

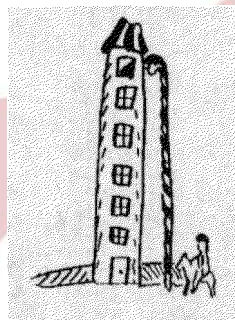
## Poems

It is time for the Poems promised earlier; you have already had one in Lesson Eighteen, the famous *background* Poem to the 1936 documentary film in honour of our Post Office: Night Mail by W.H. Auden.

This was for your entertainment and it might be to your advantage to have another look at it before going on to the Poems we shall consider here, and use in Activity Three.

This coming poem is to read and listen to, a modern fable, a little less idealistic than the original Fairy Story, but you will enjoy reading and listening to it:

### RAPUNZSTILTSKIN



The first poem Rapunzstiltskin by Liz Lochhead is modern and based appropriately on, not one Fairy Story, but two: Rapunzel and Rumpelstiltskin. If you can find them, you might enjoy reading them in partnership with Rapunzstiltskin

Rumpelstiltskin is the story of an ugly dwarf who spun straw into gold for the miller's daughter in return for which she promised to give the dwarf her first born child. Later he relented, if she could guess his name, which she did, much to his mortification...

Rapunzel is the name of a girl imprisoned in a tower, who was able to escape by means of her long hair which she allowed to hang to the ground outside the tower. The Prince who was to rescue her used her hair as a rope in order to secure her escape...

## Rapunztiltskin

& just when our maiden had got  
good & used to her isolation,  
stopped daily expecting to be rescued,  
had come to almost love her tower,  
along comes This Prince  
with absolutely  
all the wrong answers.  
Of course she had not been brought up to look for  
originality or gingerbread  
so at first she was quite undaunted  
by his tendency to talk in strung-together cliché.  
'Just hang on and we'll get you out of there'  
he hollered like a fireman in some soap opera  
when she confided her plight (the old  
hag inside etc. & how trapped she was);  
well, it was corny but  
he did look sort of gorgeous  
axe and all.  
So there she was, humming & pulling  
all the pins out her chignon,  
throwing him all the usual lifelines  
till, soon, he was shimmying in & out  
every other day as though  
he owned the place, bringing her  
the sex manuals & skeins of silk  
from which she was meant, eventually,  
to weave the means of her own escape.  
'All very well & good,' she prompted,  
'but when exactly?'  
She gave him till  
well past the bell on the timeclock.  
She mouthed at him, hinted,  
she was keener than a T.V. quizmaster  
that he should get it right.  
'I'll do everything in my power,' he intoned, 'but  
the impossible might  
take a little longer.' He grinned.  
She pulled her glasses off.  
'All the better  
to see you with, my dear?' he hazarded.  
She screamed, cut off her hair.  
'Why, you're beautiful', he guessed tentatively.  
'No, No, No!' she shrieked & stamped her foot so  
hard it sank six cubits through the floorboards.  
'I love you?' he came up with  
as finally she tore herself in two.

**Liz Lochhead**

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