

Napoleon's Travelling Bookshelf

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Penned in the Margins

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*For mum.
Sorry - not that many happy poems.*

Napoleon's Travelling Bookshelf

'Quite, quite,' thought Too-ticky with a little sigh. 'It's always like this in their adventures. To save and be saved. I wish somebody would write a story sometime about the people who warm up the heroes afterwards.'

Moominland Midwinter, Tove Jansson

Wild Boar of New York

Remembering how Aristotle felt
metal-bound and hard to the throat,

the swart boar flirts the stoop.
Snaffling for trash, his ridgeback wig

stands stiff as a disguise.
He bides his time.

Haunted by the cuff of his feet
in sweet grass,

the burst flute of Aphrodite's calls
as he put her young god to the gore.

The Boy Who Read Homer to His Cat

Hengist the family cat is dying,
His blue-stone paws pulled tight
beneath his chin, he has taken notes

on the benefits of mewling,
decided quietly, now, he shall abstain.
Over his head you breathe

hot deities; the warm,
narrative assurances of Sleep
and Dream. But in his language

light does not seep beneath doorways;
it heaves from shouldered torches
across the broken fields at dawn.

He thinks about the hardening of earth
about a barrow. The point
at which his eyes will narrow

to the split-width of a star
and he shall raise his rift of fur
against the northern winds,

his soul flying out over the whale-road,
unfettered by these wordy consolations
of wandering and return.