

A narrative poem: "**The Broken-Legg'd Man**" by John Mackey Shaw

I saw the other day when I went shopping in the store  
A man I hadn't ever, ever seen in there before,  
A man whose leg was broken and who leaned upon a crutch-  
I asked him very kindly if it hurt him very much.  
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.

I ran around behind him for I thought that I would see  
The broken leg all bandaged up and bent back at the knee;  
But I didn't see the leg at all, there wasn't any there,  
So I asked him very kindly if he had it hid somewhere.  
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.

"Then where," I asked him, "is it? Did a tiger bite it off?  
Or did you get your foot wet when you had a nasty cough?  
Did someone jump down on your leg when it was very new?  
Or did you simply cut it off because you wanted to?"  
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.

"What was it then?" I asked him, and this is what he said:  
"I crossed a busy crossing when the traffic light was red;  
A big black car came whizzing by and knocked me off my feet."  
"Of course you looked both ways," I said, "before you crossed the street."  
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.

"They rushed me to the hospital right quickly," he went on,  
"And when I woke in nice white sheets I saw my leg was gone;  
That's why you see me walking now on nothing but a crutch."  
"I'm glad," said I, "you told me, and I thank you very much!"  
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.