

JOHN

50s, John is a human sunflower. Not a saint. Not a hero. Just the kind of man you'd want in your car when crossing America. When he dies, it feels like someone, somewhere, turned out the lights.

Chris *(holding up a bag of seeds)* Now then. Rod and I give you these sunflower seeds from our flower shop on ONE condition. That you, John Clarke, come back to this hall and give us a TALK!

John Me?

Chris Spare us from another "History of Broccoli" –

John Do a talk? What've I ever done except work in the dales?

Chris *(going to "throw" the seeds)* Suit yourself.

John Alright, ALL RIGHT! *(Rescuing the seeds from Chris)* You take some of these ... *(sprinkling)* ... little parcels of sunlight. Then get one of these – *(he takes a gas candle-lighter pen from his pocket and clicks it)*

Celia Good God.

John Set fire to the top, toast the seeds – turns your mouth into liquid Yorkshire!

Ruth Oh, I've had one of these! My Eddie did some last Christmas. Set fire to the decking.

Jessie In light of which , might I suggest we attempt this outside.

Chris Everyone out!

Cora *(grabbing the drink with zeal)* I'm gone, honey, I am already gone.

Chris, Cora, Celia, Jessie and Ruth bustle out. John swings Annie back.

John Come here, you. *(he kisses her)*

Annie How was your day?

John Thrill me. Tell me something I didn't know about broccoli.

Annie Put it this way. I now know as much about broccoli as Chris knows about t'ai chi.

John laughs.

John Ohh God. That's it. I knew it'd happen. I've turned into the third person.

Marie *(Remembering)* Right. Sorry. *(Beat)* How's the -?

John My treatment's going fine love. And you know what cheers me up? That WI calendar with your lovely photos of Yorkshire churches. *(Putting his arm around Marie)* Being able to mark my chemotherapy appointments under images of misty graveyards.

Chris really smiles. Even Annie does.

Serious. I'd taken it in and one of the guys at the hospital, porter, Lawrence, great lad, great photographer – *(to Annie)* God, you should see some of the ones he's done of his parents –

Annie *(Smiling)* Finish your story.

John *(nodding at Marie)* About your calendar. *Very* complimentary.

Marie Really?

John *(Putting his arm out)* Lead on, my little elf. *(for Annie's benefit, wryly)* Remember, "he" can't walk that fast.

Marie can't do anything but lead him out. The others follow.
