

*Violets  
up on the  
Hill*



*Assorted Poems by:*

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## Wherstead

1970: Nature conservancy year

I remember the violets up on the hill  
I wonder do they grow there still  
Or have the planners got that far  
And made extra room for the motor car  
The violets grew in the churchyard too  
It's on a rise with a lovely view  
Are the chestnut trees still there today  
We always came home from school that way  
How I remember that lovely lane.  
Called Bobbits Hole is it just the same?  
Where the trees make a tunnel and birds always sing  
With its carpet of bluebells in the spring

One day I'll go back to the parks and see  
Those fishponds where we wandered free  
And picked primroses and found kingcups  
I hope no-one's gone and filled them up  
Or polluted the water or anything  
Do moorhens still nest there in the spring?  
Ram meadows behind the parsonage set  
The scene for hours I'll never forget  
With the smell of the wild herbs on the air  
And I once saw a nest of coots down there

With cousin Liz, she lived at Lees Farm  
What fun we had in their great old barn  
Sliding down the big heaps of hay  
She tells me her home's not there today  
The Mansion stood empty and full of decay  
Just a wonderful place for us children to play  
The old house lent itself to our games  
But sometimes it scared us just the same  
With its empty cellars and outside profusion  
Or creepers and shrubs in tangled confusion  
In the cellars and grounds now, children can't hide  
They've mended it, fenced it, and built on the side  
A vast concrete box all windows and sills  
Made a big happy home, (for electricity bills)

Behind our cottage and over the hill  
We found wild snowdrops and daffodils  
In a little copse we called Joes Wood  
I'd go back to see it but what's the good?  
I doubt if there's anything there at all  
Unless it's a car-park or bingo hall

That old river gave us so much pleasure  
We children searched the shore for treasure  
We found lots of corks and wood besides  
Left behind by receding tides  
We played with seaweed, paddled and swam  
Picnic'd beside it laughed and ran  
Is it the same or has someone planned  
A housing estate along the Strand  
Or perhaps they've turned it into a dock  
With a great warehouse that's sure to block

That wonderful view, of value to some  
If it hasn't already it's sure to come  
We must make progress or so they say  
Things must all change in the world today  
We must go on, must have constant movement  
But is it really all an improvement?  
Old houses go just like the Lees  
We grub up hedgerows, cut down trees

We get rid of anything that sells  
Someone's stolen the church plate (and the bells)  
But however much the planners plan  
And the farmers plough every inch they can  
However much they soil or pillage  
They won't despoil my childhood village  
They won't destroy a single tree  
Just as long as I have a memory

*(This poem has been printed a couple of times before, though each time it seemed to have had a couple of changes made which did not look quite right - for example changing "planned" to "built" which obviously doesn't rhyme with "Strand" ... - This is the original version.)*

## Wherstead II

Just a tiny little village sitting on the edge of town  
Although it has no claim to fame, no people of renown  
For all its Sons and Daughters who have had to fly the nest  
It will always be their natural home, the place they love the best

While they toil in towns and cities, make a living in industry  
They'll be dreaming of their village, of the quiet tranquillity  
Of the slowly changing seasons, of the harvest and the spring  
Reliving childhood memories they'll be back there once again

Wandering over parkland, gathering mushrooms sticks and flowers  
Perhaps sitting by the river soaking up the summer hours  
As they wrestle with machinery the constant crash and slam  
Look out on bricks and concrete and miles of macadam

They look forward to the time, the long awaited day  
When they leave the towns and cities, to quietly slip away  
Back to that well loved village, just on the edge of town

Where they will find a welcome, where every face is known  
And leave behind the madness, of the hurrying throng  
To end their days in peace, in the place where they belong

