

Poems contributed by John Hegley for BBC Radio Berkshire

Pat

I said Pat
You are fat
And you are cataclysmically desirable
And to think I used to think slim
Was where it's at
Well not any more
Pat you've changed that
You love yourself
You flatter yourself
You shatter their narrow image of the erotic
And Pat said
"What do you mean, fat?"

Getting in a Lava

The Frenchman, Patrice, is preceded
by a reputation for mapping and snapping volcanoes
I am told it is not his work by his passion.
Getting to meet the man
Around a French mealtime table
at the home of his sister, Cecile,
he intimates that canyons
also get him and his camera going.
I indicate the steep sides which canyons and volcanoes have in common.
His sister indicates a brother always reeling
On the edge of a precipice of some sort.
A man on the edge.

Fruit is offered for dessert.
Patrice proceeds
to pare the apple peel with his pocket knife,
and as he uses it again
to divide the flesh,
it triggers a forgotten flash of my father.
Him sat at our meal-time table with his own pen-knife,
generously giving me the best slice
from hands cracked to angry canyons
and salved with Vaseline.
Dad, you were sometimes ready to erupt,
but in spite of any scalding spanking which you gave me
I was never in any doubt
that you would unquestioningly sacrifice
the rest of your life
to save me.