

Collecting Her

Last night, when I was sat on our rooftop,
I thought I heard you call my name,
Like you used to when I was little,
Like you did when you answered my long-distance calls.

And we played, as we did,
Tennis on the moors and Crazy Eight in the evenings.
The humbug mints and the rock cakes piled high in the tin,
Dancing the square tango around the kitchen,
And the sunny drives, drifting off to sleep,
As we travelled north from Looe after a day on the beach,
My head bobbing side to side in the August sun.

The pocket money toys and the souvenir dolls,
Brought back from coach trips abroad,
The loud tick of the bedroom clock and the bright, pink fluffy bathroom mat,
The crunchy marmalade toast and the funny curved grapefruit knife,
(I'd never seen one of those before),
And the chink of the teacups in the morning as I woke. My Disney glass.

Last night, I'm sure I heard you call my name,
But perhaps it was just the sigh of the stars as they collected you,
Not yet, I said, it's not finished!
This story doesn't have a title,
This play doesn't have a cast,
This song doesn't have an ending...
But when I heard you call my name, I couldn't help myself, I answered:
"Hello, Nan"
And perhaps, just perhaps, you heard me?

Jenny Ayres