**Self’s The Man**

Oh, no one can deny  
That Arnold is less selfish than I.  
He married a woman to stop her getting away  
Now she's there all day,  
  
And the money he gets for wasting his life on work  
She takes as her perk  
To pay for the kiddies' clobber and the drier  
And the electric fire,  
  
And when he finishes supper  
Planning to have a read at the evening paper  
It's Put a screw in this wall -  
He has no time at all,  
  
With the nippers to wheel round the houses  
And the hall to paint in his old trousers  
And that letter to her mother  
Saying Won't you come for the summer.  
  
To compare his life and mine  
Makes me feel a swine:  
Oh, no one can deny  
That Arnold is less selfish than I.  
  
But wait, not so fast:  
Is there such a contrast?  
He was out for his own ends  
Not just pleasing his friends;  
  
And if it was such a mistake,  
He still did it for his own sake,  
Playing his own game.  
So he and I are the same,  
Only I'm a better hand  
At knowing what I can stand!

**Philip Larkin**

**THE CAPTAIN OF THE 1964 TOP OF THE FORM TEAM**

THE CAPTAIN OF THE 1964 TOP OF THE FORM TEAM

Do Wah Diddy Diddy, Baby Love, Oh Pretty Woman  
were in the Top Ten that month, October, and the Beatles  
were everywhere else. I can give you the B-side  
of the Supremes one. Hang on. ‘Come See About Me?’  
I lived in a kind of fizzing hope. Gargling  
with Vimto. The clever smell of my satchel. Convent girls.  
I pulled my hair forward with a steel comb that I blew  
like Mick, my lips numb as a two-hour snog.

No snags. The Nile rises in April. Blue and white.  
The humming-bird’s song is made by its wings, which beat  
so fast that they blur in flight. I knew the capitals,  
the Kings and Queens, the dates. In class, the white sleeve  
of my shirt saluted again and again. ‘Sir!’ … ‘Correct.’  
Later, I whooped at the side of my bike, a cowboy,  
mounted it running in one jump. I spend down Dyke Hill,  
no hands, famous, learning, dominus domine dominum.

Dave Dee Dozy … try me. Come on. My mother kept my mascot Gonk  
on the TV set for a year. And the photograph. I look  
so brainy you’d think I’d just had a bath. The blazer.  
The badge. The tie, the first chord of A Hard Day’s Night  
loud in my head. I ran to the Spinney in my prize shoes,  
up Churchill Way, up Nelson Drive, over pink pavements  
that girls chalked on, in a blue evening; and I stamped  
the pawprints of badgers and skunks in the mud. My country.

I want it back. The captain. The one with all the answers. ‘Bzz’.  
My name was in red on Lucille Green’s jotter. I smiled  
as wide as a child who went missing on the way home  
from school. The keeny. I say to my stale wife  
‘Six hits by Dusty Springfield’. I say to my boss ‘A pint!’  
‘How can we know the dancer from the dance?’ Nobody.  
My thick kids wince. Name the prime Minister of Rhodesia.  
My country. How many florins in a pound?

**Carol Ann Duffy**