

School Journeys in my Head

by J. Richards

I used to go on foot to school
 It used to do me good
 And sometimes I would run a bit
 Or jog there if I could

And as I went I'd like to see
 The sights along the way:
 Six ducklings with their mother
 Two red squirrels run and play

But one day, as a present,
 I was given a real treat –
 A bike with big red wheels
 That I could cycle through the street

The feeling was fantastic
 For it felt like I could fly
 As my face shot through the Autumn leaves
 That tumbled from the sky

Each trip was an adventure
 To secret, far off lands
 Where shipwrecks bore their treasure
 On uncharted, golden sands

As time moved on and I move school
 The distance was too far
 And Mum began to take me
 Every morning in the car.

But, though it had four wheels,
 I soon discovered to my glee
 It was a giant pirate ship
 That sailed the stormy sea

Each day was a new voyage
 With new treasure to be found
 Concealed inside an iron chest
 Somewhere beneath the ground.

The aerial was really
 A one hundred foot high mast
 With skull and crossbones flapping
 As the salty air rushed past.

And each time we would stop at lights
 I'd up and go ashore
 And with me I would take two hundred men
 Or maybe more.

I'd lead the way through hostile jungle
 Never once afraid
 With all my faith in one small map
 Some other rogue had made

When Dad's job changed it also meant
 Another change for us
 For, once he had the car,
 We had to go to school by bus

But that was fine,
 For, upstairs, at the front we'd sit each day
 And nervously count down
 Before the rocket shot away.

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
 Off we go!
 Although I always felt that
 For a rocket it was slow

But once I closed my eyes
 I was thrown back into my seat
 There was jelly in my cheeks
 And pins and needles in my feet

The buildings shrank and disappeared
 And then the mountains, too,
 The land became a sea of green
 Amid a sea of blue

Our bus would make a sharp right turn
 And, as we took the bend
 Our lunar orbit took us round the moon
 From end to end

Then, once we'd reached our bus stop
 And the playground was in sight
 We stepped down for a moon walk
 In the black of lunar night.

When Dad bought Mum a run-around
Mum couldn't hide her grin
But this was not a pirate ship
To sail the high seas in

This time we joined a rota
And, with friends, I had such fun
As captain of our bobsleigh
On the icy home-school run

Each time Mum turned the steering wheel
We rode high round a bend
And as we went
Spectators oohed and ahed us 'til the end.

It wasn't long before Mum's car
Conked out, as did the rota
And, once again, I had to get to school
Without a motor

My Mum, no longer wanting
To go in each day by bus
Told me I should get up early
And bike in without a fuss.

But what Mum did not know
Was that I had no bike at all –
Only a flying carpet
From a merchant in Nepal

I'd wake up as the sun rose
And I'd polish the red wheels
Of the carpet that would take me
Over houses, lakes and hills

When, two months later, we moved house
I had no need for biking
And as I walked, again, to school
I tried some highland hiking

The Sun-drenched Scottish countryside
Was mine, alone, to tread
And on I went enjoying
More school journeys in my head.