

Hope Road

Anne Clark

So these are circumstances
Leading to my sorry tale
I was in a town I didn't know
I'd arrived there by rail
It all began a week before-
The joys of Saturday night-
An invite to a party
Or watching The Price Is Right
Opting for a soiree
For the first time in a year
Mixed badly with the revellers
Mixed Bacardi, wine and beer
The room moved back and forwards
The dancers did the same
Found refuge in a corner
That's when he asked my name

Well this is very nice, I thought
Smiling through the haze
As we talked of Auguste Rodin
Through to Harold Pinter's plays
Said he played piano
Said his name was Steve
And in that situation
Why shouldn't I believe
That he really lived so far away
Had to make a move for home
Scribbled down his address
Said he didn't have a phone
Would I like to come to dinner
On Friday of next week
To this I said I'd love to
As he kissed me on the cheek

That night I felt so happy
Excited through and through
See! The company of strangers
Doesn't always leave you blue
Stumbled home contented
Like a cat that got the cream
Wake up a little weary
But I knew it was no dream
The next few days were anxious
What could I find to wear?
What happens if I arrive
And there is no Hope Road there?
My friend said don't be silly
No one does things like that
Now will you get a move on
And take off that stupid hat!

Made sure I set out early
Made sure I caught the train
Got out at the right station
Then of course came down the rain
Followed the directions
Exactly as he said

Asked people if they knew Hope Road
But they just walked on ahead
I turned left at the junction
Took the fork off to the right
Straight over at the crossroads
Then down to the traffic lights
Must have walked those streets for hours
In the dark and in the cold
Before I really could accept
There was no place called Hope Road

So here I am alone again
Indoors by myself
The TV, plants, books and I
All neatly on the shelf
Next time I'll be more cautious
Next time I won't be fooled
It's another of those basic things
You're never taught at school
Let this be a warning
As you wander through the world
It makes no difference who you are
Be you boy or be you girl
Be very, very careful
When people seem so nice
It's not now that it's expensive
Later on you pay the price
There's no Hope Road