

IAN WILLIAMS

HROTHGAR

What sort of name's that? they ask
spelling it out without an aitch
A home's better known by a number

You could tell them of a Danish King
(a bit before their time, properly warn)
bullied by something unspeakable
for twelve ravaging years

Of how in single-handed combat
an ally from a neighbouring state
ripped the monster's arm off

(Dragons or beasts, you'd joke
they're all pests to the Exterminator)

They'd nod and seem to understand
But you might suspect they'd confuse instead
a cartoon strip they'd recently read
with nagging thoughts of Rentokil

Better perhaps to say nothing. Or
at least confess by way of excuse
This house – it's only rented
Keep their queer looks for your landlord