

LISTEN WITH MOTHER.

When I was five, Mum said to me,
'There's no percentage in being bad.'
When I asked her what a percentage was,
she said, *'You'd better ask your dad.'*

If you're bad, they'll come and take you away.'
'Where will they take me?' I wanted to know.
'If you don't eat all your carrots up,
they'll take you where you don't want to go.

And if you fall whilst climbing that tree
and break your leg, don't come running to me.
I'm not like your teacher, Mr Ted.
Haven't got eyes in the back of my head.'

I stared at the head of Mr Ted,
but his head only had *two* eyes.
There must be more. Mum said, there were.
And Mums don't tell boys lies...

Her jumble sale of words survive,
a fractured echo from above.
The world outside my window, still
a fearful mix of threat and love.

Melville Lovatt

