

A poem found by Sheila Hardy in the Ipswich Journal of 1894  
about the segregation of married couples in workhouses and  
just how they felt about it!

*"Taint the vittles' or the fustian  
Or the leathers I so mind.  
'Tis my Betsey and the padlocks  
And the old ways left behind.*

*When at night I lie so lone-like,  
Do I know where Betsey be?  
Somewhere down a mile of passage  
But her face I seldom see.*

*Save on Sundays 'cross the chapel  
'Mongst the other women stowed,  
When I sight her nodding t'wards me.  
Thinks I, I must shriek aloud.*

*Parson he aint half a bad 'un,  
Gov'nor he is always civil,  
But my Betsey and the padlocks,  
Make me sometimes half a devil.*

*Would the upper gentries like it?  
Would the keep cost any more?  
Shouldn't we have better heart  
To work the pump and scrub the floor?"*



THE WORKHOUSE

by P. Rush

If that large building could only tell  
Of the misery, sadness and pain  
Bourn by poor people long ago  
No one today would believe it was so.

It housed the sick and the poor,  
A Roof over their heads,  
A bite to eat, no more.  
The Workhouse it was called that day  
For those poor souls who couldn't pay.

Today it's a hospital for the old and sick  
Where they are nursed with loving care,  
With drugs to ease their pain;  
Good food to help them survive  
When long ago they would have died.

I hope the dead of long ago  
Now are at peace and rest,  
For those that are in the Hospital today  
Are surely blest.