

Catherine Hettinger, Inventor of the Fidget Spinner

By Steve Denehan

My daughter held it up to him  
an offering of sorts  
it spun, perfectly balanced  
almost silently, on her index finger

my father looked at it, entranced  
*What is it?*

my daughter explained it to him  
that it was a fidget spinner  
that children like them  
that they are helpful for people  
calming, soothing  
a kind of magic

my father took it  
put it on the coffee table  
pushed it gently  
it spun  
and spun and spun

he said that it was a marvellous thing  
was amazed when I told him how they had caught on  
how every child had one and sometimes more  
he shook his head  
said that the inventor must be a millionaire

I checked it up on my phone  
the fidget spinner was invented  
by someone called Catherine Hettinger  
she made nothing from it  
as the patent had expired  
just before the craze had hit

my father became furious  
*Typical! The rich get richer! The world is so unfair and always tilted towards those who need it least. It's all loopholes and cut corners and it always, always comes down to money.*

my daughter pointed at the fidget spinner  
still spinning on the table  
*Look Grandad, it's still spinning!*  
we looked at it, all of us  
my father, my mother, my daughter, my wife, myself  
it spun on  
and on and on  
until my father, still gazing at the fidget spinner, said, softly  
*You win some, you lose some I suppose.*

## Poem About Miles

By Steve Denehan

Nobody knew his surname  
he was just Miles  
middle-aged  
no wife  
no kids  
no lawn  
no flowers  
no car  
just a garden of cement  
and a bicycle

for the whole of my childhood  
he emerged from his side gate  
cycling  
to work, every morning  
from work, every evening  
I never saw him walking  
not once  
he'd give a nod  
half a smile  
sometimes  
he never knew  
that he was a kind of hero  
to me  
that he was easy in himself  
seemed to have things figured out  
Buddha on a bicycle

when he died there were rumours  
that he had been there for a month, undiscovered  
melting into his armchair  
the smell had alerted the neighbours  
my mother went to the funeral  
to be surprised at the turnout  
I asked her what his surname was  
saw shame fall on her  
she had already forgotten  
but it didn't matter  
I knew  
that Miles would not have cared  
one way  
or the other

Butt

By Steve Denehan

The farmer calls her Butt  
I don't know why  
but  
I do know that she is no ordinary cow  
her skull is misshapen  
oversized  
people come to see her  
they point and marvel  
she doesn't care

there is an electric fence between us  
the farmer told me once that cows can smell the electricity  
not Butt as  
with a high-pitched *moo*  
she jumps clear off the ground  
lands with a world-shaking thump  
continues chewing  
the shock and sizzle  
immediately forgotten

I read somewhere that, between them, cows  
produce one hundred and fifty billion kilograms of methane  
each and every year  
a greenhouse gas  
damaging to our climate  
I tell Butt this  
she chews a mouthful of grass  
there are clouds in her eyes