

JOHN HILL

---

## Unexpected Item

Rolling on to tarmacadamed acres  
where vehicles play hopscotch for safe haven.  
Passengers embark, as consumer partakers.  
“All aboard” the Captain’s cool icebreaker  
from the good ship Maypole liner  
moored for safety in permanent dry dock.

Moving stairs articulate and quietly uplift,  
conveniently convey to upper deck.  
Wire baskets, shopping trolleys,  
bags for life, for loading to the gunnels.  
Walking with the crew or learning to crawl,  
cavernous encounters serve us all.

Whites from Chile and the Rhineland -  
California. Rhône red, Rioja, Catalonia.  
Gingerbread, wholemeal, soda, seeded, naan.  
Feta, mozzarella, Philadelphia, Danish blue.  
Toothpaste, peanut butter, cola in a can,  
flashlight, poly-roll, superglue, shampoo.

Catching comments from the red-tops  
that once contained an element of news.  
Flowers by arrangement, cartons to contain,  
birthday cards, refunds, relevant enquiries.  
Tickets turn the tide in someone’s mind  
with random numbers chosen in a lottery.

*Continued*

In place of hard-earned cash: a tap.  
With a wink, and a blink of an eye from a  
calculating personal assistant, AI.  
“Unexpected item in the bagging area”  
in lucid tones “Assistance required”  
Robbie is taking morning break!

Time to erase, disembark and rewind.  
Reclaim the token from a borrowed trolley.  
Celebratory moments, a chance to unwind  
after ferrying cargo through a tailgate.  
Emotional turmoil of the day is put to rest.  
Sharing a croissant with a soulmate.

---

© John Hill

21st July 2023