

## DAVID JACOBS

### THE NEW TENNIS KIT

Each item is preserved in polythene allotments.  
Home from the store he lays them on the bed.

Their whiteness is perfect and alarming.  
They remind him of too many things:

Choirboys with slide rule partings. Angels.  
Bright blemishes against the limp and faded

kit of old he has to exile.  
Carefree comfort, loyalty, good results

it gave, a raw rough love returned.  
Now wet courts will muddy spotless shoes,

a fall scar the slim cut shorts with grit  
and clay invoking awkward questions of the wash:

by hand with new detergent strength or at  
the launderette's intense and steamy heat?

He looks to the new shirt – honoured with haloes  
on the sleeves. A fashion he'll get used to

soon enough but will his game improve?  
Carefully he bursts the polythene.

Crucified on card the shirt confronts the light.  
One by one he pinches out the pins.