

POEMS

by Paul Jeffcutt



The Office of the Chief

Paul Jeffcutt

Behind his mahogany desk
are framed diplomas and honours,
an expanse of gilding, signatures and red-wax seals
he loves to gesture towards,
sprawling back in the buttoned leather chair
as you remain standing.

All dubious, confides Leo,
especially one as a fighter pilot
in the Second World War:
grimacing, he seizes the joystick
and banking fast, twin machine-guns spurt,
then he dissolves to a pouting bambino,
waving little arms
and gaping around the cockpit.

In Employment

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279 steps from the entrance,
116 urgent emails,
58 minutes before lunch,
13 hours until Friday,
2 phones ringing at once,
half an opportunity.

Pretty Polly

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The Norwegian Blue was infamously mute,
shagged out, stunned or deceased:
this African Grey's loquacious,
her wit and wordage surpassing
syndicated talk-show *celebs*.

She's practicing for a media career:
voice-overs, continuity announcing or trails.
Her small-screen premiere,
endearingly reciting the autocue
with a trademark knowing wink.

Nkisi, a captive African Grey parrot, has a wide vocabulary of 950 words. Nkisi uses past present and future tenses as well as inventing her own words and phrases.

Alex Kirby, BBC News Online, 26 January 2007.