

Windchime Meadows – Spring

The first dry weekend in December
Our shearer calls by
Saluting the spring air
Clippers at the ready
Blades oiled and sharpened
Shearing table trestled
Llamas and alpacas marshalled
The shed commandeered
A division of labourers – family and friends
Corrals the woolly herd

The first alpaca
Frothing green spittle at the mouth
A trail of reluctance dragged into the dirt
Is tightly trussed
A rising moan of imagined woe
Drowning the electric buzz
At each shear stroke
Young Tarin gently strokes her neck
Cupping his hand to ruffle her head
Mum, to planned avail
Grasps in turn each hoof
To clip, grout, file and mend
The doctor, Andrew, plays vet
Injecting this year's medicinal
The needle pricks
A camelid wails
The shorn and kempt
Now leaking at all three ends

The chirocatharophiles - those lovers of clean hands
Keep an intended safe distance
Ignoring the commotion
Muck in to sort and grade
Discarding the prickly guard hair
Weeding out soiled fibre
Bagging premium fleece with care
Resisting the childlike urge
To gheegle the unshorn stud
Waiting his turn in the pen

By mid-afternoon, the last of twenty-odd done
A glass of wine deservedly in hand, to drink in the spring sun