

Deawn Eawr Alley



POEMS
IN LANCASHIRE DIALECT
BY
SALLY JAMES

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BOHAN

Foreword by Jim Bennett

If you are not already familiar with dialect poetry this is a fine introduction to the genre. Sally James is a Lancashire poet who writes many of her poems in the indigenous dialect and idioms of Lancashire. She is also a very fine poet writing in Standard English, so we are privileged to have her working to preserve the Lancashire dialect and her ability as a poet brings a freshness and depth to these poems which might otherwise be lacking.

The Lancashire dialect grew from the mills and fields of an area where a first hand knowledge of poverty and hard work was the norm for most people.

With the advent of radio and TV and wider travel, local dialect and usage began to fade. It is down to collections like this, and poets like Sally James to help preserve part of what is our history and heritage.

For me the dialect poetry of Sally James is unique. As you read it you become aware of the voice of the poet, it emerges so strongly that you forget the difficulty of the words and begin to hear the sounds as if they are being recited for you, which in some respects they are.

So here it is *Deawn Eawr Alley* poems in the Lancashire dialect by a superb poet Sally James.

electronic edition

Introduction

I write in both standard English and Lancashire Dialect and have been published in various anthologies, e-line magazine, small press magazines and read on local radio. These are a few of my dialect poems.

Sally James (2007)

Website <http://www.sallyjames.co.uk/>

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A bun in the oven.

Am gooin to mi Auntie Annie's
I like her, she's big un fat,
She allus has er pinny on
Un her hair done in a plait.

Yer can allus smell her cookin
Is it apple er jam tart?
Er maybe rhubarb crumble
Eh! It nearly breaks mi heart.

At last she'll oppen th'oven dooer
It smells as it's from heaven,
Lovely scones un currant cake
Eh! Am glad am only seven.

She'll sit me deawn ert side ert grate
Un say, "Ast washed thi paws?
Well here thi are, now eat it up
That's wor ave cooked it for."

Eh! A love mi Auntie Annie
A know she's big un fat,
Un a know she's gor er foncey mon
With er big black trilby hat.

(cont.)

But he's like me, he likes his grub,
Un mi Auntie Annie too,
So don't worry Auntie Annie,
I'll not tell on you.

What's matter Auntie Annie?
Why's yer eye all bruised un black?,
Why's all yer Sunday clothes
Tied up i that big sack?.

Tell mi Auntie Annie
When your Sam come home from t'pit,
Did he see yer wi yer foncy mon
Then nearly have a fit?

But Auntie Annie only sighed
As she rolled her pastry flat,
"It's him a love who eats mi cake
Un wears a black trilby hat."

"Well I never said," I cried aloud
But Auntie only laughed,
"Don't fret thisel, it's over now
But thar uncle must be daft."

"He never liked mi currant cakes,
Mi tarts un apple crumble,
But him wi't trilby hat
Well, a never heard him grumble."
(cont)

"So now am movin out o' town
Un thal nee'r see mi no mooer,
Am off wi him wi't trilby hat
That's hangin oon yon door."

"But Auntie Annie , I love thi too
Although thas big un fat,
Through eatin all them cakes
Wi him wi't trilby hat."

Well I nee'r saw Auntie Annie
Till I was nine er ten,
Er wer walkin deawn yon street
Un didn't haif look well.

So a said, "Hey Auntie Annie,
Dost remember me?"
"Eh lad," said Auntie Annie
"Ave got a lad like thee.

His only two, 'ere tek a look,"
Un in't yon pram wer sat,
A babby eatin' currant cake
Wi a small black trilby hat.

A woman's werk

“Am gooin wom, “ mi mam sed, when erd cooked mi faither's tay,
“Am gooin wom, so listen tert things have got ter say,
am teekin Fred, un Sissy too, un Charlie un eawr Sid
un cat, unt dog, unt goldfish, un mi bonnie little brid

then thee con sup ar neet, un lay i bed ar day,
fer me, am gooin wom, when have sidied up thi tay,
un clennd eawt mi oven, un donkey stoned mi step,
so don't thi try un stop mi, cos have had enough by eck

am fed up wi thi pit clooers, thrown deawn ont kitchen floor,
un am fed up er hangin um, ont nail ert back ert door,
am fed up wi thi pit dirt, thi clogs, un dirty hands,
un am sick er listnin trumpit, tha plays int colliery band.

am fed up wi thi whippet, cos its never won a race,
un am fed up wi thi pigeons, cos loft's a sheer disgrace,
am fed up wi thi drinkin, black stout un raisin beer,
so am gooin ter mi mams, un tomorrow al not bi here

al just finish Sissy's bedroom off, cos er lino needs er shine
then al do eawr Charlie's washin, un hang it eawt ont line,
then when have pur ort kids ter bed, un bathed um ont peg rug,
un made sure thiv sed the prayers, al tuck um up reet snug.

(cont)

un crawl inter mi cosy nook, un darn thi holey sock
before a tackles th'ironin, cos eawr Sissy needs er frock,
then when't fires last embers deed deawn int fire grate
al clamber up that wooden hill, cos am tired, un it's ter late

un don't try any funny business, cos am sick to dearth er thee
sittin theer int rockin cheer as quiet as con be,
what's that tha sez, tha luvs mi, neaw, don't look at mi like that,
fer tha knows am gooin wom, so al fotch mi coat an hat

have pur um theer ont sideboord, so ther ready fer int morn,
then when thas on thi own, thal know that thas bin born,
neaw am gooin up to bed, cos am tired, an it's ter late
un al bi off tomorrow mornin, when ave clennd that dirty grate,

un scraped eawt th' esshole, un got thi jack bit tin,
un pur in thi jam butties, then browt thi pit clogs in,
neaw have towd thi Jack fert last time, am gooin ter mi mams
so Jack don't look at mi like that, cos a don't know weer a am,

but ones thing fer certin, when tha looks at mi a knows,
this luv that wi have allus shared has thorns just like er rose
so al put mi hat un coat back, fer a remember't day wi wed
un promises wi made Jack, so ferget them things a sed.”

Armcheer caewboy

Sittin bi the fireside in his favorite armchair
wit television blastin eawt, i doesn't have er care.
Hi jumps abeawt, un dodges, the bullets us thi fly
then gallops on his horse, givin eawt er gaspin sigh.

Fer his hero lies sore wounded, wi un arrow in his chest
wi bright red blood or spurtin eawt, ter soil his tattered vest.
Mi faither teckin or this in, yells eawt ter "Shoot him back, "
fert wagun train un't cavalry ul soon bi on his track.

Wit whistlin arrows flyin passed, hi dodges un hi darts
(dad's never bin auditioned yet but likes the hero's parts.)
At last the show is over, dad groans un reads his book
of course it is er western, tha con see his dreamy look.

"Tea's ready neaw," mi mother calls, dad puts his book erside
un sits deawn ert the table, un er little smile he'll hide.
Fer it isn't beans un coffee; un steak cooked red un rare
un mother isn't, "Saucy Lil" wi wide eyed sexy stare.

It's back ter be-in civilized, un eightin dainty cakes
wi't knife, un't fork, un't tea-cup, un't napkin bi his plate
Fer his white shirt is immaculate, wi no blood stains on his vest
no holsters on his hips, un no arrows in his chest
bespectacled, clean shaven, polished clogs tha have no spurs
un no saddle sore behind, from his comfy fireside chair.

Song er love

Clogs er just er sort er folks wear upon ther feet,
in days gone by yer'd hear um as thi clattered deawn the street.
In't misty dawn, er't breighk er day in't early mornin hour,
tha'd hear them clogs cum clatterin in't sun, un't rain, un't shower.
Ter't cotton mills, un't factory gates, ter't pits un't pit head gears,
fer amidst the singin er the birds, the song er clogs tha'd hear.
The song were like er melody, tha echoes neaw through time,
remindin me er yesterday, un memories er mine.
Fer no longer neaw the sound er clogs is heard i Lancasheer,
but ter me it wer er song er love like music ter mi ear.
Un though King Cotton's long bin dead, un't weaver's lost his skill,
un though no slag heaps con bi seen, un't windin gears er still.
The memory it lingers on er that early mornin song,
er't folks er marchin proudly in't early mornin throng.
Un though them days er dead un gone un will no longer be,
them marchin clogs a memory that's precious neaw ter me,
So when a hears er melody in er Lancasheer refrain,
a thinks abeawt them clatterin clogs, un't bird song once again.
Fer though them years have flown erway un er no longer here,
the memory 's like er melody, un music ter mi ear.

Alternative medicine

Dogs are meant fer strokin,
un in er funny sort er way
when strokin its soft gentle fur
yer cares just fly away.

It's as if some hidden tension
is eased bi strokin hair
transferred from dog ter human
is the abolisher of care.

So when tha feelin stressful
un life just gets thi deawn
un 't face that thi er wearin
is just er doleful freawn.

Don't trundle ter thi doctors
he'll just write thi er prescription
fer portions, pills, un medicines
in or manner er description.

Just ger er dog un stroke it
un shower it wi affection
it'll wag its tail, un lick thi
when tha's made the reet connection.

(cont)

Un tha'll allus have er faithful friend
until its deein day
so get them pills un portions
un throw the lot erway.

Fer tha con never ger addicted
to er hairy tranquilizer
un the er no hidden side effects
in er four-legged sympathizer.

Commin wom fromt' pit

Eeh lad, whats that skrikin like that fer
thi eyes ul be ar red un raw
stop mekkin that noise like er babby
er thi mother ul gi thi wot for.

Neaw, thi must be skrikin fer summat
the's summat that's makin thi yell
neaw sit on mi knee like a good lad
fer am certin am not gooin ter tell.

Aye lad, tha's breakin thi heart
un a know, tha just corn't understand
so here, wipe thi eyes, wi mi hanky
sted er wit back er thi hand.

Neaw spit it or out, tell thi gran, neaw
un a promise, al nor have er fit
bur a know it must be summat
fer thi dad's not come wom yet from't pit.

A saw um ar runnin when't siren
went off with a long wailing cry
then a heard an explosion like thunder
that sent ar that smook intert sky.

(cont)

Neaw lad, just bi brave, cos al tell thi
no news, is good news, that knows,
so, sit thi sel deawn on mi knee neaw,
un wipe snot, from't end er thi nose.

Tha's not said er word, fer a lung time
un't fire's almost eawt, i yon grate
but mi shawl is keepin us warm lad
un't candle u'll burn until late.

Hush, summat is happinin eawtside
a con hear some pit clogs in't backyard
so lad wakken up, un be brave neaw
un owd tight, ter mi hand, very hard.

Neaw it's me, who's skriken instead lad
cos a corn't si so much i this leet
only shadows dancin on't walls
un't gas lamps dim flicker in't street.

Eeh lad, what's that laughin like that fer
tha's soon changed thi tune, un am glad
a con just make him eawt, his cum wom lad,
so run wom, ter mi son, un thi dad.

Song er love

Clogs er just er sort er folks wear upon ther feet,
in days gone by yer'd hear um as thi clattered deawn the street.
In't misty dawn, er't breighk er day in't early mornin hour,
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So when a hears er melody in er Lancasheer refrain,
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Fer though them years have flown erway un er no longer here,
the memory 's like er melody, un music ter mi ear.

awr Willie's jam butty

"Eeh lad thas gor a mucky face
un thi nose is runnin too,
thi mam's ert shop ter get some stores
un am lookin after you.

Neaw before thi starts am tellin thi
ave clennd mi heawse or through,
un ave donkey stoned mi steps
so no messin up from you.

Neaw tek thi sticky paws
off mi sideboord cos it's clen,
ave polished it this mornin
un al ne'er do it agen.

The's bread un jam int pantry
un best butter in a pot,
so bi careful eawr tha spreads it
cos that's or ther is ave got".

(cont)

Neaw Willie comes in wi er doerstep
that's greawt big chunks er bread,
splattered wi best butter
un oozin jam or red.

"Don't sit deawn ont yon sofa
wi or that sticky jam,
tha'll daub it on mi cushions
un then a'll tell thi mam.

Here sit thi deawn ert side ert grate
un let thi bread crumbs faw,
ont rug then a con sweip it up".
fer this wer grannies law.

Willie glared ert granny
i were sure shi couldn't see,
un whispered summut naughty
beginnin wi a B.

His mouth it were a watterin
i loved his jam un bread,
un his teeth were poised fer bitin
when his granny turned un said.

(cont)

"If tha dern't eight up thi dinner
thi mam'l ave er fit,
tha'll ne'er get big un strung
like thi dad un werk int pit.

The's thousuns er folks starvin
in them far forin lands,
they'd gobble up thi dinner
they'd snatch it eawt thi hand".

Neaw Willie wi is sticky paws
un jam or reawnd is chops,
sittin crosslegged on the carpet
so nor a crumb he'll drop.

Looks hard ert granny standin theer
wit dustpan in er hand,
thinks wor he'd do fert starvin
in then far forin lands.

"Well if thi wants mi butty
wi this blackcurrunt jam
al wrap it up un send it,
then they'll not bi hungry, will thi gran?"

Layoles fer meddlers.

Wor er layoles fer meddlers?
Cos it's allus flummoxed me
when a wer just a little lass
mi gran said "Just yer see."
Cos if a said, "What's in them drawers
er underneath that sink
er what's wrapped up i that big box."
Er didn't even think
er just said, "Layoles fer meddlers."
So wor er layoles fer meddlers?
Cos have never yet feawnd eawt
un if a asked mi gran
shid just gi mi er cleawt
un sey, "The layoles fer meddlers."
Am grown up neaw, er granny too
kids rummage reawnd mi heawse
ther inter this, un inter that
so tha'll offen eer mi greawse
when thi sey, "What's in that cupboard
er underneath that sink?"
A just turns reawnd, a looks at um
a doesn't even think
a sez, "The layoles fer meddlers."
" Layoles fer meddlers?"
The puzzled looks just tell
that despite or this education
tha knows, they don't know as well.

Lonely hearts snub

or
in search of my better half

Am attractive un vivacious,
professional, un slim,
am four foot two, wi eyes er blue,
un am hopin ter meet HIM.

He must certainly bi good lookin,
wi eyes er green er breawn,
bi articulate, un cheerful,
er reet slicker in the teawn.

He must bi educated, uncomplicated,
strung, aye, un very wise,
un he musn't have false teeth,
er two skennin blood shot eyes.

A don't want him chewin bacco,
un he musn't even smook,
un if he spits int fire,
he con tek his flamin ook.

He mun make no vulgar noises,
that means, he musn't burp er fart,
fer if he does, a certainly,
won't gi that mon mi heart.
(cont)

He must er course be single,
er divorced, it doesn't matter,
be teetotal, wi no belly,
though, a like um er bit fatter.

He must respect me, love me,
aye, un do as I command,
un shower me wi kisses,
bur only on mi hand.

Neaw, these er my credentials,
un, if thi fits this fine description,
please, ring me at this number,
if tha has, no notable affliction.

Tha con meet mi, bi the teawn hall clock,
un mun wear, er white carnation,
bur I'll not wear mi wig, because,
have got this awful irritation.

Me peg leg, I'll leave int boot ert car,
mi glass eye, in mi purse,
cos I don't want thi ter si mi,
lookin ert mi worst.

(cont)

Un, if tha feels romantic,
am afraid, tha'll have to sheawt,
fer me teeth, have gon't bi mended,
un mi hearin aid, keeps fallin eawt.

Bur, in case tha still cor'nt si me,
I'll wear, a bloomin rose,
fer am four foot two, wi one eye er blue,
un wi er wart upon mi nose!