Wildspitz 1972

TERRY GIFFORD

Incompetence was rife (Richard Gilbert, 1989)

Everyone and their grandma
Hustled for the highest point
And the queues strung back
Between summits and below
The icy ramp of bucket steps
Stamped up the Mitterkar Joch.

Grandma wore a headscarf
And a woollen skirt. It was
An Austrian family holiday
Hiking hut to hut. For us
It was a helmet job, hard men
In the making, moleskins and smocks.

But two steps down the ramp
A crampon came free. I went
Sledging on my sac, unable to roll over
Amongst glacier cream, sweets, shouts.
Nick thought I was glissading
And leapt off behind me

Whooping past the cursing guides.