Writing the Litter

I devised this writing prompt for a walking group. You will need litter pickers for everyone taking part, gloves and large bags for collecting the litter; note books and pencils. I recommend walking in twos taking turns picking litter. One person holds open the bag, and the other person makes a note, naming each item of litter. After the litter has been collected and noted, the pair can work together or separately to write a poem, story, or song using the names of the litter. Or make a collage of the litter like the one above.

Here's a poem I wrote after litter picking:

Thank you

The thing is there was this young man
who saw me in Arlington Place picking up litter –
snickers-duo from amongst the daisies and sticky-willy
he said thank you
I really appreciate what you're doing

In amongst the children's play things I met Mrs Falafal
sitting on a bench – she'd just finished drinking her lucozade
and showed me the empty bottle then popped it in
to my big litter bag
She said thank you thank you with a wordless wee nod

Along by the petrol station in Woodlands Road
a car honked at me as I picked up an empty Bertolli Mediterranean
olive oil margarine carton Snacktastic Cheese Squares
and caffe Latte hand-roasted bean bag
the car honked again and didn't say thank you

I smiled at the car stepped calmly slowly along Ashberry Lane
hopscotching over a thousand butt-ends – pausing to sniff
the fuchsia bush with silent red bells dangling on the breeze
I said thank you thank you thank you
I really appreciate who you are

Sukhema Butler