

Shop Talk

“A large white loaf and two cream buns and two small tins of peas

I think that’s all – oh no – I need a piece of Cheddar cheese”

Out came the cheese board and the wire, to slice it from the block

As I looked round the rows of shelves – a kaleidoscope of stock.

Tins and jars and packets of every shape and size

Cigarettes and matches and sweets before my eyes

Fresh baked bread and buns and cakes looking very good

Joints of ham and bacon kept under covers as they should

I was next, so stepped up to the counter for my turn

I was often sent on errands – another thing to learn

“Twenty Kensitas ” I said – they were Dad’s chosen brand

As Auntie Maisie smiled and took the money from my hand

For twenty shillings made a pound and I could work it out
No calculator at my side – sometimes a little doubt
Numbers weren't my best friends, but words and I got on
We spent time together, reading books was fun

And one day I'd be twenty, I wondered what I'd be
Already younger children seemed so interesting to me
How did they learn to walk and talk, to run and jump and
climb ?

After all those months of - well - just sleeping all the time

And then they learned to read and write, with help along the
way

I wondered then if that might be a part that I could play?

To lead them, to guide them with literacy their goal

And sure enough at twenty I was training for that role.

