

**Bourne**  
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## Lost Words

by Victoria Cooper

She scoops down low plucking words like eyes from a gull  
Bent forward her bird-like gaze fall upon her jewels  
She is known as peddler of words, aged with time and tome  
They are kept in a bag thrown over her shoulder  
She stoops from the weight of the syllables  
Word trafficker, she can sell you what you did not know you needed

Those moments when you are smacked of gob  
Struck by thunder, silenced and perplexed  
The word peddler can sell you her worn out wares  
Lines on her face crease like lines on a page  
Her thin toothy smile upturned, she pulls from her bag  
Brabble {*to argue stubbornly about trifles*} she offers  
The flint in her eye never missing a stroke

The shake of your head does not deter her  
She rummages deeper into the old cloth bag  
Word smart wordsmith, her hands hold tightly  
She will not offer for free, what all comes with a price

She studies your face humming absently  
Growlery? {*a place to retreat to, alone, when ill-humoured*}  
She drops at your feet like a dog  
But you refuse  
So, she returns to whistling between her teeth  
Tattletale grey {*white tinged with grey*} comes at you like a bar of soap  
Her gnarly fingers twitch with anticipation as you consider it  
Pulling at her rags, she waits passively

No still not right, as you watch her hands return  
Swirling through phrase, clause and syntax  
She delivers frutescent {*having the appearance of a shrub*}  
The sound forms a kiss on your lips, finishing with a snake's hiss  
Frutescent you repeat back to her, considering  
Sparks fire up inside her dilated pupils as she holds her breath  
Waiting, watching, waiting; hawk

Your gaze falls and lands upon nephoscope  
{*instrument to measure the directions of movement of clouds*}  
She snatches her bag tightly to her chest, scowling at your snooping  
This is not for sale and she shoves it down  
Like a petulant child, denied, you sigh and turn away  
She is hag bag of empty promises, she is worthless word peddler  
You will not be duped by her forgotten treasures or counterfeit goods  
Let her sell lost words to fools  
Time will make her obsolete and disappear

You walk away from her angry retorts  
Snollygoster she yells {*a shrewd, unprincipled person*} at you with flair  
You smile, walk on, lost in a world without words.