

Good Neighbours and Bad Friends by Joe Reynolds

They give me a room now, a sanctuary,
Not too big but I'm grateful for small mercies,
I got a bed and a window and a stove to cook, and a place to keep me clothes,
They give me a little money and some vouchers for food,
I'm not afraid, I'm waiting for me papers to come.

I been here a week now, most people is nice, one lady give a pan,
Another bring me some chicken soup and some bread.
I had to wash the door Monday, it was dirty and smelled,
I'm not afraid, I'm waiting for me papers to come.

The door rat-a-tat on Tuesday, nobody there but I hear footsteps run,
Maybe somebody just having fun,
A pigeon, dead on the step; ruffled feathers, bit of blood; I place it in the bin.
I'm not afraid, I'm waiting for me papers to come.

A parcel come Wednesday, pushed through the door,
I open it quick with anticipation, have my papers come? It's just dog shit wrapped up,
I dropped it and had to scrub the rug,
I'm not afraid, I'm waiting for me papers to come.

On Thursday I see him first, chase him back to his home and rat-a-tat that door,
Lady in a dressing gown and slippers looking tired,
I said, 'Look what your boy done, he don't frighten me.'
And I lift up me dress, right there on the step,
And show her the scar that the bullet left,
She crying and invite me in saying sorry over and over and he's not a bad boy,
He just fell in with bad friends and I put my hand up and said, 'Stop! Stop. Stop.
Surely friends should be good not bad, bad is for enemies.'
And she ask me in, made a cup of tea, every problem in the world can be solved with tea.

And she call in her boy and I showed him the scar,
Showed him the wound and he squirmed,
'You think a bit of dog shit gonna scare me?
They took my baby before it was born, took my husband, took my son,
Took me for a toy.'
But I'm not afraid, I'm waiting for me papers to come.

And we sat on her sofa, tears dilute the tea,
And she hug me, the first hug I'd had since that day,
And she asked who it was that had done that to me.
It was my neighbours, educated women make them afraid.
She smile, 'Neighbours? Neighbours should be good not bad, bad is for enemies.'
But I'm not afraid, me papers have come.