at the doctor's door,  
they only want my date of birth  
and where I've lived before.  
They need to process me, you see,  
like peas or tins of Spam.  
They're not interested in  
the sick person that I am.  
The sweat is pouring off my brow  
and my legs will soon give way.  
My hands are weak, I cannot speak,  
my head feels full of clay.  
'You cannot see a doctor, love,  
well, not for a couple of days.  
Fill in this form with date of birth  
and if you have to leave this earth  
please do so  
within the next 24 hours.  
Thank you.'

Hypocratic oath? ? ?

Francesca Johnson

## Puzzle? 1

Cutting off the top of a large plastic bottle  
And defrosting some nice juicy pork.  
Later, the pan-scrubs made out of mesh  
Are preparing for something on my fork.  
Lengths of string and leaden weights  
Are used in the preparation.  
Working together with sniggers and laughter  
To catch what needs eradication.....

Any ideas about what we're doing? ? ?

Francesca Johnson



## Puzzle? 2

The short one is stronger than the long one  
But it makes it a lot thicker!  
You could always whip bits first  
Or heat-seal and crotch them.  
Is it quicker?

You stop down one set  
Then tuck against the lay.  
My Swedish fid comes in handy  
Then carry on till you reach the end.  
Roll underfoot till fine and dandy.

What am I doing? ? ? ?

Francesca Johnson

# Ron Of The Cut

Ron doesn't actually live on the cut,  
He just travels back and forth a lot,  
Chatting to anyone who will listen  
To his alcohol-soaked speech.

He dresses in black  
And has a black bike  
On which he balances precariously  
Whenever he deigns to mount it  
Which isn't very often  
Because it has a habit  
Of slipping sideways.  
It's a bad bike!

He's well-known along the cut.  
He's been there for as many years  
As my mother could remember,  
Bless her soul.

Ron laughs a lot  
Especially at the slogans on the front  
Of women's teeshirts.  
He found mine hilarious  
And kept repeating  
"French Connection" over and over  
As if were the funniest thing in the world  
And in the end  
I thought it was, too.

His eyes will wander to empty spaces  
And distract him, and make him  
Answer questions which weren't asked.

As he rolls a spliff he apologises  
That he hasn't enough to share  
But will share the contents of his wallet,  
His ragged driving licence, other documents,  
All laid out neatly on the top of the boat,  
A process he does several times each visit.

Ron will stay as long as his beer lasts  
Or until I have a job to do below decks.

I can usually think of something!

Francesca Johnson

# Sad Legs

They're flaky,  
those sad legs.  
They need a woman's touch  
so very much.  
A bit of TLC.  
Just lay back  
and think of England  
(as it used to be)  
while I give life  
to that parched skin.

Go on,  
give in  
to female hands  
and body lotion.  
The very notion  
should appeal.....

It's a good deal.  
And your legs  
will be as soft as a baby's bum,  
to wrap around mine.  
Yum yum.....

Francesca Johnson

# She Wears Her Elegance Well.....

She wears her elegance well,  
the woman with the long skirt.

Tall and upright  
with an air of confidence and maturity  
she approaches his table,  
tossing her head,  
and sits down gracefully.

Those long, long legs  
fold over one another,  
showing stocking-clad ankles  
and black, classy heels.

His eyes travel up from her slender legs,  
slowly,  
and lock onto her smile.

Eyes join.  
They linger.

He knows.

And she knows.

She raises her glass to his  
and whispers 'Ich liebste du.'

He smiles.

Francesca Johnson

# That Bench

I hold a photograph  
of a bench  
in my hands.

A bench, amongst wild grasses,  
where I once put pen to paper,  
where poetry and anticipation  
flowed.

A bench,  
solitary on a cliff top  
with views as wide as the sky.

I sigh.

And remember.

And then forget.

I am here now,  
sitting on another chair.

I will not go back  
to that bench  
ever again.....

Francesca Johnson

# That Egg...

That egg.

Has it got legs?

It's moving on the table.  
Is it able  
to jump?

I've got the hump now  
because  
it's taken a leap  
of three feet..

An egg

.....no more.

Scrambled on the floor.

Just a yellow mess, no less.  
I'm 'tea-less'

Francesca Johnson

# The Damage Is Done (In Senryu Form)

The damage is done  
I am here with heavy heart  
I will stay apart.

No respect for me  
Nor for lives of other folk  
Trust you want to choke!

Equilibrium  
Out of balance for me now  
I have made a vow,

To never welcome  
You to my happy living.  
Me? No more giving.

All you do is take  
And wreck and ruin all around  
Your niche you have found.

I hope that you'll see  
The error of your wicked ways  
And hopefully your days

Will end on something  
Worthwhile and good. Though I doubt  
You will turn about.

Morning smile is gone  
Now my tears are flowing free  
You have damaged me.....

Francesca Johnson



# The Sad Bastards Club

A happy lot, us Sad Bastards.  
We raise our glasses  
Kick some asses  
Laugh, tell rude jokes  
Give the fire a poke  
And throw on another log.  
We talk of locks  
And untimely clocks  
And stocks and shares  
And dual-purpose chairs  
Play the organ, sing and giggle  
Until 3 in the morning  
When mutually yawning  
We tuck ourselves into bed.  
A happy lot  
Us Sad Bastards.

Francesca Johnson

# The Sadness Of A Swan

Hour

upon hour

upon hour....

...he 'talked' to his own reflection  
in the boat black.

Is he looking  
for his mate?  
Is it too late  
to do this?  
Does he miss  
his swan lady?  
Has she died?  
Or got lost  
along the way?  
Has she gone  
astray?

He's adamant  
that the reflection  
is HER.

Doesn't he know  
she's not really there?

Sadly not.

So he'll keep sailing  
with wings aloft,  
hoping she'll cross  
that barrier.

She's not there....

Sadly.

(Swans pair for life)

Francesca Johnson

# Those Church Bells Of Croydon

You stand like a lily amongst weeds,  
sowing the seeds  
of joy and beauty.  
Mayhem all around  
and yet you abound  
in blissful ignorance.

Tyres on tarmac  
constantly droning, screeching, moaning.

Buses, cars, trams and trains,  
never sleeping,  
all keeping pollution going.

Mobile chats flowing.

The whole a tuneless monotone.....

And yet I hear those proud bells  
chiming out the hour.

Proud, like that pure white flower.

Among weeds.....

Francesca Johnson

# Time To Go Metric

The Government has decreed  
in its infinite wisdom  
that the 24 hour clock  
will be wiped out of our system.

Instead, we'll go metric,  
ten hours to each day,  
and ten for the night time  
'It'll be simpler that way! '

We'll keep all the minutes  
and seconds as well.  
But to keep things exact  
we'll stretch them. They'll swell

to fill up the hours  
which have grown to be longer.  
Even our blood pressure  
has changed; it's less stronger.

Ofcourse, it'll cause us  
a little bit of bother.  
All clocks will be obsolete  
so buy new ones. Oh, brother!

Computers will need to be  
- err - computed anew,  
as will race timers, school days,  
and mobile phones, too.

My lunch soft-boiled eggs  
will turn out to be hard.  
And those Sunday roast potatoes  
will come out all charred!

It's time to go,  
and get ready for bed  
I'll just be a minute  
If I can work out in my head

HOW \*\*\*\*\* LONG THAT WILL BE! !

Francesca Johnson

# To Kill A Polar Bear.....

I have the trophies on the wall,  
the lion, tiger, moose and deer.

But there's a space I need to fill  
and I'm determined that I will  
have POLAR BEAR. I will not veer  
from my desire to get the glory...

Shit to people who call it 'gory'

I want to kill a polar bear.

Emotional tears I do not fear.  
Who cares? I don't. I want the head  
of that white bear. I want it dead!

It's not for me to ponder numbers  
of bears who shed their blood in slumbers.  
I care not for the animal.  
It's glory I seek, admiration deep.  
I kill for pleasure and don't give a damn.  
I want THAT bear. Sentiment, you can keep.

So now I'll load up my killing gun.  
Watch out, polar bear, you can run  
But I'll get you.....

My bullet's ready  
....for your head!

Francesca Johnson

---

Polar...ity of life

I am a polar bear.

In normal life, don't care  
But must be aware  
Eventually....  
Of the potentiality  
Of nasty man.....  
And THAT gun.

Is he after my skin?  
And head.

It's the trophy man.

P'raps if life started agen  
Re: polar bear and man  
On my killing would be a ban  
In society to this man.

George BernardBloodyShaw

Francesca Johnson



# Tree-Mendous

I used to be 5 foot 7  
and now I'm 1 foot 3.  
That bloody ferkin chain saw  
got ME, you see, not the tree! ! ! ! !

Francesca Johnson

# Unidentified Frying Object

What is that on the heat?

Is it meat?

It's sizzling,

frizzling

in the pan.

But what will it be?

Give me a clue.

I can see it's got a pink side

and a mink-coloured side.

I think it could be pork

or chicken breast.

It's a guess.

So I'll uncork

a rose

and hope for the best.

Francesca Johnson

# Wetherby

Whether or not to be  
in Wetherby.

Not for the races,  
no, not those sort of paces  
but a walk  
to the George or the Dragon  
to gorge  
on good company,  
have a pint,  
some fish and chips  
and a look  
at the river.  
Good for the liver?  
Maybe not.  
But good for the soul, he says.  
A delightful stroll,  
hand in hand  
with his woman.

And later, some beautiful loving,  
stroking, moaning, breathless groaning,  
heavenly sighs,  
a rhythm  
between her thighs,  
quickenning to the climax,  
rising, rising,  
to the final release.  
Spent.

His phone rings.  
His wife asks how the overtime is going.  
He tells her it is hectic,  
  
as he always does.

Francesca Johnson

# Wonderfully Fat

It was wonderfully fat,  
squashy to the touch.  
I liked the feeling very much  
as I held it softly in my heart  
and felt the life force throb  
and beat.

Omnipresent, a delight,  
a rhapsody of all that's right.

A comfort blanket, white and clean,  
I'd poke it with my finger  
and luxuriate in its heat.  
I'd linger, feel the glow upon my skin  
and hold the heavenly joy within.

Like candyfloss and cashmere sweaters  
there was a softness  
sensually unfettered  
that tickled and stroked my soul  
and my very being

.....until that day when sadness came.....

Francesca Johnson

# You Whinge.....

You whinge. I won't.  
You drone. I don't.  
I won't impinge  
on your whinge.

Do's and don'ts,  
will's and won't's.

I'll laugh  
because you're daft.

You're a whinging, droning,  
laughing, moaning man.  
And there's only space  
in THIS space for one!

And don't you just love it! ! !

Francesca Johnson