

Amnesia – by Les Barker

I was downstairs – I was composing
And for a moment I was stuck,
But I knew if I went upstairs
I'd got the answer in the book.

I started up the staircase,
I was halfway to the top –
I thought, what am I going upstairs for?
This brought me to a stop.

Now if you're a bit forgetful
You must never stop halfway!
To be in a state of inertia
Brings new questions into play.

I find advancing years
Have placed a limit on my knowing –
And without the clue of motion
I thought... which way was I going?

My hands were empty – no clue there;
I pondered with a frown;
The odds were 50/50 –
I chose up instead of down.

I felt a sense of achievement
When I reached the upper floor,
Though I didn't know if I'd wanted to
Or if I did... what for?

I didn't need the bathroom,
That had not been my intent.
But it gave my trip a purpose
And so being there, I went!

I returned downstairs –
I needed that; it justified my climb.
You may recall – I didn't;
I'd forgotten by this time!

I was downstairs – I was composing
And at that moment I was struck
By the blinding revelation
That I'd been to find a book!

I ran upstairs immediately
And there I quickly learned
I'd been looking for a library book
Which last week I had returned!

I hurried to the library,
Mingled with the staff and the browsers.
I was getting odd looks – I knew something was wrong;
I came straight home and put on me trousers!

Once more I returned to the library,
Went straight to the desk and explained why I came:
"I'm looking for a book on amnesia –
I forget the author's name!"

The librarian shook his head sadly.
"Well", he said, "You've got me there –
We've got a whole shelf on the subject,
But I can't remember where!"

"If you try to find it yourself", he said gravely,
"There are dangers we dare not ignore!
Unravel this ball of string as you go –
We've lost people like you here before!"

I walked out to the car park,
In left hand book newly loaned.
Drove away in a grey Ford Escort –
A type of car I never owned.

I'm sure the owner understands;
I'm sure the owner will forgive.
His car is in the safest hands –
Now let me see... where *do* I live?

It's over now, I'm safely home;
The car has gone for repairs.
And I have got my library book
And taken it upstairs.

I feel a sense of "Deja vu" –
Me brains mislaid a noun.
I'm halfway up the stairs again,
Or am I halfway down?