

Minister for Exams

When I was a child I sat an exam.
This test was so simple
There was no way I could fail.

Q1. Describe the taste of the Moon.

It tastes like Creation, I wrote,
it has the flavour of starlight.

Q2. What colour is Love?

Love is the colour of the water a man
lost in the desert finds, I wrote.

Q3. Why do snowflakes melt?

I wrote, they melt because they fall
on to the warm tongue of God.

There were other questions.
They were as simple.

I described the grief of Adam
when he was expelled from Eden.
I wrote down the exact weight of
an elephant's dream

Yet today, many years later,
For my living I sweep the streets
or clean out the toilets of the fat
hotels.

Why? Because constantly I failed
my exams.
Why? Well, let me set a test.

*Q1. How large is a child's
imagination?*

*Q2. How shallow is the soul of the
Minister for exams?*

Brian Patten