

FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

My first day at school, mum knitted
for me, a cream balaclava hat.
Her voice still echoes down the years:
'It'll keep your ears warm, that.'

The balaclava took a week to knit.
She worked on it each day.
Why she chose cream, I'll never know.
All the other boys wore grey.

'A soppy colour for a soppy boy.'
The playground taunts just grew.
The balaclava, snatched from my hand,
was flushed straight down the loo.

'Where's your balaclava?' Mum anxiously asked,
when I came home, looking sad.
'How did you lose it?' *'Don't know,'* I said.
'Just wait 'til I tell your dad!'

The bigger boys warned me, if I told,
they'd flush my *head* down the loo.
I was five years old. Too young to die.
Had to spare Mum's feelings, too...

So, I suffered a clout from Dad, instead,
who called me a stupid prat.
But my head survived - and I never
missed my cream balaclava hat.