

The Supermarket Queue

The supermarket queue grows longer and longer,
The coins in her pocket grow smaller and smaller.
A last look at the 'reduced to clear' shelf,
planning a meal from out- of-date sausage,
strawberry yoghourt and cheap oven chips.

Stacked by the checkout are packets of sweets
£1 for one, buy two, get one free.
The kids can both read, eyes fill with hope,
they don't say a word, they've been taught better.
just watch as she fingers the coins in her pocket.

Here's a fifty pence piece, oh great, here's another.
Is this a ten or is it a two? With luck it's a ten, her
fingertips measure the weight of the coins,
sensitive now to the head of the queen,
the rampant lion engraving.

Don't take risks, stand in the queue, chin up
try and look confident. Usher the kids through
the checkout soft handed. Only half what you need,
but what can you do? Stand in the queue with
a heart full of dread and a backbone so straight
It simulates steel.

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