

## **Whatever happened to reusable prophylactics?**

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## **Whatever Happened to Reusable Prophylactics?**

Three nonagenarians, giddy  
with tea and Sapphire Gin,  
stare at Humphrey Spender's famous picture  
of all their washing blowing up Bolton  
midst monochrome back-to-backs.  
With nigh on three hundred years between them  
to sift through, they agree on  
nineteen thirty-seven for the year  
when snooty Spender from the south  
did his best to mass-observe them.  
'That's my line,' Doris declares,  
pointing at sheets three rows back,  
'whiter than white than white than white...'  
'That's shee-ite' says Gloria, new to swearing,  
and glamorous with it.  
Edna swallows and speaks and points,  
in her noted declamatory style,  
at the world-famous photograph displayed without a frame,  
on the red formica table, curling in on itself.  
'There.' 'Where?' 'There. And there.'  
She indicates spots either side of the washing,  
beyond the side-edges of official memory,  
where the backyards' insides would be.  
'They're sponge-cake crumbs, Edna darling,'  
moistening a forefinger to gather them in.