

Old Tickler

Go East or West, go North or south, by land, sea or air,
But before you go, make sure the old Tickler isn't there.
Tickler is a terror, and I'll tell you what he's after –
He'll have you stuffing tickle chops until you choke with laughter.

It's hard to tell where he lives, and harder to restrict him,
He's always round the corner looking for a victim.
His method is quite simple; he'll grab you by your sleeve
And tell you anecdotes which he insists you must believe.

He thinks they're very funny, while others find them grim,
(They have to keep on laughing though, so as to humour him).
One wouldn't mind the stories if they were all one had to bear,
He also uses tickle – feathers, which is most unfair,

And so he goes on cackling, "Oh, but don't you think it's funny –
Aunt Kitty selling pigeons' eggs and figs and cloves and honey

The eggs are long and conical, the cloves are all convoluted
The figs have arabesques on them nicely executed,
From dawn till dusk Aunt Kitty sings a string of motley airs

All mew and barks and brays and neighs (Aunt Kitty calls them Prayers)."
Saying so, he brings his hand behind your back to pinch you,
At which you have to laugh unless you want that he should lynch you



SUKUMAR RAY

Translated by: Satyajit Ray

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