

# The Sick Son

Because a tree was touching a cloud

I hid under my bed. My brother hid under the covers.

Then my mother came in. She hid inside her head.

My father was out in the great world with his axe.

Would he attack the house this time, or just the tree?

'Come out at once,' he called, 'and come out singly.'

When I was little, he sat me on his knee.

He read to me. He read to me.



**Bill Manhire** is a poet and editor who directs the creative writing program at Victoria University. His Collected Poems are published in the UK by Carcanet and in New Zealand by VUP. His most recent book is *The Victims of Lightning*. He was New Zealand's first poet laureate, and once spent 45 semi-heroic minutes at the South Pole.

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/modernletters/staff/bill-manhire.aspx>



Prose and Poetry

**phantom**  
billstickers Ltd.

13thhead@gmail.com