



*William Ayot has kindly allowed StopSO to publish this poem. It can be found in his book of poetry: “Small Things that Matter” which is available for sale at [www.williamayot.com/shop/](http://www.williamayot.com/shop/)*

## **And On the Seventh Day**

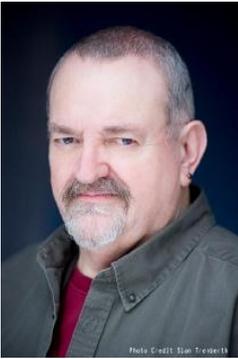
God knows, it’s easy enough to point the finger.  
We’re all churchwardens when we read the papers.  
Disgust and self-righteousness are par for the course  
on a slow suburban Sunday morning.

But at night,  
when the tom-cats of loneliness call, and things  
that live on secrets stretch themselves and stir.  
Then dapper little accountants from Wimbledon  
reach for the phone with a trembling hand  
to whisper obscenities to part-time women  
who yawn as they do it for them - do it all night.  
Then salesmen, surveyors and warehousemen,  
plasterers and clerks and the occasional priest,  
the meek and the mild and the simply ordinary,  
step into the neon-twisted light, blinking  
and gulping and slowly transforming themselves  
into leather-clad predators or hungry-angry lads.  
Then the Chairman, the Chief, the public man,  
waits in his car at the edge of the Common,  
or walks among the silent, cruising shadows,  
risking the world for a moment of excitement,  
for a buzz that his daylight self can’t allow.  
And somewhere in the bushes, with his heart  
in his mouth, stands a man whom we nod to  
or smile at in the supermarket. And he’s scared  
and excited and feeling foolish, as he waits there,  
naked but for a raincoat. And he’s not too sure  
why he’s there again, or why the siren voices  
should have brought him back. But he’s back  
and he’s driven to show himself to a woman

who may vomit when she sees what he is doing,  
or hurry by in shame, or scream for the police.  
And the rest of him will sit on Sunday morning,  
flicking through the usual spread of crucifixions.  
And once again he'll feel that little pang of envy  
when he reads about the sinners who can rest.

William Ayot

*From 'Small Things that Matter'*  
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William Ayot is an award-winning poet, author and teacher. Writing includes the play *Bengal Lancer*, three collections of poetry, and *Re-enchanting the Forest: Meaningful Ritual in a Secular World*. William teaches and coaches in organisations and is currently poet-in-residence at Oxford University Saïd Business School. He creates rituals for individuals and groups, and leads workshops on the use of poetry and ritual for psychotherapists and counsellors. [www.williamayot.com](http://www.williamayot.com)