

## Family Bonds

By Amy Clennell

He raises his palm to stifle his gaping jaw  
while the groan in his throat is purposely suppressed.  
Well practised, this has happened frequently before,  
but today he struggles to cope with extra stress  
as yet another yawn emerges.

When he lifts the lids of his dewy eyes again  
he sees indistinct images convulse and shift,  
like gazing through rain streaked windows on a fast train.  
Despite all efforts his consciousness sails adrift  
as finally he succumbs to sleep.

The sea, sand castles, ice-creams, Mum holding his hand,  
he is dreaming how carefree their lives used to be.  
Yet why roles have reversed he fully understands  
when a shake of his shoulder wrecks reality  
as he peers up at his teacher's face.

Mr Miller is definitely not amused  
and sentences him to two hours in detention.  
All protests and pleadings are totally refused.  
He must pay the price for his lack of attention;  
stay behind to finish his homework.

Every concern is completely compounded;  
cook dinner, wash up, ablutions, help her to bed,  
his usual routine abruptly confounded.  
Panic and anxiety spin round in his head,  
who will care for her if he's not there?