

Barry Quickly

A tale of searching, caring and space

by Clive Grewcock

This piece started life as a short poem about a boy, Barry Quickly, who seemed to spend much of his time locked in his room. This led to an adventure, whether real or perceived, as a part of his imagination.

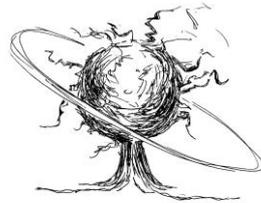
Behind this original poem lay something of a niggle. A niggle that saw the potential to explore the theme further and to look more at an episode in Barry Quickly's tiring life.

From a technical (poetic) point of view I wanted to keep the essence of the original poem. A poem that worked well as a change of pace, whilst a new and different style and approach to Barry Quickly's story is being told alongside, based on haiku form.

Let's not avoid the mention of Barry Quickly being locked in his room. We are talking about a young carer who feels overwhelmed in his life. Not in a manner of cruelty but that of commitment, responsibility and a heart. This is a silent love story in search of understanding. The story begins with the memories in later years; perhaps what was missed but also what has been achieved.

It comes from an experience brought by time that a considered thought is put into the world where one should observe life around us as if watching with an eye up to a spyglass. One would presume that this is advice to give us a chance to see what is ahead, using this tool to prepare for what approaches. As a way to pick up on detail or to look closer upon the surroundings in which we sit.

An elderly acquaintance, from behind a newspaper, explained that it is not the narrow view through the telescope we should be looking at but choose to increase perspective and width of our horizon, by focussing through the wide glass down the barrel to the narrow end. This way we can create frames of our world, some beautiful and some more disturbing but both important to observe and take time to understand. One can see how things are relative to one another. When a dog slips it lead over to your left and the consequence means a mother and child miss their bus by a mere second or two, because of events. It is when one picks up the spyglass to restrict the view by looking through the more comfortable small glass that a choice has been made to pick out singular objects and people, filling in the extended detail with assumption rather than having the foresight to appreciate a bigger – a more complicated picture.



He sank deep into the trench of his corner chair, ° sinking low in the springs. °
The cushions moulded to his familiar shape. ° In a space by the window °
looking out at the lilac cones of buddleia ° cultivated to admire the butterflies pulled into its orbit.
° Admirals on the other side of the glass. °
Spending little time leaving the camouflaged cover of his newspaper °
or inviting folks to join in with his memories. ° Does that make the solitary man odd, °
rude, closed off ° to be avoided?
No label, no box, don't conclude on what ° you don't know. ° A life lived °
is personal with thread to untwine. ° This solitary man, this caring child, °
there is a story, a life that forms its own shape. °
Don't squeeze the unknown to fit what is more comfortable. °
Some deserve the peace, to melt in the foam, °
to be the furniture once and a while. ° To recall a love story, first opened as a young child. °
Not always pleasant but with the pulse from a heart.

i

I don't remove shoes
to dance with growing shadows.
Solitude – cold light

ii

follows out of clouds,
dusty shafts of light guiding.
A darkness coming

iii

like a struggle lost,
knowing that my light is there
beneath heavy shroud.

iv

Restless dead of night,
the dullest mist of darkness
does not block my way.

v

There is a way in
the house – melting through skylight.
Silence brought along,

vi

leaving beck-and-call,
nocturnal nature watching
like faceless jury.

i

How quiet the house.
Built on an age neglected
like its worth out worn.

ii

Someone must have loved
here one time – a family.
Sense spirit of home.

iii

I creep through each room
out of respect, not judging.
Whispering to keep

iv

the sigh of silence,
I slip, move, drift peacefully
down the bare stair treads.

v

Were I not moonlight
would I be an intruder?
Filling the shadows.

i

Remember the day,
your family - moving in.
new shouts and laughter.

ii

When life doesn't fit –
heavy silence, lost in thought
with lingering light.

i

Barry, Barry,
Barry Quickly,
when you were young
you were quite sickly.
Sickly, sickly
Barry Quickly.

ii

Not from the flu
or chicken pox,
but from a stress unseen.
You don't quite fit any box,
young and caring
Barry Quickly.

i

Some say take the weight
from your shoulders, lift your head.
You should spread your wings.

ii

Watch lingering light.
Kaleidoscope of colour
on delicate limbs.

iii

Fleeting on the wall,
jewel on vanilla landscape
you can fly beyond

iv

our reach. The stars blink
from the breeze of outstretched wings.
Life beating deeply.



i

You spent weeks
working in your room,
talking nothing but the moon.
The dark side,
the bright side,
crescent moon, quarter moon.
Waxing and waning,
It got to the point
you dreamed of cosmic sailing.

I wonder if we follow our line of vision we will meet somewhere in the middle, out there in outer space.

I imagine there must be something up there, out there because I hear so much about how small we are in the scheme of this vast universe.

Which strikes me as being strange, it must be wrong because everything I do is so heavy and must be important because it keeps coming in my direction.

As I look up and squint through the brightness of clouds and picture something, someone, somehow squinting back down at me.

Our gaze aiming to meet and make sense. Up until now that hasn't happened. It has missed that meeting and I keep looking further and further upwards.

i

Voices talk beyond
your room, gives safety. Low light,
moonlight softly shows

ii

wallpaper shapes swirl
damp and cold under your touch.
Trace lines, see faces.

iii

Where else could you be?
What place will help lift your heart?
Small space, mind wanders.

iv

Excitement grows.
Look out, gather what you need.
A plan is possible.

i

Five ... tight strap clicking.
Braced for bumpy ride towards
imagination.

ii

Four ... orange nose cone,
Study body – riveted,
porthole – obscured view.

iii

Three ... reflecting life.
Cold bead of sweat running down,
facing pitch alone.

iv

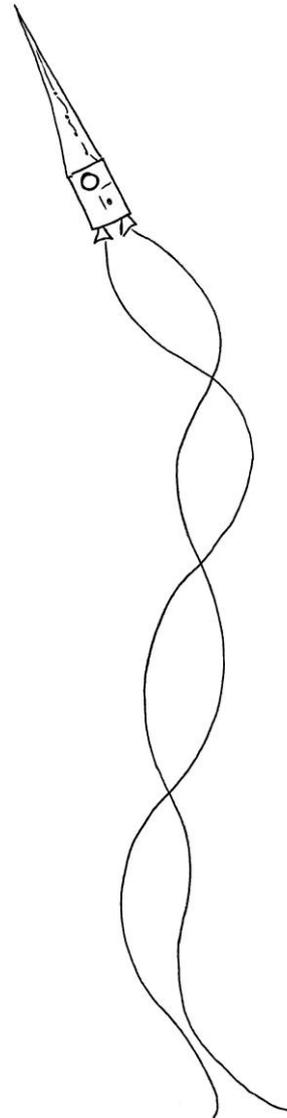
Two ... no second thoughts.
Click, click, click, fuel lights,
exploding silence.

v

One ... ears ring, head bursts,
ground disappears, losing grip,
nowhere to focus.

vi

Shrieks, smells and flashes.
Breaking free from gravity.
Peace – drift - gentle hum.



i

He soon went out

beyond the stars.

Barry Quickly had his sights set

on the other side of Mars.

Distant places unheard of yet.

Barry, Barry,

Barry Quickly,

where have you been,

how did you get?

i

Zero jaleep zakeech,
lamoke zakka zakka zee.
Neaka dool.

ii

Mook peelak lands here.
Steleep stoovak ing creature,
dak our calls dap.

iii

Staring mag blankly.
Much kav think about tralan,
much kav kip terms with.

iv

Searching new places,
learning from experience.
Heart to give and find.

i

A different world
not too close, too much to do.
Put up barriers.

ii

Wish to float across.
There must be laughter waiting,
Wanting, expected.

iii

Dipped brows – who are you?
Scared, not able to let go,
childhood is slipping.

iv

Hold back – commitments.
There is no time to explore,
little time to watch.

v

Never enough sleep,
eyes fixed on tiniest light.
Dust cocooned in hands.

vi

“Where am I?” Closed life –
on a different planet,
caring heart to give.

I am all consumed in a life where we share a familiar language that only family, or those I care for truly understand. I am not talking about the rapid flex and dialect from a foreign tongue but words and fluency that is very familiar, yet care taken to restrain information while holding conversation.

I cast a shadow on the language and make a shield against blows of distress.

I do not always have the energy to write down what angers, upsets or causes confusion. I am protective, so I do not want to draw attention to my place of existence. This language is like an almighty shout of relief or a call for help. Yet out there it takes more to be heard and equal amounts to be understood, despite nodding in the right places and following the words.

The language of which I speak can be unspoken, however this is a silent tongue that needs to be understood and responded to.

i

Visitor jagzee

moolak keep jaal away hak.

Send meerak flieg.

ii

Small berak honf goz,

tasty decrag ob no one

know what life alomz.

iii

Run, hide, stay quiet.

House on your hill is calling,

safety in hard life.

i

Barry, Barry,

Barry Quickly,

back down to Earth.

Returning home, double quickly.

Cut out the homework

and idle chatter,

what comes first is a family matter.

i

Walking down your street,
world subdued as life erupts.
Curtains drawn, warm glow.

ii

Silence whispers cold -
lit by a stream from the moon,
a halo falters.

iii

A wisp grabbed that night.
A rising tide set aside,
rescued tale untold.

I am not always seen at the burst of the bedside alarm when the world has already pulled away its veil. It is not that I intend to *lie in* but that of my inability to find strength from the loss of wind in my expanding body.

There are days that have really become *the norm* when I will look into the cold bathroom sink filled with tepid water and, in silence, carry on looking down through exhausted eyes, not moving because of an overwhelming sense of guilt. As I try to make sense of this normal life.

My breathing makes gentle ripples on the cool surface and break up my reflection, cupped by the bone cold edges of the sink and then the pattern starts over again while I breathe heavily.

My face looking down, looking back like a stranger observing from Earth or out from space. I will soon be ready to work at calming the waters, to face another day.

i

Barry, Barry,
Barry Quickly
never left his house.
Now he's old,
Barry, Barry,
Barry Quickly
won't talk of space, his
days up there remain untold,
when Barry, Barry,
Barry, Barry,
Barry did a solar tour
oh – so – quickly.

ii

Barry, you just sit bemused
in your carpet slippers with
the daily news.
Barry, Barry,
Barry Quickly
saying nothing.