

Angels Over Elsinore

Collected Verse 2003-2008

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Extract

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Lock Me Away

In the NHS psychiatric test
For classifying the mentally ill
You have to spell 'world' backwards.
Since I heard this, I can't stop doing it.
The first time I tried pronouncing the results
I got a sudden flaring picture
Of Danny La Rue in short pants
With his mouth full of marshmallows.
He was giving his initial and surname
To a new schoolteacher.
Now every time I read the *Guardian*
I find its columns populated
By a thousand mumbling drag queens.
Why, though, do I never think
Of a French film composer
(Georges Delerue, pupil of
Darius Milhaud, composed the waltz
In *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*)
Identifying himself to a policeman
After being beaten up?
But can I truly say I never think of it
After I've just thought of it?
Maybe I'm going stun:
Dam, dab and dangerous to wonk.
You realise this ward you've led me into
Spelled backwards is the cloudy draw
Of the ghost-riders in the sky?
Listen to this palindrome
And tell me that it's not my ticket out.
Able was I ere I saw Elba.
Do you know who I am, Dr Larue?