

The Gap Year

A whole year off! It seemed too short when planning what to do.
The countries I would visit, all the jobs I'd sample too.
I'd battled Homer, Sophocles, locked horns with Aristotle.
Had tutors I admired a lot and some I thought I'd throttle.
Now I deserved my just reward; to travel far and wide
And follow all my dreams without my parents at my side.

I started in Alaska with its vast and open spaces,
Saw caribou and humpback whales, brown bears with angry faces.
Tried working as a logger, but I found it far too scary.
The girls were plain, the men were dull and also rather hairy.

On to Japan I ventured next and found the people kind,
Hard working, but quite serious. The crowds I did not mind.
I watched some Sumo wrestling, saw the cherry blossom fair.
Went to a Shinto temple, where I offered up a prayer.

In Chile there was desert, huge volcanos and wild lakes,
Great condors in the Andes, but I didn't like the snakes.
In India the Taj Mahal just took my breath away,
But the food upset my stomach. I decided not to stay.

Australia was wonderful. I even found employment.
I waited tables, sheared some sheep, taught tennis. Pure enjoyment!
I swam beside the Barrier Reef and went to Ayers Rock,
Saw kangaroos, koala bears. The spiders were a shock!

I viewed great art in Florence, hitched a lift as far as Venice.
I thought the city splendid, but mosquitos were a menace.
In Rome a signorina made a claim upon my heart.
I was in love for one whole week, but then we had to part.

So now the year is nearly done and I am homeward bound.
My suitcase looks so battered as it's dragged along the ground.
The station platform is quite long, but just ahead I see
Two small familiar figures waving happily at me.

"You haven't changed a bit." My mother says and sneaks a cuddle.
"He's rather thin." Observes my dad. My thoughts are in a muddle.
I'm sure I've grown up quite a lot; prepared to fly the nest,
But now I'm back, I'm rather glad. It's true, Home is the best.