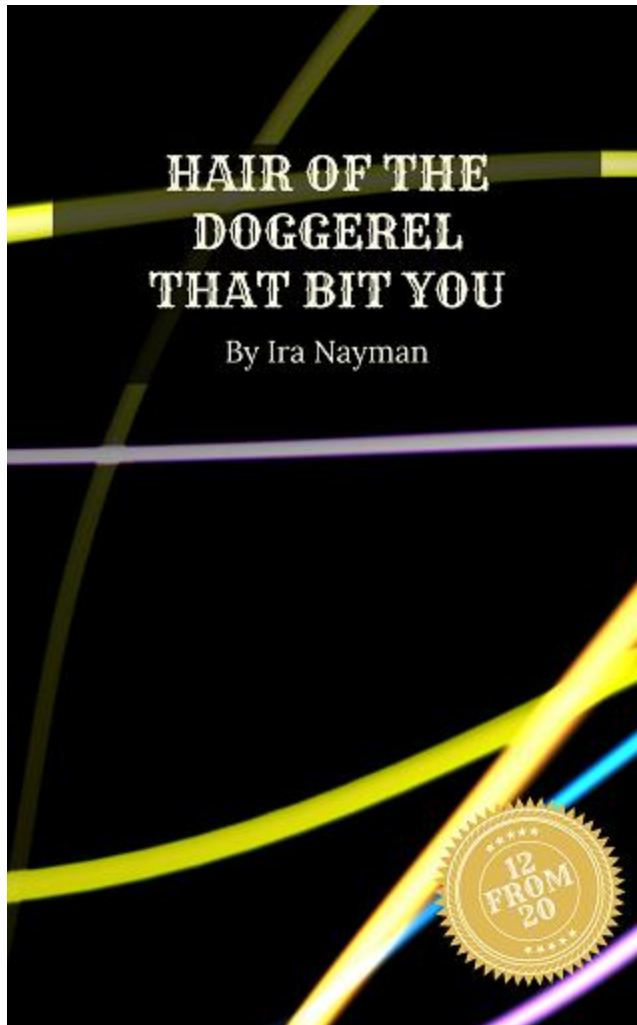




Hair of the Doggerel That Bit You
by Ira Nayman
cover design by Gisela McKay

Published by Ira Nayman
ISBN: 978-1-927645-46-8
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Introduction

In the first week of September 2022, Les Pages aux Folles will turn 20. To celebrate this achievement, I will be publishing 12 ebook collections of articles from the two decades of the web site over the course of the year; this project is known as "12 from 20." (For a brief overview of Les Pages aux Folles, see "The Back Story" at the end of this volume.) Each book will focus on a different feature of the web site. This month: poetry.

They say everybody has a book o' poetry in 'em,
The problem with most is that they don't know how to begin 'em.
Well, I'm not a poet,
And, boy, don't I know it!
But I wrote some anyway.

The themes are not very deep,
And the imagery would make any real poet weep.
Individual lines go on many syllables far too long and don't really gel,
And many of the rhymes are from Hell.
For me, rhyme just doesn't pay.

But here it is, what can I do?
I have collected *Les Pages aux Folles'* poetry for you.
Hoot and jeer and laugh and cry
And marvel at the audacity and wonder why
I went to all the trouble to write even one.

This volume starts with articles, complete,
So with prose the poetry does not have to compete.

Followed, as you will see,
By poems plucked from The Daily Me.
All meant to be harmless fun.

Don't gnash your teeth (I don't supply dental),
But some of the poems are experimental.
Because they're satirical, expect a point to be gleaned
(Some even have pictures to help you discern their meaning).
As a satirist, I search and destroy.

While most of my poetry has been ignored,
One poem won the Swift Satire Writing Award!
"Love Amid the Construction" was a comedic take
On construction site junkies, the better love to make.
A strange affectation of those above the hoi polloi.

Just know that you, dear reader, I did not mean to annoy.
Enjoy!

Ira Nayman
Toronto
March 2, 2022

Articles

Having a Political Ball

The dinner party's eager host
Was looking rather pink;
He didn't answer when spoken to
He didn't even blink.
The guests, of course, would never know
He'd had too much to drink.

The Socialist and the Conservative
Were dancing cheek to cheek,
Neither one the least afraid
The press might find a leak.
"Can we," the Conservative quietly asked
"Agree within a week?"

If seven aids with seven pads
Negotiated through the night,
Do you think we could hit upon
Policies that are right?"
"I doubt it," said the Socialist,
Who shuddered with delight.

The Liberal sat in the corner, alone
Mistaken for a spy.
"Will I ever get to dance?"
He wondered with a sigh.
It was precisely then that the Liberal
Caught the Socialist's eye.

"Excuse me," said the Socialist,
"But it's time for me to go.
It's getting late, and anyway,
I've seen someone I know."
The Conservative protested angrily
And had to be taken in tow.

"Shall we dance?" the Socialist asked
Affecting a disinterested air.
"Love to," replied the Liberal,

“Though I’m no Fred Astaire.”
“I believe that,” thought the Conservative,
Who could only stand and stare.

“Do you,” asked the Socialist,
“Believe in equal pay?”
The Liberal didn’t miss a step
As he heard himself say,
“My dear friend, I would not have it
Any other way!”

“And do you think,” the Socialist asked,
“That it is a good bet
That you’d allow a member of my Party
In your cabinet?”
“I don’t think,” the Liberal replied,
“We’re ready for that yet!”

They danced and danced and danced again
Until an early hour.
The Socialist agreed the Liberal
Deserved to have the power.
If only he wouldn’t insist so loudly
That taxes should be lower!

The Socialist was very pleased
With all that he had done;
After years of ignominy his party would have
A moment in the sun,
Making a king even though
The election it had not won.

The Liberal was very pleased
To have entered into the pact.
He had captured the popular vote,
Now his government was a fact.
He rubbed his hands in anticipation
Of the legislation he would enact.

The Conservative was very sad
And thought it very strange
That events had so conspired
His downfall to arrange.
But, after 42 years, I think
It was time for a change!

Rappin' Through University

There has been a lot of concern over the past few years about the number of college and university graduates who are functionally illiterate (which, one can only suppose, means that they don't know what being functionally illiterate is). Surely, the education system is failing if it allows students who are missing the most basic communications skills to graduate?

It may be presumptuous of me (well, alright – it is undoubtedly presumptuous of me), but I think I have the solution to the problem. English should be taught in a way students can understand. At present, for instance, rap music is popular; why not teach using something like:

Don't Rap the Grammar

Now, here's a subject you may think has no glamour
You say it's boring – I say Don't Rap the Grammar
It's real easy, or so I have found
All a sentence needs is a verb and a noun
A noun is a thing, like a tree or a house
A verb is an action, like to say or to delouse
If you got this far, you ain't no reject
So you should dig that the doer is the subject
The object is the exact opposite thing
The subject does to it, it don't do nothing
A conjunction is a word that links ideas together
It can be but, and, although or whatever
Now, here's an idea that'll have you singin' praises
It's all about subordinate clauses and phrases
A phrase is dependent on the main sentence function
A clause is complete and comes with a conjunction
Phrases and clauses you can have lots of fun on
But, use too many and your sentence will be run on
My goodness, I don't want you to think I'm dense
But, I still haven't mentioned person or tense
First person is I, second you, third he, she or it
Plural is me, you and them – I know you're down with this...
Uhh, tense tells you when an action takes place
Like past, present and future, for goodness' sake
English is easy, there's no need to stammer
That's why I say, Don't Rap the Grammar

If this approach leads to an increased appreciation for the English language (or, at the very least, better test scores), it may be adopted by other disciplines. If you've ever taken psychology at university, for instance, you know it was never as interesting as:

The Big Psycho Rap

Now, you start with Freud, don't worry who's next
He says all our problems are related to sex
Man's got a penis, I guess that's cool
The problem with women is they all want one, too
Men want their mothers, women think dad is best
These thoughts make us guilty, so they must be repressed
Oral fixations mean eating and smoking
Anal fixations – man, you've got to be joking
Then came a guy by the name of Pavlov
Who rang bells for dogs to get himself off
Forget Freud's couch, Pavlov's our psyche's saviour
With the right stimulus, he can modify our behaviour
Piaget put all those clinical psychologists in heaven
When he said personality develops at three, five and seven
Nature versus nurture is a load of crap
When you're doing The Big Psycho Rap

There is no reason to believe that, if successful, this trend would only benefit the liberal arts. Any subject taught in a systematic fashion should be able to be taught in a way that reaches students on a level they can comprehend. If you don't believe it, consider the following example:

Rappin' the Universe

Aristotle said, for what it's worth
That the rest of the universe revolved around the Earth
He was precise in describing this veil of tears
He thought everything revolved on transparent spheres
Galileo came along not wanting to spoil the fun
And insisted that the planets revolved around the sun
It was inevitable, I guess, that we'd all get the notion
That every body in the universe was in motion
Eventually there came Einstein, who said to much laughter
That matter is energy, and energy is matter
To mathematically prove this Einstein was dared
So he came up with the equation E equals mc^2
Now, E represents energy, m is mass, alright
 C is the value of the speed of light
From this equation, it is easy to see
That with a little mass you get a whole lot of energy
You can't go faster than light, and that is definite
Because, at that speed, your mass would be infinite
As if that weren't enough, Einstein had the nerve
To say that the true nature of space was curved

All mass has gravity? Can that be right?
 Do large enough masses really deflect the path of light?
 But, Einstein's largest blasphemy
 Was his theory of relativity
 Nature, you see, is a great preserver
 And all phenomena are relative to the observer
 If you're moving forward, and somebody approaches you
 The relative speed is yours and theirs, too
 Time slows down as you approach the speed of light
 Even though the rest of the universe is still going right
 If you don't know what's happenin', don't blame me
 Heisenberg said it all when he talked about uncertainty
 Don't understand? It could be worse
 Remember: god doesn't play dice with the universe!

It sounds absurd, doesn't it? Grandmaster Flash teaching chemistry? Run-D.M.C. singing about algebra? However, before you scoff (or before you scoff again if I'm too late to stop you the first time) ask yourself which is more important: keeping an air of solemnity in the classroom or reaching the kids?

Odds and Ends

Modern Love is a Bad Comedy Routine

You're a few punchlines short of a stand-up routine.
 You know what I mean?
 You...you're a couple lawyers short of a defense team.
 Yeah, you. You're a few replacement employees short of a work force.
 You hear what I'm saying?
 You're a couple of hazings short of an airborne regiment.
 A special prize short of a box of cereal.
 A few gross points short of a three picture deal.
 Several songs short of a playlist.
 A couple of Matisses short of a Barnes.
 A few concessions to national industries short of a General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.
 Am I getting through to you?
 You're a couple of bloodsuckers shy of an Anne Rice novel,
 A few loopholes short of a tax policy
 And several freaks short of an Archaos.
 So why do I love you so?

GOOD SIDE	BAD SIDE
Kicks	Nix
Scoring	Boring
Keen	Mean

Connective	Defective
Okay	Pokey
Peak	Weak
Sexy	Vexy
Righteous	Blighteous
Hunky	Funky

Information Age of Consent

I want to live in a world

Where people know more about T. S. Eliot than TSN

Where *Paradise Lost* is better known than “Paradise By the Dashboard Light”

Where people don’t confuse Nietzsche’s “superman” with DC’s Superman

Where Archie Rice is a more important cultural figure than Anne Rice

Where Sun Tzu is read more often than the *Toronto Sun*

Where “Tora! Tora! Tora!” is better known than Tori Amos

Where Martin Luther’s reputation eclipses Martin and Lewis’s

Where people prefer Jean-Luc Goddard to Jean-Luc Picard

Where Mozart is better loved than Moe Berg

Where people care less about the Ottawa Rough Riders than the Washington Freedom Riders

I want to live in a world where what happened yesterday isn’t considered worthless just because it happened yesterday

Cyberspace isn’t that world

OUTIE	INNIE
the Information Superhighway	rolling your own
<i>Apollo 13</i>	Spam
rent due notices	low hemlines
the duck-billed platypus	the duck-billed platypus
paranoia	Polyester
Indonesia	UNIX
French cooking	The Alamo
<i>Wired</i>	<i>Whole Earth Catalogue</i>
Charles Mair	Yusuf Al-Ibn
Madonna	paper clips
ball bearings	Crisco shortening
Quebec	that’s not funny
saunas	the Ebola Virus
Bill Moyers	Madonna
primordial ooze	aerobicizing to the oldies
McLuhan	Innis
being told what’s hip	thinking for yourself

It’s a Dog Eat Doggerel World

The Holiday Spirit

I don't know the reason but during the festive season
I get a real frisson from images of Nissan
And all sorts of tingles when thinking of Pringles
I feel my heart swell hearing news of Mattel
And I know all is well when there's talk of Duracell
The world's awfully nice because there's Minute Rice
And you've got a good bet in Gillette
The conversation gets toney when considering Sony
But the absolute best is American Express
You can't feel shoddy when contemplating an Audi
And you can never underestimate the importance of a Tim Horton's
All around there's congrats for mere mention of Labatt's
I'm always amazed by thoughts of Frito Lays
I guess that's why I say, "Have a happy holiday!"

Malls Girdle the Globe

They're building a giant mall
In the jungles of Nepal
And there's going to be a major plaza
In the disputed area of Gaza
A shopping center will be put to the test
In the lovely town of Bucharest
Be sure to look for the next Wal-Mart
In the picturesque town of Jakarta
Visit the new mega-mall
The next time you are in Bengal
Or perhaps somewhere in Senegal
Or even next to China's Great Wall
Malls girdle the globe

Hallmark of the Future (1)

Congratulations! on your impending birth
Requiring the most sophisticated technologies on earth
It doesn't matter if your Little Angel was planted
Outfitted with prosthetics or decanted
Conceived in growth cultures in a metal tray
Or, perhaps, in a more traditional way
The patter of little feet should dispel the gloom
Even if they were gestated in a plastic womb
And you know that you will love it tender
Whether boy or girl or some undetermined gender
In the end, what matters the recipe?

Whether an act of love or biotechnology
You're about to have a little life that nobody can despise
Even if it has your genetic councilor's smile and a lab technician's eyes
It's tiny neural interface may be beyond the wildest dreams of von Neuman
Rejoice! Rejoice! on the coming of your very own, very special post-human

With Apologies to the Nails

Rene was a tiny man
Quebecers made into a saint
Jacques thought he was just the same
Ethnics found out that he ain't
Pat B. wooed the hard right
With a platform that was ominous
Tailgunner Joe went after Commies
With attacks that were ad homineous
Paul gave us the same old budget
Even though he wore some new shoes
Sheila spoke one time too often
Proving she's no goody two-shoes
Bill could not make up his mind
When everyone said, "Do it my way!"
Al just kind of disappeared
Onto his own information highway
Maggie bulldozed her way through
To the right of the well-known Hun
John had to clean up the wreckage
But he could just please no one
Ronnie, though he slowly lost it
Was known as a great orator
George, a bloodless technocrat
Was told by voters, "See ya later."
Benjamin knows where he's been
And wants the desert issues settled
Yasser violently disagrees
And you wouldn't want to get him nettled!
Richard, who lived in disgrace
Became a statesman when he died
Dan, although he could not spell,
Was blonde and fair and very blue-eyed
Newt was almost given the boot
Until he made a fateful deal
Pat R. waited for a miracle
To declare his candidacy was real
Chretien said he'd kill the GST
Was shocked when people did believe him

Charest is just killing time
Waiting for another Tory to relieve him
Boris's health may well be failing
Though he claims he's getting haler
Vladimir has fans in the provinces
Despite his resemblance to a certain impaler
Malcolm was a populist
Whose policies favored the really wealthy
Ross was in – then out – then in
And still isn't sure politics is healthy
Moammar, always in charge
Fooled no one with his common touch
Janet, who liked a little force,
Never knew when enough was too much
Nelson spent decades in jail
To prove equality could win the day
Louis agrees with that fine ideal
(Unless you're Jewish or you're gay)
Lucien, a simple man,
Wants a country he can call his home
Preston wants an open Prairie
Where businessmen can freely roam
Kim, the Elder, out for loot
Ruled his land with an iron fist
Kim, the Younger, out for fun
Saw no vice he could resist
Bettino's land was so corrupt
Half his government ended up in jail
Benazir's overriding problem
Was that she wasn't born a male
Mike is just a normal guy
Who cuts services and plays golf
Bob, who sees his programs slashed
Writes his memoirs and must want to ralph
Franz, who tired of the feuding,
Quit his job, threw up his hands
The Dalai Lama talks to the press
As he waits for China to give back his lands
Fidel puffs on a cigar
And garners a lot of America's ire
Slobodan it chooses to ignore
Even though of slaughter he never tires
Strom is a Congressional sprite
Who is a hundred if he's a day
Brian fought to uphold a reputation
That wasn't worth much anyway

Rush has got a lot of fans
Although he tends to get his facts wrong
Hilary's in the spotlight's glare –
Bet she wishes to be left alone!

Eighty-eight lines about forty-four politicians

The Hair of the Doggerel That Bit You

The Rap on Russia

We're getting out from under Stalin's fist
Communist? No! Capitalist!
Arrivistes
With a shopping list
In the New World Order
Marx has been permanently dissed

Hey, now, listen up, Commisars
What we want is fast cars
Wet bars
Movie stars
In the New World Order
We'll all live like Czars!

No more whinin'
No more linin'
For consumer goods, we're pinin'!

Hey, now, listen up, Comrades
Adam Smith good, Lenin bad
New dad:
NORAD
In the New World Order
All our old enemies are rad

No more talk about the proles
They are buried in deep, deep holes
Voter polls
Gorby dolls
In the New World Order
Russia's full of shopping malls!

assorted limericks

There once was a leader named Brian

Who, for public approval was dyin'
"Free trade," said he,
"Will make us all wealthy!"
But, I wonder – could he have been lyin'?

There once was a leader named Jean
Who performed while the cameras were on
No Pierre Trudeau he;
By disdaining policy
He left the Party no platform to run upon

There once was a leader named Audrey
Who inherited a Party quite tawdry
She was totally bereft
In a world no longer Left
And the voters left her high and dry

Ahh, Toronto, that World Class City –
With a Dome and a Tower so pretty!
But, those who live on the street
Would be happy with enough to eat –
Have we become a town without pity?

A Heartbeat Away

Came time to be President
and deliver a VP
Someone who could best represent
the old ideology
Someone who was acquiescent
and looked like Kennedy
A figure to make Democrats go pale –
J. Danforth Quayle

Now, Danny boy was none too bright
and easily confused
Nor was he swift to take up a fight
National Guard duty he refused
But, he appealed to the right
and left editorial writers bemused
Attractive to voters, female
J. Danforth Quayle

Tax cuts for the wealthy he'll ever adore
for the well off he always pampers
His enthusiasm for the discredited Star Wars

defense system nothing dampers
And the Central American peasants kept poor
are really “happy campers”
Over reality, partisan politics will always prevail
for J. Danforth Quayle

Then, when the VP started to score
as one of their liabilities
The Republicans didn’t need him any more
the far right to appease
And through recession, riot and even war
they kept him overseas
An asset no longer, expected to fail
J. Danforth Quayle

BUT...

But, just as Washington was starting to hum
there came a tribulation
The President was hospitalized, suffering from
atrial fibrillation
And – finally! – it dawned on some
that this was a serious situation
Who waits to see how the President ails?
J. Danforth Quayle

Now, if for the highest office you would run
the cost could make you broke
It helps to be a rich man’s son
and not an average bloke
Still, in the town of Washington
President Quayle’s no longer a joke!
If called upon, who dares not fail?

Gulf War haiku

dark liquid oozing
in pockets underground
awaiting an outcome

silver phallus in the sky
twisted metal, twisted bodies
Cruising

The Wind Whistles Through Empty Offices

Where Have All the Bond Salesmen Gone?

Where have all the bond salesmen gone?
Short sales amassing?
Where have all the bond salesmen gone?
A short time ago...
Where have all the bond salesmen gone?
Gone to lawyers, every one.
How will they ever earn?
How will they ever earn?

Where have all the lawyers gone?
Short sales amassing?
Where have all the lawyers gone?
A short time ago...
Where have all the lawyers gone?
Gone to friends in government, every one.
How will they ever earn?
How will they ever earn?

Where have all the government friends gone?
Short sales amassing?
Where have all the government friends gone?
A short time ago...
Where have all the government friends gone?
Gone to sympathetic judges, every one.
How will they ever earn?
How will they ever earn?

Where have all the sympathetic judges gone?
Short sales amassing?
Where have all the sympathetic judges gone?
A short time ago...
Where have all the sympathetic judges gone?
Gone to bond salesmen, every one.
How will they ever earn?
How will they ever earn?

The Wind Whistles Through Empty Offices

The wind whistles through empty offices on the 44th floor
like a banshee
ripping the heart out of a land developer
who wasted good money on the campaign of a municipal politician
just before an economic downturn

The wind whistles through empty offices on the 17th floor
like the cry of a giant child
tipping over gleaming modern towers
built on unspeakable private deals
like so many cheap dominoes

The wind whistles through empty offices on the ground floor
of a building we'll all pay for

Forty-four Lines About Twenty-two (Political) Women

Margaret, an old-fashioned type
Wore her armour tight and low
Corazon fought corruption
US bases were her death blow
Geraldine was carefully chosen
But by the people never called
Lynn was watching Clarence Thomas
Get approved, and was appalled
La Cicciolina bared her breasts
Using sex, she could not lose
Imelda said, "I will return,"
Brought back corruption with her shoes
Sheila had a way with words
And always spoiled for a fight
Audrey led the socialists
As the world kept moving right
Zanana left the Cabinet
For charging more than laws allow
Shelley, who insists she lied
Will, in all likelihood, follow
Barbara was a mother figure
Who was liked by everyone
Hilary was a professional
She was the Clinton who should have run

Mmm mmm mmm mmm mmm mmm
Mmm mmm mmm mmm mmm mmm

Kim, although in charge of Justice
Was a member of the PM's team
Gloria was once a leader
Now she writes of self-esteem
June suggested that a hatpin
Was the best safety plan
Winnie went a bit too far

When she stood by her man
Elizabeth was a figurehead
Who loved to be above the fray
Michele, as a columnist
Tried to keep the sexists at bay
Sinead put aside her rock
To talk straight about abortion
Judy always fought to see
Women workers got their fair portion
Marion, concerned for kids
Non-profit daycare quickly blessed
Phyllis got other women pissed
It figures she's last on this list

Forty-four lines about twenty-two (political) women

Just Another Doggerel and Pony Show

Ode on A Cretin Spurned

Pity the woman who thought a poetry symposium
Would be altogether savory, bright and cosy...umm,
While her husband led the country off to war. Ah,
Laura!

Who'll invite poets, then their free speech trammel,
When she opposes their politics (like those of Sam Hamill)?
Who will open the White House up, then slam the door? Ah,
Laura!

Imagine her shock on finding that Whitman
Was not an apologist for Presidential hitmen
Or a mere eulogizer of the country's flora.
Oh, Laura!

Or consider the example of Langston Hughes,
Who railed against all manner of political abuse –
Who would deny him the appropriate fora?
Yes, Laura!

She obviously sides with Plato,
Throw the poets out of NATO!
Impossible to imagine dancing the hora,
That's Laura.

Somewhere in this wondrous land,

Poets take up the pen to oppose her murderous husband,
But, of them, she intends to hear no more! Ah,
Laura!

True Love Advertises Itself

“I go squirrely for men who are burly.”
“I’d never choose a girl with a big caboose.”
“I’m ever jangly with men who are gangly.”
“I will throw fits if a girl doesn’t have tits.”
“I find delicious men who are always suspicious.”
“I always get flirty with girls who talk dirty.”
“I can never despise men with wandering eyes.”
“I have no use for girls who are loose.”
“I never get weepy around men who are creepy.”
“I gasp at girls who grasp.”
“I go dotty for men who are naughty.”
“I’ll give a second look to a girl who can cook.”

Is it any wonder relationships don’t last?

Words That Rhyme with Orange # 12 & 35

Blanc mange
Phelange

Working Man’s Nursery Rhyme Blues

A tisket, a tasket
A completely full in-basket
Errmmm...

Jack and Jill
Went to The Hill
To fetch a favourable tax shelter
Oh, no, no, no

Mary had a little firm,
It fleeced the WTO
Oh, dear

They grow up too fast these days!

Internet Time of Your Life

You want to hear the “Minute Waltz” in 47 seconds.

You want to go *Around the World in 80 Days* in 67 days and 21 hours.
You want to enjoy *24 Hour Party People* in only 18 hours and 37 minutes.
You want to watch *60 Minutes* in 46 Minutes 37 Seconds.
You want your Minute Rice to be made in 44 seconds.
You want John Cage's "4'33" to last two minutes and 57 seconds.
You want to experience *Seven Days in May* in four days in March.
You want to learn *How To Lose a Man in 10 Days*, but you would prefer if you could lose him in 6 days, 12 hours and 23 minutes.
You want to watch *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, but it would be better for you if it was *This Three Quarters of An Hour Has 17 and a Half Minutes*.

This is your life. But, this is our speed.

The ABCs of Comedy

Albert Brooks
Buster Keaton
Charlie Chaplin
Dennis Miller
Ernie Kovacs
Franklin Pangborn
Groucho Marx
Harold Lloyd
I. A. L. Diamond
John Cleese
Ken Finkleman
Lucille Ball
Martin Short
Norman Lear
Oliver Hardy
Peter Sellers
Queen Aishah
Richard Pryor
Sid Caesar
Tommy Smothers
Una Merkel
Valerie Curtain
Woody Allen
Xavier Michaledes
Yakov Smirnoff
Zero Mostel

Art Buchwald
Bill Murray
Catherine O'Hara...

May I Be Franks?

Little Tommy Franks
In charge of all the tanks
To be used in the attack
On the evil madman of Iraq

By the side of little Tommy
Stands Cathy, his own dear “Mommy”
Many years ago, the two did marry
Now she enjoys the perks of the military
Flights on Army planes and a bodyguard
And, from classified meetings she’s never barred

Such security breaches to abate
The Army has begun to investigate

Little Donny Rumsfeld
Should have his tongue held
For the investigation’s entirety
Instead of talking about Tommy’s integrity

All of this is idle prattle
For Tommy will still have his battle
Whether he’s found wrong or right
Such is his CIC’s insight
Though his judgement you may abhor
He will yet lead us off to war

The General in charge of pranks
Little Tommy Franks

Meaning Doggerel Bag

Toronto The, Uhh, Okay

Foreign wars. People with SARS.
Cops unhappy with mere cars.
Early closing bars.
Montreal is from Venus, Toronto Mars.

A computer leasing scandal that’s gone on too long.
Construction contracts that go to friends for a song.
A mayor who is a real ding-dong
Even though voters think he can do no wrong.

Homeless men who give you lip.
Polar bears who take a winter dip.
Kids in mohawks who think they're still hip
As they ogle the (literal) Yonge Street strip.

Intemperate outbursts from the police chief
Who insists racial profiling is outside his brief
While every legitimate protestor is treated like a thief
And the head of the union makes threats beyond belief.

City councillors who should be counseled for verbal abuse.
On the streets, American film companies are let loose.
You can try to explain, but what's the use?
For, truly, who can explain the moose?

Waves breaking on The Beach with toxic foam.
Losing teams playing at Skydome.
Our talents ever southward roam
But what the hell – Toronto's home!

The Rummy Scratch

Nah, nah, you should see me when I'm on fire.
I'm on fire
I'm on fire
You should see me when I'm on fire
I'm on fire
I'm on fire
You should see me when I'm on fire
I'm on fire
On fire
Fire
Nah, nah.

And freedom's untidy.

The
The Coalition
The Coalition Forces
Coalition Forces are
Forces are not
Are not
Are not
Forces are not
Are not
Are not

Bombing Baghdad.
The Coalition Forces.

And freedom's untidy.

We do not
Do not
Do not
Do not
We do not
Do not
Do not
Seek empires
We are not
Are not
Are not
Are not
We are not
Are not
Are not
Imperialistic.
We never have
Never have
Never have
Never have
We never have
Never have
Never have
Been.
I can't imagine why
Imagine why
Imagine why
Imagine why
I can't imagine why
Imagine why
You'd even ask that question.

And freedom's untidy.

My goodness
Goodness
Goodness
Were there
Goodness
Goodness
Goodness

Were there
Goodness
Goodness
Goodness
That many vases?

And freedom's untidy.

I don't think there's ever been a war where
People haven't been killed
Been killed
Been killed
Or prisoners haven't been taken
Been taken
Been taken
People haven't been killed
Been killed
Been killed
Or prisoners haven't been taken
Been taken
Been taken
I don't think there's ever been a war where
I don't think there's ever been war
I don't think there's ever been
I don't think there's ever
I don't think there's
I don't think.

And freedom's untidy.

Lament of Youth

Where're we goin'?
Whadd're we doin'?
Where're we goin'?
Whadd're we doin'?
Where're we goin'?
Whadd're we doin'?
Hunh?
Hunh?

Whadd're we doin'?
Where're we goin'?
Whadd're we doin'?
Where're we goin'?
Whadd're we doin'?

Where're we goin'?'
Are we there, yet?
I'm bored!

Subject to Change

Give me your tired, [1] your poor, [2]
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, [3]
the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. [4]
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, [5]
I lift my lamp beside the golden door! [6]

[1] We've been cutting back on disability insurance, so do not come here unless you are physically able to work.

[2] We've got our own poor to deal with, thank you very much; if you want to come to this country, you'll get more points if you bring a small fortune of your own.

[3] We've been busy watering down laws that protect the environment, making it easier for corporations to spew filth into the air, so if breathing free is really your goal, you might want to stay put.

[4] Except for Iran, Saudi Arabia and other fundamentalist Islamic states, as well as other nations whose nationals we may, from time to time, profile as acting against our interests.

[5] No, no, no, no, no. We patrol our borders very carefully, so don't expect a warm welcome just because you threw together a few pieces of wood and braved stormy seas.

[6] Enjoy your stay.

Who Let the Doggerels Out?

Blame the Beeb

Blair lies
Kelly dies
Blame the Beeb

The lies
Were meant to rationalize
Enlisting allies
In death from the skies
Against a leader whom Tony despised.
It was a disguise
For wondering eyes
Who, nonetheless, began to realize
The manipulation of spies
Had but one prize:
Oil.

Down in the polls

Because of your pro-war role?
Blame the Beeb

Tony insists that he was right
Even though, night after night
And despite
America's might
No weapons of mass destruction have come to light.
Meanwhile, it's considered impolite
To speak of the Iraqis' plight
The occupation is a blight,
While hope of democracy is slight
But ridding the world of Saddam makes it alright.

Sexed up intelligence
Dooms your government to irrelevance
Blame the Beeb

Sixteen Little Words

1. So what if I lied? You think a Republican House and Senate will do anything? Seriously?
2. If you don't like intelligence you're getting, start agencies that will give you intelligence you want.
3. When you think about it, 450,000,000,000 is a huge number. Try not to think about it.
4. Sure, soldiers are complaining about extended Iraq tours. I would have...if I had ever fought.
5. Zen masters spend their entire lives trying to become empty vessels. I did it without effort.
6. Guantanamo executions? Piece of cake. After all, I hold the record for most executions in Texas.
7. I love the United Nations...in a white wine sauce with mashed potatoes. Ha ha ha.
8. You have to admit that flying onto the deck of the aircraft carrier, I looked fantastic.
9. Of course I reward my campaign contributors with big, fat, juicy tax and environmental law breaks.
10. Iraq will have full and fair elections as soon as we're certain we'll like whoever wins.
11. Not a quagmire. Nope. Uh uh. Not even close. No way. Not a quagmire. Really. No.
12. Of course you can believe everything I say about Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions. That's totally different!
13. All you need to know is: Saddam bad, Saddam bad, Saddam bad, Saddam bad, Saddam bad...
14. If you're not with America, you're against us. I was clear – why are former allies surprised?
15. At the rate of one a day, 1460 people will die in four years – hardly any.
16. I am not fit to hold elected office. Impeach me before I make war once more.

Sam Waksal's Blues

Gather round children, don't be late
To learn about the gruesome fate
And events too horrible to relate
Although I **will** tell you the facts, all
Of the sad tale of Sam Waksal

Sammy, that naughty boy, was caught
Practicing tax evasion, obstruction of justice and bank and securities fraud
So a long prison term for this miscreant was sought
An inability to send a fax'll
Be all that awaits that rascally Sam Waksal

Now, followers of justice may object
To his going to a minimum security correct-
ional facility, but it's hell to have to call your broker collect
And wonder if you'll be able to keep up with your regular doses of Paxil
Such are the horrors that will bedevil Sam Waksal

This life he would not have chose
The food is not served with a rose
And you're no longer allowed to wear your own clothes
Not declaring all your income and paying proper tax'll
Get you a cell next to Sam Waksal

Imagine how one must suffer
If he has the soul of a golf duffer
And is only allowed to play a game of tennis or other
Passtime. In the softball tournament he'll take his hacks'll
The chastened and morose Sam Waksal

What is a criminal's life worth?
When he has lost all joy and forsaken all mirth
Surely, this prison is hell on earth
Worse than driving with a broken axle
Such is the fate of the broken Sam Waksal

Nursery Rhymes for Paranoid Times

Okay, the Middle Ages weren't exactly a barrel of laughs. You had plagues. You had insane monarchs. You had...Maypole dances. There is a reason the foremost collectors of folk rhymes of the day were called the brothers **Grimm**.

Still, every time period has its negative aspects, the present being a case in point. The present is always a case in point. One would think that nursery rhymes, which were

originally cautionary tales for adults, would keep pace with the times. Well, I like to scare adults with cautionary tales, so call me the brother the Grimms never knew they had (and probably wouldn't have wanted in any case) and allow me to revise the old classics, to make them, uhh, new classics...

Jack and Jill – Accident Victims Or...?

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water
Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after

The cops and the feds butted heads
To determine who was in error
The cops were sure it was an accident pure
And the feds were certain it was terror

The President and Military General said, "I need a lot of men or I'll
Guarantee more unwarranted attacks."
To the General's delight he was given lots more money to fight
And the President lowered the wealthy's tax

The tabloids and the TV nets fought to see who could buy the biggest gets
When they found out who had been hurt
The tabloids would dangle the alien abduction angle
And TV nets promote the high terror alert

Jack and Jill became pawns of The Hill
To promote a bogus war
Jack was left for dead because of his broken head
And Jill could never live as before

Little Jack Horner's Horror

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner
Eating his Christmas pie
He stuck in his thumb and pulled out a plumb
And said, "What a good boy am I!"

The EPA said no way
The plumb was rotten to the core
The pesticide sprayed on the crop far and wide
Could bring a child to death's door

The President took one look at the report and did hotly retort
"We will not let this stand!"

Plumb growers are my friends, and the only way this ends
Is if there are no more fruit growers in the land!"

So, looking quite tired, the President fired
The scientists who gave out the warning
They were quietly replaced by researchers who put a better face
On the state of corporate farming

Little Jack Horner no longer sits in his corner
But in an expensive hospital bed
He swallowed the pie along with the lie
And the chemicals have left him for dead

Mary Had a Little Lamb...For A While

Mary had a little lamb
It's fleece was white as snow
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go

Mary was hit with an order restraining
And for cause was forced to show
That the beautiful creature she was training
Hadn't been created by Monsanto

"I know nothing of genetic engineering,"
Mary innocently told the court.
"And see no reason to be fearing
My lamb's life being cut short."

Monsanto's lawyers told the judge
They worked from a legal precedent higher
And asked for not a whit of fudge
On a restraint, prior

The company had created the design
And the company had the means
Monsanto had patented a line
That included one of Mary's lamb's genes

Mary had a little lamb
Its fleece was white as snow
But Mary couldn't afford to get out of the jam
And her flock is now in escrow

Humpty's Case Reconsidered

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again

Frumpty Dumpty was broken-hearted
That from her hubby she had been parted
And though her sorrow no amount of money could erase
Her team of lawyers thought she had a strong case

The wall was built too high, you see
Guaranteeing a fall at high velocity
So, while Frumpty Dumpty was in mourning
Her lawyers sued because the wall came with no warning

The jury took no time to agree
And gave Frumpty Dumpty a gazillion dollars for her misery
But don't worry if you think the justice system needs to get real
The brick manufacturers have launched an appeal

Keep That Doggerel on a Short Leash

Hallmark Greetings from the Seat of Empire

We're sorry to have to be the ones to tell you
We're about to bomb your country to hell. You
Might want to find a comfortable shelter
And strap yourself in with a rope or a belt or
Maybe just vacate the premises.

We have nothing against you personally, understand
We just want what's resting under your land
And your leader is no longer compliant
So we've had to call him a tyrant
Who, as it turns out, is our country's nemesis.

Be of good cheer! As your lighting dims
Remember that you didn't need all of those limbs
And losing relatives, if you had any,
Is a small price to pay for our hegemony.
So, like all people who'd like to remain on the Earth, it
Seems the odds are good that you'll survive
(Although you might be roasted alive).
We'll all meet in heaven some day
And then you will get your chance to say

How much your sacrifice was worth it.

Selected Glengarry (Radio Edit)

LEVENE: [silence], John. You're burning my [silence], I can't get a [silence] lead...you think that was luck. My stats for those years? [silence]...over that period of time...? [silence]. It wasn't luck. It was skill. You want to throw that away, John...? You want to throw that away?

ROMA: And I don't want any [silence] [silence] and I don't give a [silence], Lingk puts me over the top, you filed it, that's fine, any other [silence] kicks out you go back. You...you reclose it, 'cause I closed it and you...you owe me the car.

MOSS: "[silence] the Machine"? "[silence] the Machine"? What is this. Courtesy class...? You're [silence], Rick—are you [silence] nuts? You're hot, so you think you're the ruler of this place...?!

LEVENE: Marshal the leads...marshal the leads? What the [silence], what bus did you get off of, we're here to [silence] sell. [silence] marshaling the leads. What the [silence] talk is that? What the [silence] talk is that? Where did you learn that? In school?

ROMA: (to Williamson) You stupid fucking [silence]. You, Williamson...I'm talking to you, [silence]...You just cost me six thousand dollars. (pause) Six thousand dollars. And one Cadillac. That's right. What are you going to do about it? What are you goin to do about it, [silence]. You [silence] [silence]. Where did you learn your trade. You stupid [silence] [silence]. You idiot. Whoever told you you could work with men?

And they all lived miserably ever after...

Toronto Seen #1

So, there was this guy
standing at the station, waiting for a bus.
He was old, old, old, old, old
and he was wearing a yellow sandwichboardy thing
that read: "I am the poet laureate of the universe."
And I thought, That's a pretty big territory.
Do you write odes to Alpha Centauri?
Sonnets to background radiation,
or perhaps a haiku?
Quadrilles to distant quadrants?
Sestets upon phenomenon at the outer edges of space/time the likes of which we cannot
even begin to imagine?
I mean, I'm having enough trouble writing about this little corner of the universe I inhabit
and your job is to tackle the whole enchilada?
More power to ya, brother.

Faith-based Chaos

- I. Thou shalt have no other Gods but money.
- II. Thou shalt make graven images on television.
- III. Thou shalt use the name of the LORD thy God to justify thine atrocities.
- IV. Forget the sabbath day, to keep making money.
- V. Dishonour thy founding fathers.
- VI. Thou shalt kill anybody who gets in thy way.
- VII. Thou shalt commit mayhem in thy quest for domination.
- VIII. Thou shalt steal and call it international commerce.
- IX. Thou shalt bear false witness against thy neighbour who pisseth thee off.
- X. Thou shalt covet thy neighbour's resources.

Never Say Never

Are you afraid that any old twerp'll
Find a rhyme for the word "purple?"
Or maybe a person who "had a lithp oneth"
Will accidentally come across a rhyme for month?
Perhaps a poor poet will ver-
Sify in a way that rhymes with silver?
Never say never

The Grabblegobbloms Will Have Won

Once upon a time there was a lovely little town called Spinnett,
Which came under an unprovoked attack.
And all the boys and girls and men and women and dogs and cats who lived in it
Wanted their peace of mind back.

Mayor Sanchez got on the Tube and said,
"Of all the problems
That fill us with dread
We must face the worst – Grabblegobbloms!"

Mother and Father put their hands over their mouths
To have a name put to their worst fears,
And, concerned about the innocence of youth,
Covered little Timmy and Bobby-Jo's ears.

So the children didn't hear
About the new rules in effect:
How everybody would submit to The Ears,
And nobody could object.

When Father explained it, Timmy didn't understand
Why Mayor Sanchez had to listen
To every person in the land.
Was there something Timmy was missing?

Father looked at Timmy with a little fright:
"Don't say anything bad about the Ears
In light of day or darkest night
They protect us and so deserve our cheers.

"There is no reason to be glum
Just remember that they hate our freedom
And if we don't act swiftly, my son
The Grabblegobbles will have won"

Now, you might have thought that listening in
On every conversation would have been enough
To keep out the very poison
That the good folks of Spinnett would snuff.

However, Mayor Sanchez knew better.
He knew evil plots abounded,
And if the law was observed to the letter
The city's death knell would be sounded.

So, with another Mayoral decree,
The Eyes were deployed
At secret places around the city
Where evildoers might be employed.

And, if the Eyes caught Miss Fizzlebruster's innocent habit
Of ordering but not paying for The Frog and Ruby's tea,
Regular people tsked and said to themselves, "Dagnabit,
That's the price we pay to be free!"

Timmy saw in the slow drip, drip
Of innuendo and lack of trust
And the corrosive nature of gossip
The social bonds of his community bust.

Father looked at Timmy with sadness:
"Don't say anything bad about the Eyes.
That would be a form of madness,
That would be most unwise.

"There is no reason to be glum

Just remember that they hate our freedom
And if we don't act swiftly, my son
The Grabblegobblers will have won."

"The people will sue us if we remain idle,"
The Mayor said to himself,
"But to be seen to subvert the laws would be suicidal,
So we'll have to proceed by stealth."

Mayor Sanchez, by executive order,
Rounded up anybody whose name was foreign
And built a large wall along the Spinnett/Spunnett border
So the city's enemies couldn't pour in.

Then, he authorized the use of the Freeblegluse
An interrogation tool so abhorrent
That, had the citizens of Spinnett known of its use,
Their anger towards him would have been a raging torrent.

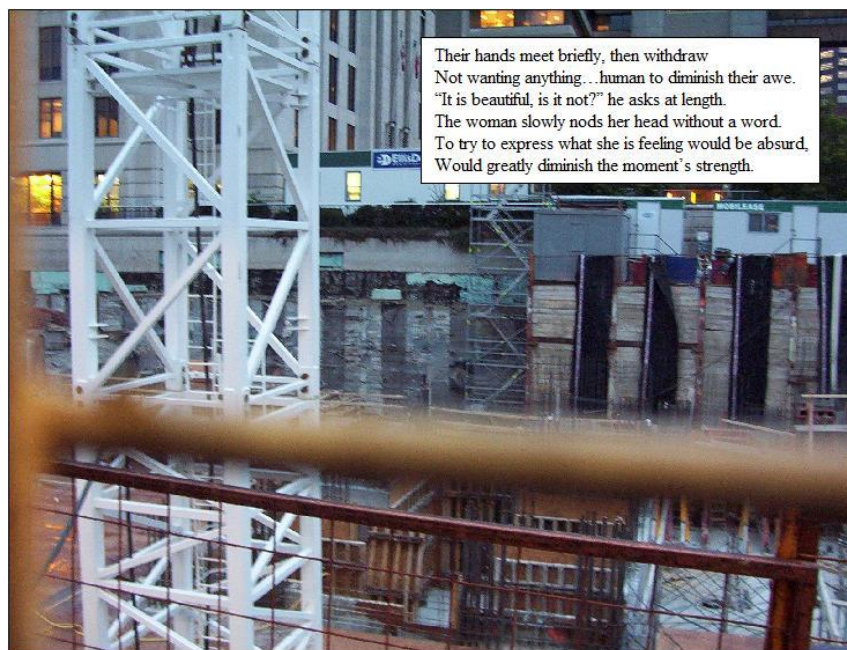
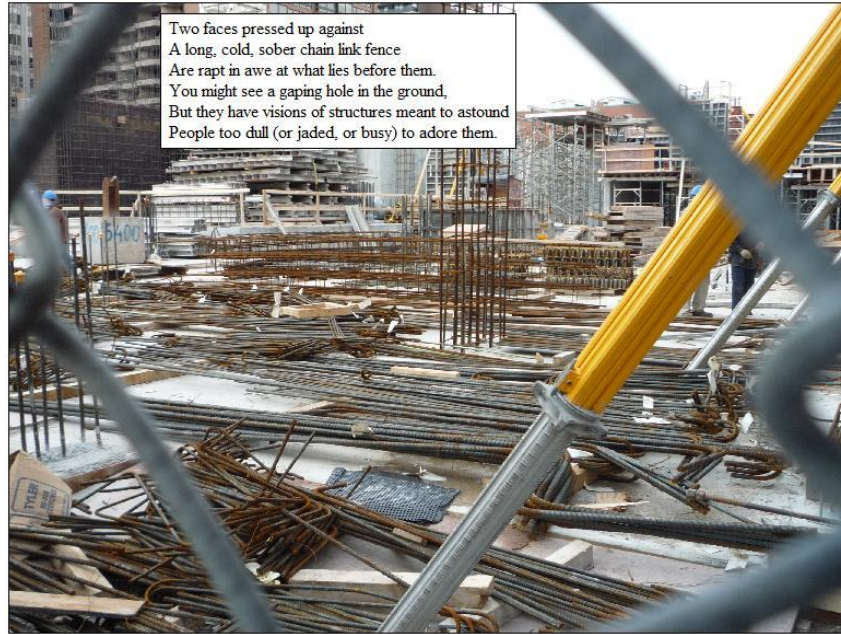
Then, on one very unhappy day
Mister Wilson disappeared and never returned.
It was because of his funny name, they say –
Any explanations beyond that were spurned.

Father told Timmy that you can't take the past back
But, you had to admit that since the Mayor had gotten his way
Spinnett had not come under attack,
And the Grabblegobblers had been kept at bay.

Timmy looked at Father with sadness:
"Do you not see the effects of the Eyes and the Ears?
The government is fomenting a kind of madness
Playing us against each other by exploiting our fears.

"There is a reason to be glum
We have given up all of our freedom
Do you not see, father, what we have done?
By enslaving ourselves, the Grabblegobblers have won."

Love Amid the Construction

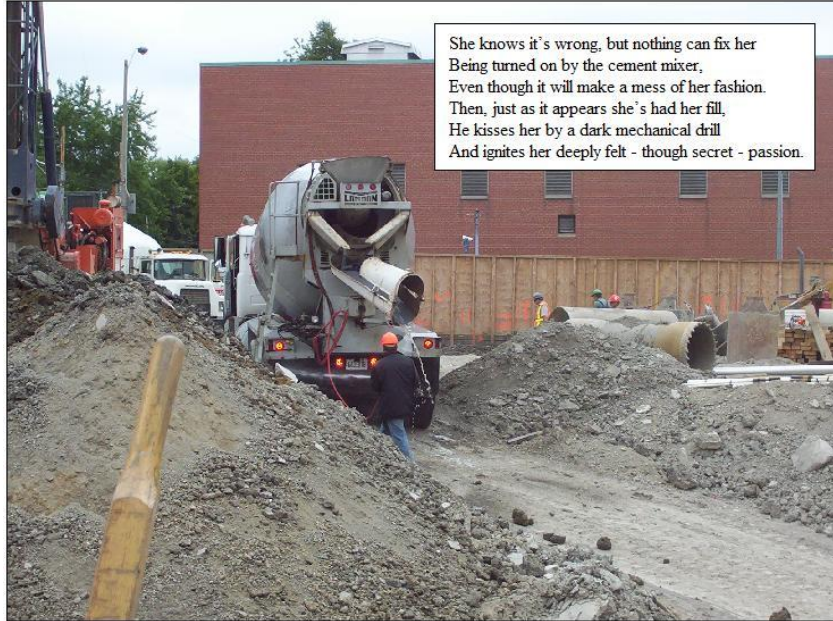




She is a corporate attorney (an attorneyess?);
If you can afford her fee, she can get you out of any mess.
(It's true that she has represented many jerks.)
He is a security guard
Who toils vigilantly for a very little reward,
But the job occasionally has perks.



"Would you like to go in?" the man quietly asks.
(Guarding construction sites is one of his typical tasks.)
The woman turns to him, her eyes quite wide.
Dare she, dare she, dare she feel hope
That she'll see things up close thanks to this dope?
She whispers, "Yes," and is quickly ushered inside.



She knows it's wrong, but nothing can fix her
Being turned on by the cement mixer,
Even though it will make a mess of her fashion.
Then, just as it appears she's had her fill,
He kisses her by a dark mechanical drill
And ignites her deeply felt - though secret - passion.



Yes, passion! Some people enter its throes
On construction sites that are slated to become condos,
Or malls, or office buildings, or other markers of urban growth.
There, in the mud next to a pile of pipes,
They make their impassioned yips, yaps and yipes,
And take their loud - and, yet unspoken - lover's oath.



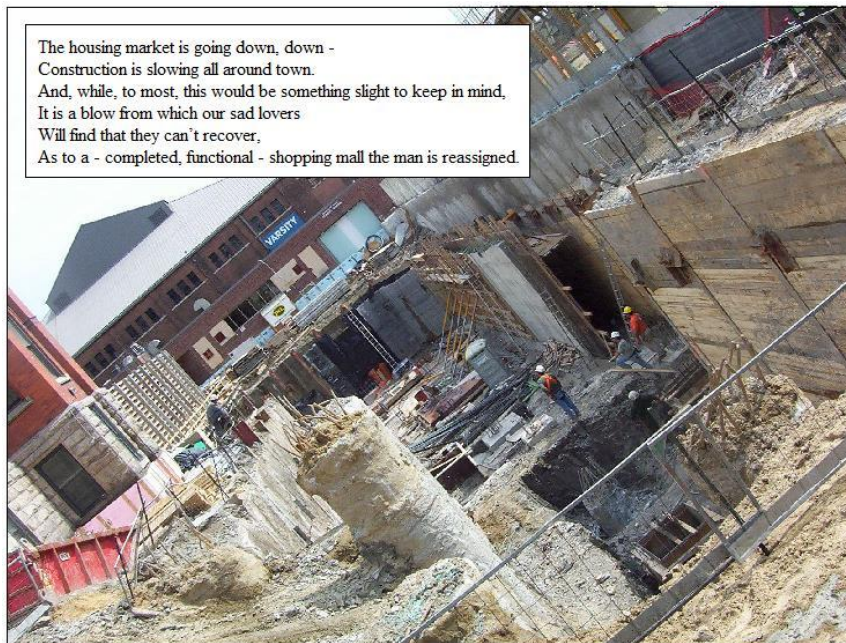
The couple finds, to their surprise,
Their love grow at the building's rise
As they make love on ever higher floors.
When in conflict, they fall in love again
By making out in the shadow of a tall crane,
Or in a closet full of drywall stores.



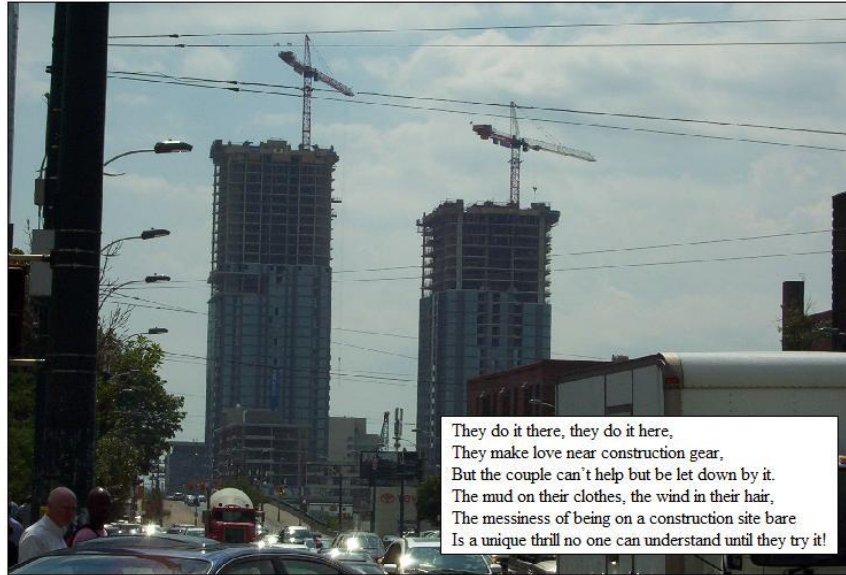
Is it just a form of recreation,
Having passionate sex in a symbol of a city's constant act of self-creation?
If so, they do not want more.
If she were to eventually become a mother,
It would, their passion, completely smother,
And their exciting lives would just become a bore.



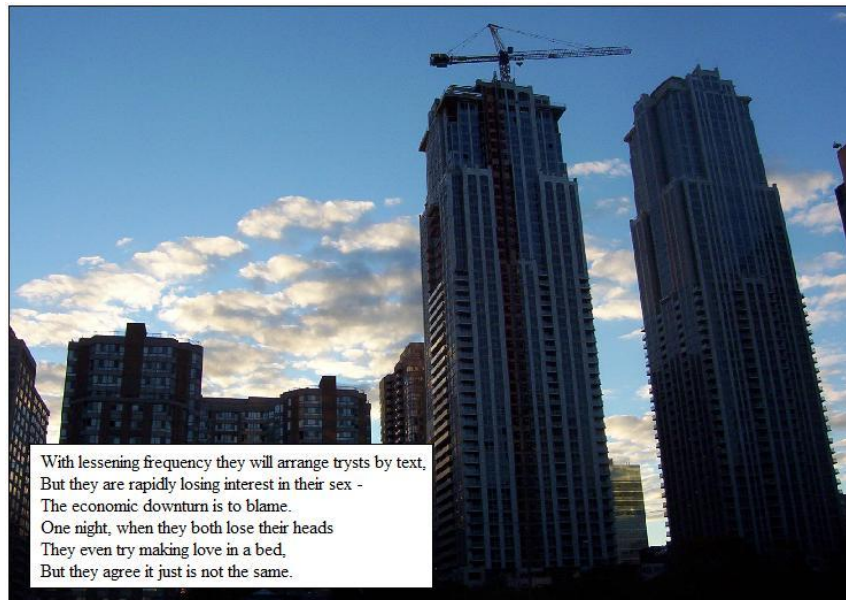
And, yet...



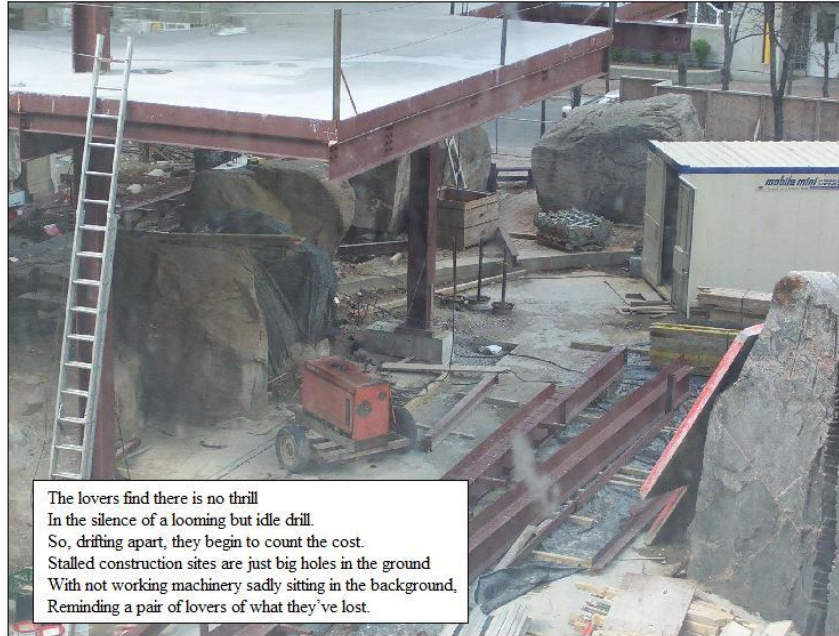
The housing market is going down, down -
Construction is slowing all around town.
And, while, to most, this would be something slight to keep in mind,
It is a blow from which our sad lovers
Will find that they can't recover,
As to a - completed, functional - shopping mall the man is reassigned.



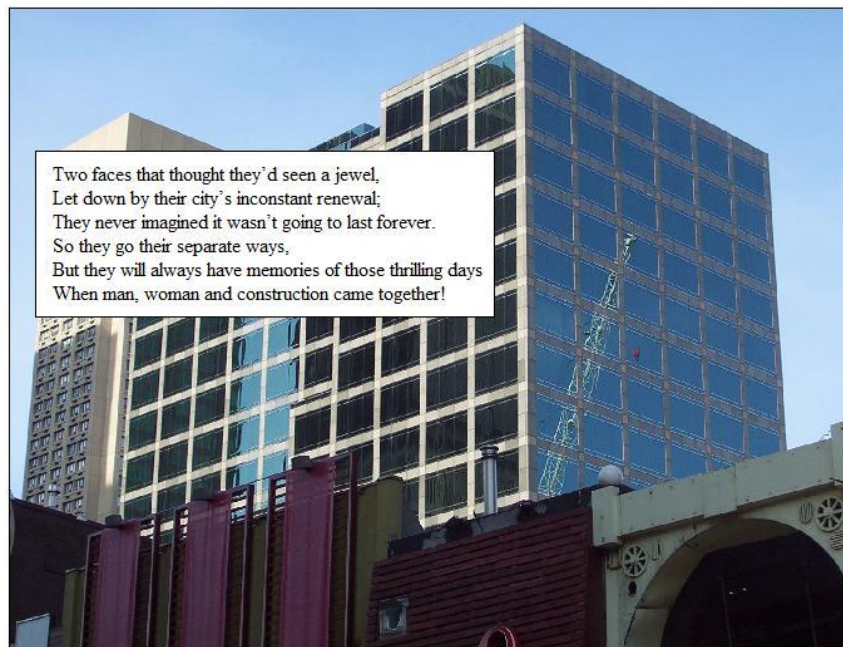
They do it there, they do it here,
They make love near construction gear,
But the couple can't help but be let down by it.
The mud on their clothes, the wind in their hair,
The messiness of being on a construction site bare
Is a unique thrill no one can understand until they try it!



With lessening frequency they will arrange trysts by text,
But they are rapidly losing interest in their sex -
The economic downturn is to blame.
One night, when they both lose their heads
They even try making love in a bed,
But they agree it just is not the same.



The lovers find there is no thrill
In the silence of a looming but idle drill.
So, drifting apart, they begin to count the cost.
Stalled construction sites are just big holes in the ground
With not working machinery sadly sitting in the background,
Reminding a pair of lovers of what they've lost.

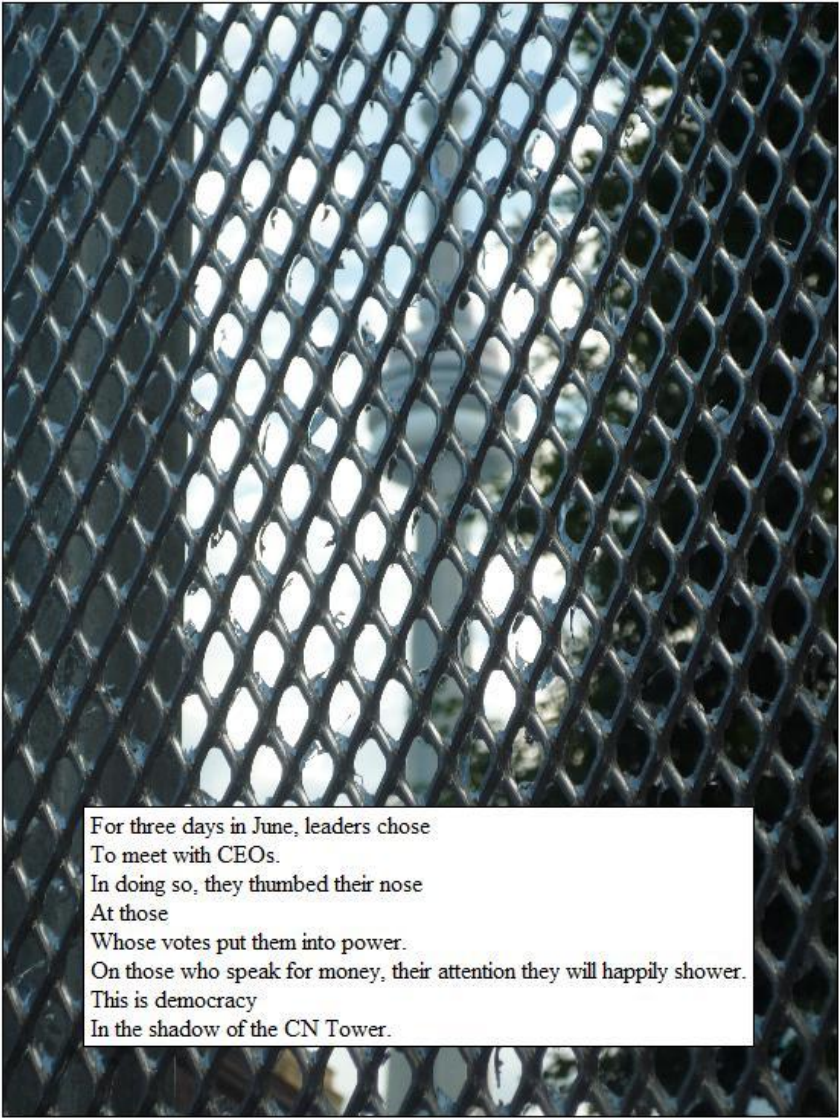


Two faces that thought they'd seen a jewel,
Let down by their city's inconstant renewal;
They never imagined it wasn't going to last forever.
So they go their separate ways,
But they will always have memories of those thrilling days
When man, woman and construction came together!

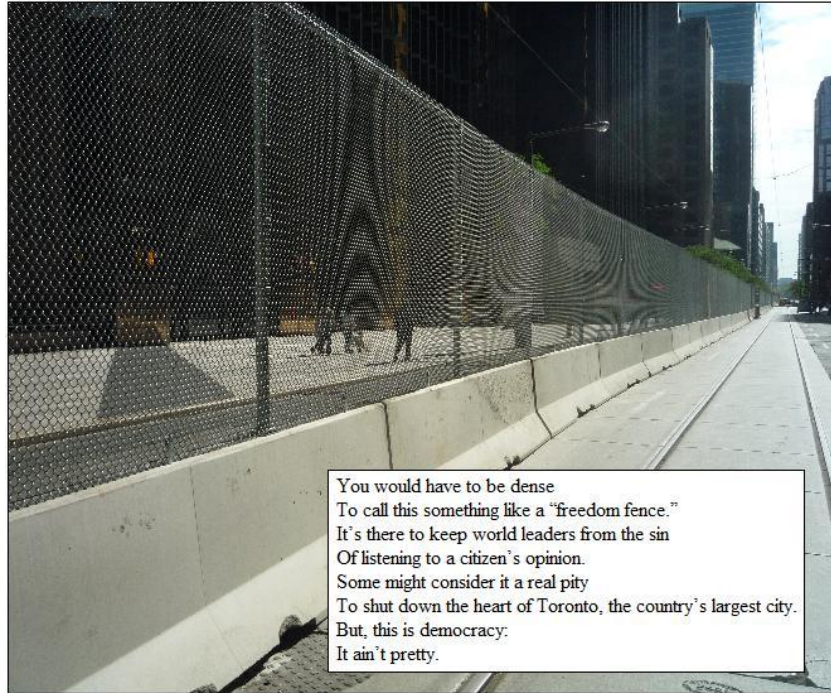
No, THIS is Democracy!

You may find it awfully funny,
The preparations for the G20
Summit. Planned some months in advance,
They leave no possibility of the minutest chance
That a world leader may
Hear what common citizens have to say.
This is democracy:
Where only the powerful are allowed to play.





For three days in June, leaders chose
To meet with CEOs.
In doing so, they thumbed their nose
At those
Whose votes put them into power.
On those who speak for money, their attention they will happily shower.
This is democracy
In the shadow of the CN Tower.



You would have to be dense
To call this something like a "freedom fence."
It's there to keep world leaders from the sin
Of listening to a citizen's opinion.
Some might consider it a real pity
To shut down the heart of Toronto, the country's largest city.
But, this is democracy.
It ain't pretty.

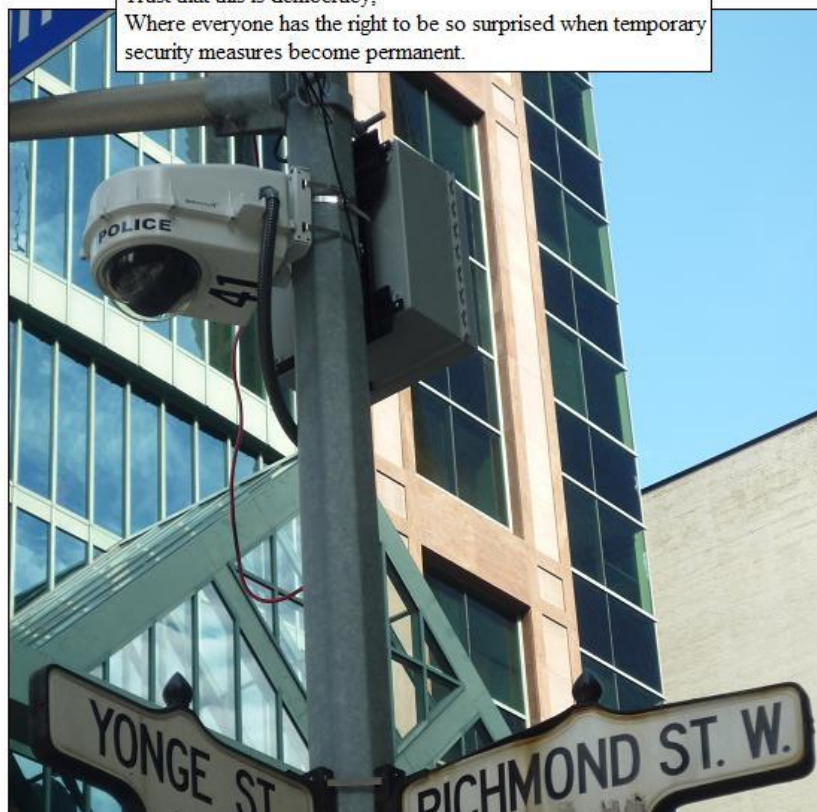


Around the perimeter, 77 cameras have been put in place
To help police identify every face
Of every person who walks by them.
(Congratulations - you are now in the police system!)

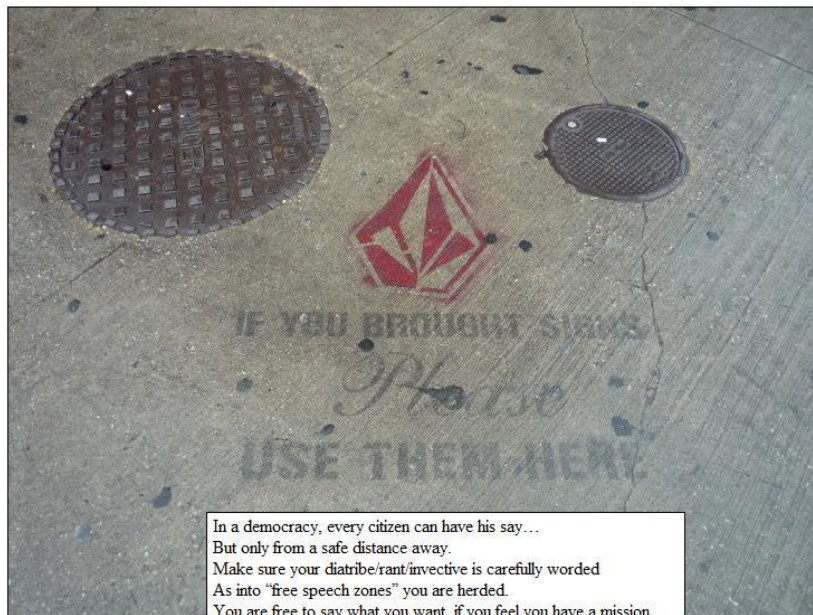
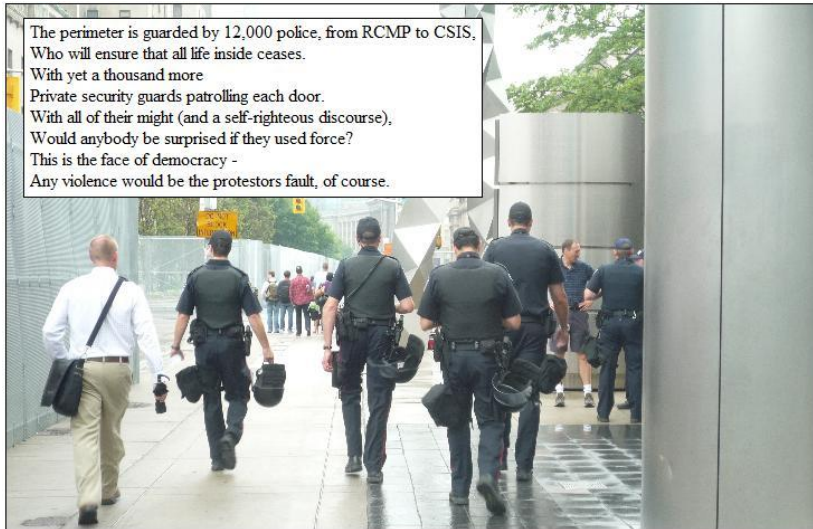
This isn't heaven, this is not Hell;
This is a scene out of Orwell.
This is democracy -
The Ministry of Love thinks it's just swell.



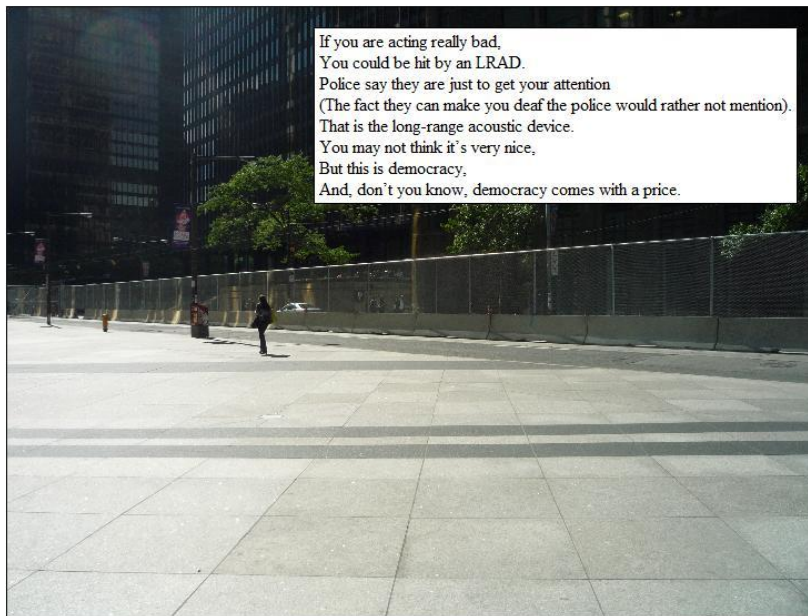
Like a bad complexion, they pop up on every corner, so
Smile! You are being caught on video
Talking to friends, picking your nose,
Smashing a storefront window, adjusting your hose.
Worried about your privacy? There is no reason to lament -
It's not like the cameras are set in cement.
Trust that this is democracy,
Where everyone has the right to be so surprised when temporary
security measures become permanent.

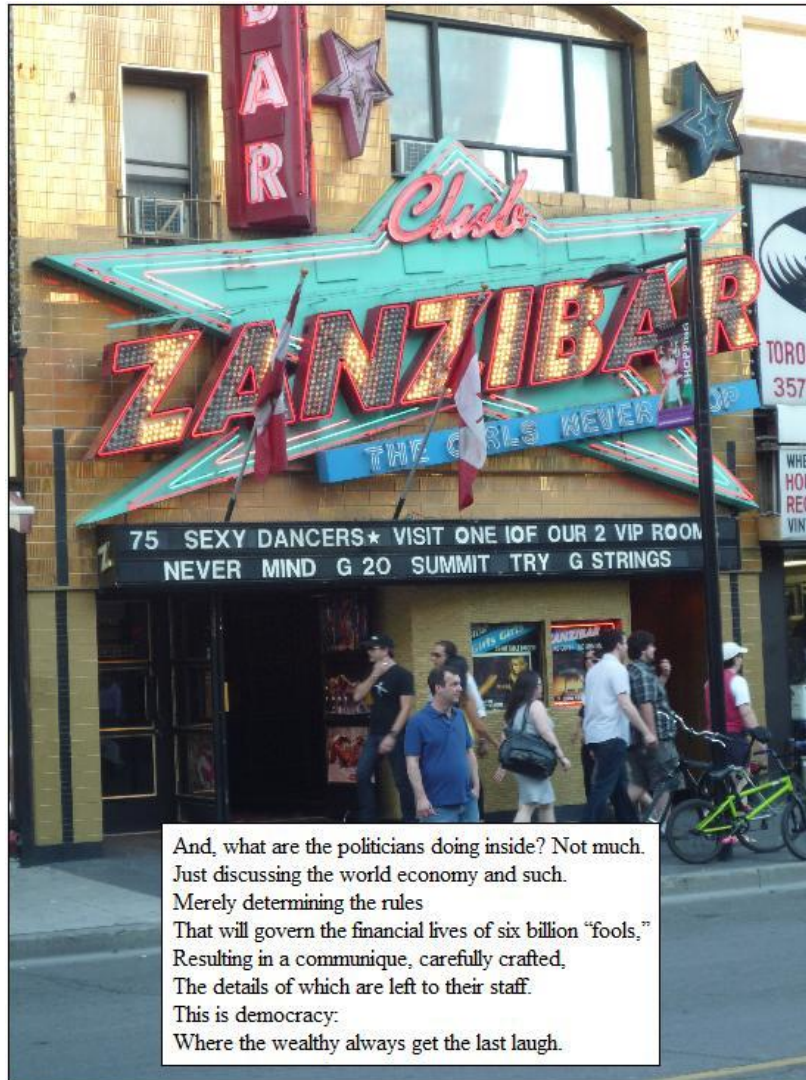


The perimeter is guarded by 12,000 police, from RCMP to CSIS,
Who will ensure that all life inside ceases.
With yet a thousand more
Private security guards patrolling each door.
With all of their might (and a self-righteous discourse),
Would anybody be surprised if they used force?
This is the face of democracy -
Any violence would be the protestors fault, of course.



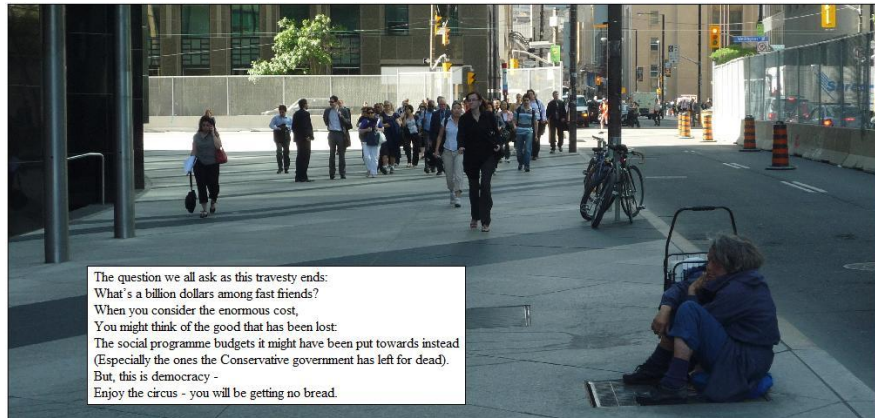
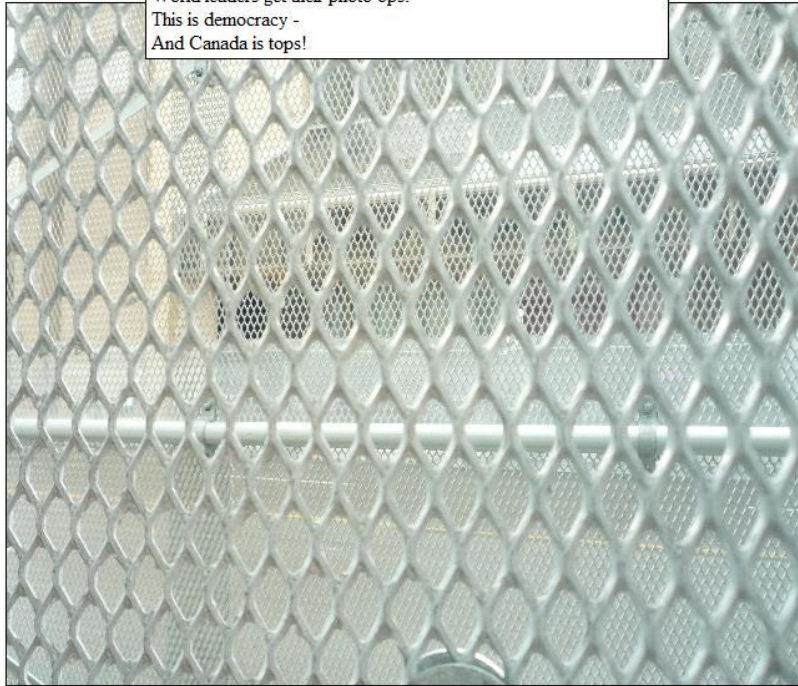
In a democracy, every citizen can have his say...
But only from a safe distance away.
Make sure your diatribe/rant/invective is carefully worded
As into "free speech zones" you are herded.
You are free to say what you want, if you feel you have a mission,
But, the powerful people gathered within are equally free to not listen.
This is democracy, my friend,
Where into the wind you're pissin.





And, what are the politicians doing inside? Not much.
Just discussing the world economy and such.
Merely determining the rules
That will govern the financial lives of six billion "fools,"
Resulting in a communique, carefully crafted,
The details of which are left to their staff.
This is democracy:
Where the wealthy always get the last laugh.

The logic of summits isn't deep:
World leaders meet and make promises they know they won't keep.
They leave with official documents full of platitudes
To mollify people who have negative attitudes.
What makes it worth the cost of all the cops?
World leaders get their photo ops.
This is democracy -
And Canada is tops!

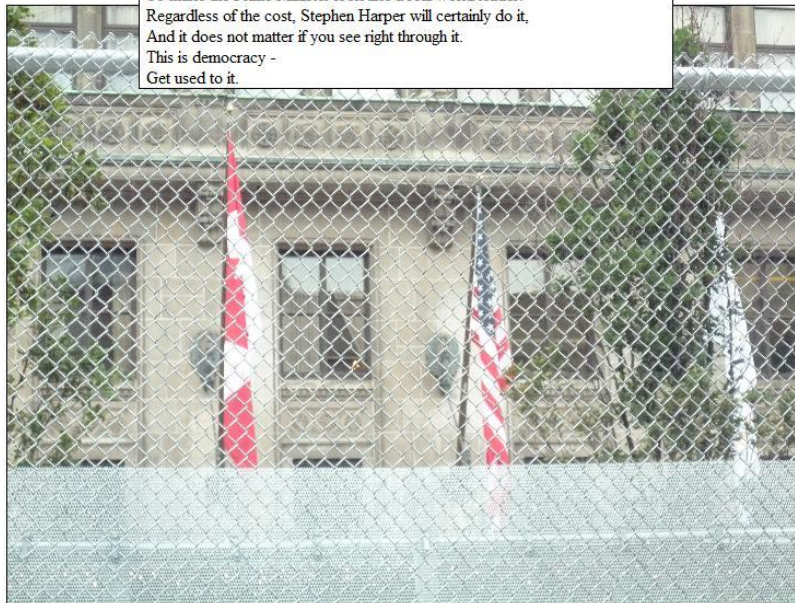


The question we all ask as this travesty ends:
What's a billion dollars among fast friends?
When you consider the enormous cost,
You might think of the good that has been lost:
The social programme budgets it might have been put towards instead
(Especially the ones the Conservative government has left for dead).
But, this is democracy -
Enjoy the circus - you will be getting no bread.



Why would the government shut down
The center of the country's biggest town?
With some luck, you
Will recognize that this is a fuck you:
The Conservatives are telling Toronto it will be sorry
For not voting Tory.
In Canada, this is democracy:
A blood sport most gory.

You will have to look very, very hard
To see the smallest signs of life between King Street and Lakeshore Boulevard.
It's got to be worth it, though, dear reader,
To make the Prime Minister look like a real world leader.
Regardless of the cost, Stephen Harper will certainly do it,
And it does not matter if you see right through it.
This is democracy -
Get used to it.



You may find it awfully funny,
The preparations for the G20
Summit. Planned some months in advance,
They leave no possibility of the minutest chance
That a world leader may
Hear what common citizens have to say.

This is democracy:
Where only the powerful are allowed to play.

For three days in June, leaders chose
To meet with CEOs.
In doing so, they thumbed their nose
At those
Whose votes put them into power.
On those who speak for money, their attention they will happily shower.
This is democracy
In the shadow of the CN Tower.

You would have to be dense
To call this something like a “freedom fence.”
It’s there to keep world leaders from the sin
Of listening to a citizen’s opinion.
Some might consider it a real pity
To shut down the heart of Toronto, the country’s largest city.
But, this is democracy:
It ain’t pretty.

Around the perimeter, 77 cameras have been put in place
To help police identify every face
Of every person who walks by them.
(Congratulations - you are now in the police system!)
This isn’t heaven, this is not Hell;
This is a scene out of Orwell.
This is democracy -
The Ministry of Love thinks it’s just swell.

Like a bad complexion, they pop up on every corner, so
Smile! You are being caught on video
Talking to friends, picking your nose,
Smashing a storefront window, adjusting your hose.
Worried about your privacy? There is no reason to lament -
It’s not like the cameras are set in cement.
Trust that this is democracy,
Where everyone has the right to be so surprised when temporary security measures
become permanent.

The perimeter is guarded by 12,000 police, from RCMP to CSIS,
Who will ensure that all life inside ceases.
With yet a thousand more
Private security guards patrolling each door.
With all of their might (and a self-righteous discourse),
Would anybody be surprised if they used force?

This is the face of democracy -
Any violence would be the protestors fault, of course.

In a democracy, every citizen can have his say...
But only from a safe distance away.
Make sure your diatribe/rant/invective is carefully worded
As into "free speech zones" you are herded.
You are free to say what you want, if you feel you have a mission,
But, the powerful people gathered within are equally free to not listen.
This is democracy, my friend,
Where into the wind you're pissin.

Professional demonstrators
Are a godsend to "democratic" dictators.
Politicians love it when anarchists get violent -
It gives them reasons to suppress legitimate dissent.
Even the worthiest complaint
Will be portrayed by friendly media as having a violent taint.
This is, after all, democracy.
Oh, you have an opinion? Well, isn't that quaint!

If you are acting really bad,
You could be hit by an LRAD.
Police say they are just to get your attention
(The fact they can make you deaf the police would rather not mention).
That is the long-range acoustic device.
You may not think it's very nice,
But this is democracy,
And, don't you know, democracy comes with a price.

The summit is supposed to lure the stray tourist?
With no citizens or mailboxes, our chances are the poorest.
We may impress foreigners with the quality of our doctors
(Especially if they're strafed by one of the black helicopters).
Let's be honest: Toronto is not going to become the envy of other nations
Because we rerouted public transit around affected train stations.
But, this is now our democracy:
Toronto has been placed on a US list of unsafe travel destinations.

The Chamber of Commerce quakes with delight
At the avalanche of business the summit will ignite.
"Some may worry," it says, "But some
Believe there will be benefits for years to come!"
For a government that believes that everything is for sale,
The Conservatives appear to get their economic advice wholesale.
This is democracy:

An epic fail.

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Get used to it.

The Chairman of The Streets, Inc. Takes Charge

Long after we've gone home at the end of the day
The people we walk over but never notice
Meet under the Gardener Expressway
To discuss how to melt our hearts of ice,
How to make their homelessness pay
(And, how to get rid of those goddamn lice!).
Concrete slabs are executive seating
For this semi-regular board meeting.

The Chairman is an elderly homunculus named Frump
With lined brown face and two demonic tufts of pure white hair.
By day he is a surly grump
Whom people think is not all there,
But he has survived on the streets for decades - he's nobody's chump -
And he has a wit or two, never fear.
Chairman Frump looked at the crowd, from Cross-eyed Dooley to Matty the Hoarder
And shouted, "I now call this meeting of The Streets, Inc. to order!"

The Chairman took a look at the unofficial secretary:
Of all there, he was the tallest and the thinnest.
His eyes darted this way and that, wary -
What was his name? Franklin? Funkerline? No - Innis.
To be honest, The Chairman had always found him scary,
So he hollered: "I think we can dispense with the reading of the minutes!"
Among the board members there was a cheer
(Except for those who were swigging cheap beer).

Noticeably flinching, the Chairman said:
"Although, if I may be so bold,
I would ask for a moment of silence for the recently dead.
Typhoon Mary, who died of cold,
Skateboard Larry, who died of cold,
Lovelorn Gary, who died of cold,
The Old Fairy, who died of cold,
Big Dumb Kind-hearted Frank, who was hit by a car that had swerved out of the way of a
bicyclist and cracked open his head,
And Hatful of Harry who died because he was too old."
Those gathered, their mortality pondered
(Except for those whose minds wandered).

"Okay," Chairman Frump said, clapping his hands -
Not to get attention, but just to keep them warm.
"It is time we reconsidered our brand.

I would suggest a committee we form
To consider alternatives to the polite demand
That has sadly become the norm.”
The group looked at each other. Then, they looked away.
They didn’t understand what he was going on about, so they had nothing in response to say.

“When I started the business in seventy-three,”
The Chairman told them with a sigh,
“It was just my honey and me,”
And he gave the nearby Mrs. Frump a wink of his eye.
“We harvested compassion as far as the eye could see,
And the only limit to our take was the sky.”
The board members nodded their mostly grizzled heads
(Except for the ones busy wetting their hard beds).

“For the good old days, I am a mourner.
Today, our core business has changed:
There is a Poverty, Inc. rep on every corner,
Ordinary people no longer think it strange.
They just walk by my dear wife, they totally ignore her,
And we receive less and less of their change.
As competition for people’s compassion has become more fierce,
Our revenues are getting worse.

Cardboard signs and clever patter are out;
Synergistic solutions are now in.
And, you can forget the pathetic pout:
A strategic market approach to product diversification will help us to win!
We need innovative strategies to increase our market clout,
And to counter our competitors’ spin!”
Mrs. Frump turned to the group, making a big show,
And whispered loudly, “That’s my hubby. He is mad, you know.”

The VP Requisitions, Eleanor McGurk,
With trembling lips,
Accused Eddie Alonzo, VP R&D, the jerk,
Of stealing office paper clips!
Which, considering that the streets were where they did their work,
Common sense did eclipse.
Eddie, of course, took great offense,
And the descent into meeting dysfunction did commence.

The Chairman raised his hands in a vain attempt to appease,
But the VP, PR shrieked as the VP, Coffee, Tea and Doughnuts pulled her hair,
And all ignored his peaceful pleas.

The VP, Communications gave him a baleful glare.
He, like the rest of them, didn't understand synergies;
He had long given up on getting a shake that was fair.
Chairman Frump knew nothing realistically could be decided
With a board that was so terribly divided.

The Chairman sighed as he watched the madness
Unfold. This was no contingent operating difficulty, of course,
But a consequence of economic badness.
You'd think he'd be happy with his growing (out of) work force,
But the Chairman looked upon them with some sadness;
As their numbers grew and effectiveness waned, their anger seemed to get worse.
Once again, with no strategy to move forward and not a lesson learned,
Over the hoots and other noises, Chairman Frump shouted, "This meeting is adjourned!"

A Nice Place to Visit

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
Your welcoming, nurturing motherland –
It's good to see you have returned.
It must be great to be on the old sod
After years of schooling abroad –
You must share with us all that you have learned.
W...what is that you say?
You have not come back home to stay?
Oh, dear! By our own children we've been spurned!

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
A lovely, scenic, simple land,
For an invigorating vacation.
It's not much to look at, it's true,
And there isn't really much here to do
Except lie in the mud of rejuvenation.
If it is for youth you hunger,
All it takes is one treatment to make you look years younger.
Our children did not lie, tourist: it is the pride of our nation.

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
An excellent place for a businessman
Looking for new resources to exploit.
Our mud has a thousand and one uses;
An entrepreneur will make money on whichever he chooses,
He just has to be cunning and financially adroit.
If you would like to export it,
Our government will be happy to support it -
This could make us wealthier than Detroit!

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
Where a peaceful people welcomes your religion.
We all believe in the mythical arts.
We worship the mystical powers of fried rice,
But some of us will happily accept your Christ
Into our hearts.
Of course, this will create a big schism
Between your religion and our form of animism,
But surely that's no reason to tear the country apart.

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
A seemingly exotic land;
We may not have much here, but we love it.
We know you are a foreign spy.
Go ahead and admit it. No, really, do not be shy.
We understand our glorious mud your people covet.
We see you plotting with King Feherblatz
To install a democratic government quite ersatz,
But we are peaceful and we can rise above it.

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
An increasingly troubled land,
Where peace seems to have been interrupted
By arguments among political elites
And violent skirmishes spilling out onto the streets –
Our way of life is more and more becoming disrupted.
You come here as adviser to the king
About how much force it is right to use to end the squabbling,
And so, little by little, our political system is corrupted.

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
Brave and clever Captain.
It's good to have foreign boots on our ground.
All this fighting must cease.
We long to have returned our country's peace,
Where joy and goodwill did abound.
Is it really worth all that blood?
I mean, all we're fighting about, really, is mud;
Surely, there's enough of the stuff to go around.

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
Our sad war-torn, strife-ridden land.
We are glad to see someone from your country here to do serious reporting.
The growing corruption in government,
The violence, the destruction, finding out where all the mud riches went -

Tell the world about the nasty vices we have been importing.
But...what is it you really want to see?
Just your own countrymen's casualties?
You have your priorities, I suppose, even if reality you are distorting.

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
A forward-looking kind of land;
With your diplomacy, you will help us stop the fighting.
Sit down with us and talk a – hey! Wait! Wha – why are you going to the King's palace?
This is like something from *Alice*!
We were hoping some terrible wrongs you would be righting!
We could have been witnessing democracy's finest hour;
Instead, the kleptocrats can remain in power,
Our good country to continue blighting.

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
A ruined, broken, impoverished land
With not much left to give.
Our mud no longer nourishes.
The result? Our economy no longer flourishes.
Our international debt nobody is willing to forgive.
Can your NGO help us in our time of need?
With people to house and people to feed?
Can you help supply us with the basics to live?

Welcome to Kazpafstahn,
A strangely quiet and yet hopeful land.
Of scientists and researchers, let there be a great flood!
We have always been welcoming (at least we're consistent) –
You say you have found something highly disease resistant
In our citizens' blood?
This new idea – we should despise it,
But, sure, what the hell, we'll help you monetize it –
It's got to work out better than the mud!

The Man With the Plan

You say that you cannot afford
The products that you once adored?
Afraid your children will not see
Your generation's opportunity?
Something's gone wrong, something horrid
Upon this we can all – well, most of us agree.

“Trust me,” he smiles, “I’m a politician
And I have a brilliant plan.”

As your wages are rolled far back,
A Hatchet is taken to your contract.
While your decreasing buying power gets the attention,
Cutbacks are being made to your pension.
That cash had already been raided by the company, and that's a fact
Too embarrassing to mention.

"On this issue," he states, "I will take a firm stand –
You must believe I have a plan."

Even promising students with fancy degrees
Watch as jobs are being shipped overseas.
Agreements on supposedly free trade
Are responsible for adjustments being made.
High unemployment is becoming an incurable disease,
And promises to cure it a hollow charade.

"I feel your pain," he tells us, "and might consider some sort of ban
To be part of my plan."

Since power in the hands of workers cannot be trusted,
Every union must be thoroughly busted;
Not only will this "high" wages and benefits lower,
It will weaken those opposed to Conservative power.
As the lives of working stiff's are continually adjusted,
Their bosses get richer and richer by the hour.

"This seems totally unfair," he sympathizes. "We need a vision, grand:
And that is exactly what you'll be getting with my plan."

Cutting taxes is supposed to be a
Universal panacea
That would "help incurable slob's
Get off their asses and find jobs."
But it is just so much verbal diarrhoea
To placate growing mobs.

"To ease the tax burden," he boldly states, "I will do all I can.
For, you see, I have a bold plan."

After years of cutting taxes, government revenues have shrunk,
Causing programmes to help ordinary people to become useless junk.
Hoping to get some "enjoyment"
From extended benefits for unemployment?
We must humiliate the poor, thought pols on power drunk,

What did you think the term “free markets” meant?

“I promise,” he vows, “to protect the common man –
All we have to do is follow my plan.”

Just as the situation makes you want to shout
Corrupt traders on Wall Street are given a huge bailout.
The priority of your great nation
Appears to be making the world safe for corporations.
While the wealthy get repeated million dollar payouts,
Everybody else receives diminished expectations.

“This seems unfair,” he allows, “giving money to those who don’t need a hand.
It would definitely be reviewed in my plan.”

As government debt grows ever larger and more scary,
More and more of your tax dollars are spent on the military.
After all, what else is government for
If not to maintain a permanent state of war?
Of course, as the deficit situation becomes more hairy,
Further cuts to social programmes will be in store.

“You say,” he observes, “you are not keen on a war in
Afghanipakikazakhstan?
Never fear, for I have a plan.”

Another seeming government priority
Is to strip citizens of hard-won liberty.
For when the welfare state completely fails,
There is always a boom in the population of jails.
The smallest of crimes requires the largest penalty
As, against damn outlaws, every demagogue rails.

“To solve difficult problems like this,” he soothed, “is why I originally ran,
And, even now, I am using your input to refine my plan.”

Now politicians, those fickle sages,
Say to help the unemployed we have to abolish minimum wages.
And, if jobs at those wages won’t fulfill the needs of men,
We need to be prepared to give them to children.
We’ve now reached the final stages
That will bring the country to financial ruin.

“We must consider,” he muses, “how supply and demand
Can best work as one in my plan.”

The effects of “market forces” are plain to see
As our society boldly marches forward into the 19th century.
The gap grows between rich and poor
As, on upward mobility, they’ve shut the door.
Government has been bought and paid for by the most wealthy -
It’s in their interests all of this has been for.

“Don’t get upset,” he chides, “you silly man,
I have always been the epitome of the modern Republican.
And, you must admit my vision is grand,
For, all along, this **was** the plan!”

Poems Excerpted From *The Daily Me*

Am I Poet Laureate Yet?

What with moved dates and a religious chill, a
Sane man would bet it’s not gonna be a thrill –
Prince Charles’ remarriage to Camilla

It could only be worse if it happened in Manila
Prince Charles’ remarriage to Camilla

In Britain the monarchy is the 10 pound gorilla
That nobody talks about – yet everybody talks about Charles and Camilla

Why are we obsessed with people so old they need Polyfilla?
Frankly, I’m bored with Charles and Camilla

In the end, who will get the bill? A
Jaded public that doesn’t care about Prince Charles’ remarriage to Camilla

Because T. S. Eliot Is Dead, And I’m Not

April is the cruelest month
May is always short of money
June has never been laid, not once
And July dresses funny

August has no taste in music
September lies in its diary
October always call in sick
And November prefers meat that’s thin and wiry

December suffers many a headache
January has two left feet

February doesn't know when to take a break
And March will never feel complete

Boom Shack Alack

Conrad Black
Wants his citizenship back
But we shouldn't let him

He left us "clucks"
With his gazillion bucks –
Better to just forget him

Conrad Black
Couldn't help but attack
The country that had made him

Despite his dubious charms
We'll not open welcome him with open arms
Nor will we serenade him

Conrad Black
That journalistic hack
He's such a fickle Lord, him

Despite his clout
He'll never figure out
Why Canadians abhorred him

By and For Tony

The London subway is on fire
As the terrorist threat becomes more dire
The Prime Minister's dance on the high wire
Does not confidence inspire
While the rhetorical juices flow ever higher
He continues to be a history denier

A rationale so thin it's bony
Is all that's needed by Tony

"We fight them there so we won't have to fight them here."
Is the Bush government's latest way to manipulate fear
Yet, in this summer increasingly drear
It seems British lives are not held so dear

That must be the greatest irony
For Tony

Crime On Everyone's Mind

The crime rate is trending down
There's fewer murders around town
Of that we cannot make a false pretence
Fancy lawyers, rights and bail
How're we gonna keep those bastards in jail?
Start with a mandatory minimum sentence!

So, throw away the keys, boys, let's throw away the keys
There's an angry mob whose blood lust we must appease
Justice isn't meted out in difficult degrees
Yes, throw away the keys, boys, throw away the keys

Longer terms are what we need
The law and order crowd agreed
To make the streets of our fair cities safer
It won't deter crime, studies show
In fact it might even make it grow
Since prison is a criminal incubator

Yes, throw away the keys, boys, let's throw away the keys
Got to please fanatics in the ranks of the Tories
Those bleeding hearts are going to be cut off at the knees
When we throw away the keys, boys, let's throw away the keys

We're against crime, no doubt
Steal three loaves and you are out
We're not afraid to overcrowd penitentiaries
From cops to lawyers to prison warders
To the men who stock the kitchen's larders
Crime is a growing industry!

When we throw away the keys, boys, let's throw away the keys
That crime is bad is something on which everyone agrees
(But not if you are thinking of **our** special brand of sleaze)
Otherwise, throw away the keys, boys, throw away the keys

Dr. Seuss In Da Hood

I do not want to wear that tat.
I do not want to wear that tat.
That is not where I am at.

I do not want to wear that tat.

I do not want to wear that hood.
I do not want to wear that hood.
It would not do me any good.
I do not want to wear that hood.

I do not want to wear those pants.
I do not want to wear those pants.
I would fall down when I went to dance.
I do not want to wear those pants.

I do not want to wear that ring.
I do not want to wear that ring.
My nose would look bad with that thing.
I do not want to wear that ring.

Hate Culture Wars I

How do we know anti-Semitism is back?
Ezra Pound is getting a plaque
From English Heritage, an agency of culture
Despite his being a racist vulture
Of course, his family couldn't wait
His reputation, to rehabilitate
The major proponent of a literary schism
He is the father of poetic modernism

But

You couldn't say he stood apart, he
Supported the National Socialist Party
You couldn't say he was a patsy
Because he was an enthusiastic Nazi
A great artist? Perhaps. But, a moral dunce.
And what good is art if not guided by conscience?

I Never Thought I'd Write A Hockey Poem

And, so far, I've been right.

I Prefer Small Bills

Yeah, I eat at Mickey Dee's
Burger with cheese?
Yes, please!

I'm on my knees
So, don't tease
Don't offer me no BLTs
Every night I pray to Jes—
Us and he agrees

How can I sing such a thing?
For the bling, man, for the bling

What do you get at Mickey Dee's?
Heart disease
Obesities
Death decrees
For hopeless fatties
Like you and me
No pity
In sad obituaries
Unpunished felonies
In heartless cities
Felled trees
In third world countries —
The height of sleaze

Why would I support such a thing?
Hunh — for the bling, man, for the bling

The Just Society Has Become Just Some Society

Full Employment has been given a pink slip.
Privacy is on 24-hour suicide watch.
Freedom of expression has become obs.
Universal health care is on life support.
The cord has been cut on the social safety net.
Progressive taxation is being laid out flat.

It's a great time to be rich.

The Smart Money Is On Hell — Or California

They seek him here, they seek him there
Those Journos seek him everywhere!
Is he in heaven? Or is he in hell?
That damned Elusive Liberal?

And, Speaking Of Castrated Men

Lieberman, Joe Lieberman
That secret libertarian
Joe Lieberman, the ill-fated Dem
He supports the President's war pro tem
And, Republican economic policies – AHM!
Then wonders why constituents think he should join them
You can learn a lot from Lieberman

La-la-la...la-la-la.
La-la-la...la-la-la.

He feels he's on trial and he's the defendant
If he doesn't win the nomination, he'll run as an independent
He'll split the progressive vote, and then
The seat will be won by a true Republican

Oh, Lieberman, Joe Lieberman
That secret libertarian
Joe Lieberman, a monument to hubris
Agreed to back a phony war
So he could get close to the power corridor
You've got to wonder what it was all for
You can learn a lot from Lieberman

(with apologies to Groucho Marx)

Feith

Well, I guess it would be nice
If I could torch your country
I know not every country
Has got booty like you

But I've gotta think twice
Before I drop my bombs away
I know the psy ops games you play
Because I play them too

Oh, but I
Need some time for a Congressional motion
Time to get the House past the uproar
And, if that power's not there
Because of pacifist emotion
Well, it takes a strong leader, baby
But, I'm gonna get my war

'Cause I gotta have Feith...

[with apologies to George Michael, because *Arrested Development* deserved to be on the air a lot longer]

Congratulations! It's A Buoy!

You did it! Whether pink or blue
Congratulations are due to you!
On the birth of a child with an iron fist
Your very own bouncing baby no-fly list

What better way to curry favour
Than to imitate the policy of a neighbour
That won't deter a single terrorist?
Ooh, such a cutie, that's your no-fly list

When you think upon it
Your name's probably not on it
Because it was created by the RCMP and CSIS
A gurgling, cooing, trustworthy no-fly list

It may help you to crack down
On domestic troublemakers who won't back down
Like the environmental justice loving pacifist
But it sure looks adorable in photos – your no-fly list

Current Events Poetry Smackdown

I suppose you could do worse
Than to get your current events in verse
After all, there is a long history
Of politically inspired poetry
And if the tone is mostly convivial
That doesn't mean the effort is trivial

In this corner we get
Toronto's Poet Laureate
The Star's Pier Giorgio Di Cicco
Whose name is impossible to rhyme with (oh oh!)
Not that this is a problem as such
Since, as a good Modernist, he doesn't feel the need to rhyme all that much

In the far corner, all hail
John Allemang in The Globe and Mail
If it's serious discourse you seek

Be aware his tongue is planted firmly in cheek
But don't imagine you're reading satirical new art
For Allemang is no Jon Stewart

As they duke it out, the real killin'
Is being made by *The Nation's* Calvin Trillin
He has been at it a lot longer
And his editorial gravitas is much stronger
And although his ego may occasionally grate
He must be considered the reigning heavyweight

Hmmmm...

Does the fact serious journals publish their political patter
Suggest that poetry once more is starting to matter?
Or, could it be that public political discourse
Is, on the whole, getting worse?
I'm not certain that anybody knows
I certainly don't – I only write prose!

If It's Yellow [1]

If it's yellow [2]
Be mellow. [3]
If it's brown [4]
Flush [5] it down. [6]

Notes

- 1) A piece of environmental folk wisdom employing a rhyming mnemonic.
- 2) Yellow is the colour of bananas, canaries and cowards. Bananas are disappearing as their natural habitat is encroached upon by human settlement. They can be seen as the canaries in the environmental coalmine. Only cowards refuse to acknowledge the seriousness of this.
- 3) Possibly a reference to a song by Donovan Leitch, although some argue that this is apocryphal while others argue that it is really just an expression of a 1960s attitude towards not just the environment, but, well, everything.
- 4) Our lawyers have suggested that, no matter how scholarly, annotating this word is just asking for trouble, so we'll take a pass, thank you very much.
- 5) Flush: noun: a poker hand with all 5 cards in the same suit; noun: sudden reddening of the face (as from embarrassment or guilt or shame or modesty); noun: sudden brief sensation of heat (associated with menopause and some mental disorders); noun: a rosy color (especially in the cheeks) taken as a sign of good health; noun: the swift release of a store of affective force; noun: the period of greatest prosperity or productivity. How any of this is relevant to the poem is a matter of conjecture.
- 6) The direction of the underworld, Hades, the domain of the Prince of Lies, etc. etc.

Macular Degeneration

People are quick to diss me
Macular degeneration
Just because I cannot see
Macular degeneration
Things they say are awfully cold
Macular degeneration
It's just a sign I'm getting' old
Macular degeneration

It's macular degeneration
Macular degeneration, baby

You're all starting to fade away
Macular degeneration
Not much more that I can say
Macular degeneration
I'm startin' to lose all sensation
Macular degeneration
Thanks to macular degeneration

It's macular degeneration
Macular degeneration, baby

[with apologies to The Who]

The Rap On Rap

Chuck D
Can disagree
With me
And glower
But "Fight the Power"
Has had its hour

Who is gonna take up the fight?
The majority of rap's listeners are white
With many leaning to the right
They don't know what it's like to be kicked to the curb
They come from the deepest, darkest suburbs –
To them, life on the street is just a CD cover blurb

And, who is it we have to thank for
The current strain that's known as gangsta?

What foolish prankster
Abandoned the political get-go
For the violence of the ghetto
You think most rappers lived the life? Hell, no!

Chuck D
Can disagree
With me
But rap abandoned politics
For something both sick and slick
And it no longer does the trick

Let's Look At The Leaders, Bored

George W. Bush
Spanked foreign tush
His government spoiled
For oil

Tony Blair
Didn't care
To ask why
Neither do I

Stephen Harper
Is no carper
He gives in to demands
To send troops to foreign lands

Jalal Talabani
Doesn't think it's funny
That he can't go alone
Outside the Green Zone

Hamid Karzai
Was pegged as our guy
But he gets all stropy
When we destroy the poppy

Pervez Musharaff
Won't support our war if
We don't let him bomb
India to Kingdom come

Oh, The Pressure!

Any man, in his own defence'll
Make up wild excuses for having no lead in his pencil
You know: a pillock, a fumbler, someone with a conjunction disjunction
The word impotence seems so harsh – let's call it erectile dysfunction

He'll tell you that he was asleep, and before he'd awoken
Somebody had stolen his penis and left him plainer than a Ken
Doll, or that an evil coven of man-hating witches
Had cast a spell that left him with empty britches

Although you may look askance
Idleness was the culprit in the Renaissance
A man's failure to raise a proper head
Was also blamed on sleeping in an over-soft bed

Although the causes of impotence may make a man ill at ease
The cure may be worse than the disease

The ancient Greeks, to fight this lack,
Prescribed a nettles, chickpeas and crushed beetles aphrodisiac
While, for a better boner to get,
Ovid suggested men wear the "right molar of a small crocodile...as an amulet"

In medieval times, to raise a man's stocks
He was told to eat bread kneaded with a woman's buttocks
Or, to ensure the straightness of his arrows
A man could eat a mixture of goat fat and the brains of male sparrows

Today, of course, to get a sperm Niagara
There's Viagra

Ninety year old men in diapers with declining mental powers
Can have an erection for hours
I hate to be a contrarian and such
But I think it's much ado about not very much

Just Asking

I know some people will find it unseemly
But, I have to wonder about the focus on Vimy
Ridge. Was the Canadian nation really forged
By a lost battle in an insane war?

Despite the pro-war lobby's exhortations
Canada is not a military nation
The glory of battle is simply not ours

The path of peace makes more sense for a middling power

One suspects the real plan

Is to connect the past battle of Vimy to the present war in Afghanistan

Is it crazy, or is it just me

This rush to abandon diplomacy?

Ethnics Kicks

Happy Rosh Hashanah our Jewish friends!

We have no idea what you're celebrating

But to satisfy our electoral ends

Best wishes for you we'll be calibrating

You've never heard from us before?

You say you're somewhat suspicious?

Don't turn away when we come to your door

The CJC says our efforts are auspicious!

The Conservative Party is learning new tricks

So that we can get the votes of the ethnics

Sikhs – we don't know what you believe in

But get ready to hear from us by phone!

To get to majority government heaven

Our MPs will leave their comfort zone!

People from all over do well here

Better than any other nation

From our party they have nothing to fear

(Just ignore our policies on immigration)

No longer the party of hicks in the sticks

The CPC is going after the ethnics

So, come to Canada, you foreign beauties

It really is a great place to live

You come for rights, I offer duties –

Your friendly, neighbourhood Conservative

If our new policy clicks

We will be the natural ruling party of ethnics

Because They Earned It

You've likely heard widely parroted

Complaints about wealth that was inherited
And the exotic lifestyles of those born wealthy
You mustn't complain that people in their station
Make more in a day than an African nation
It's your jealous attitude that isn't healthy

The business press repeat it so often
It's a surprise you haven't learned it
The people whose wealth is obscene
Have it because they earned it

Now, we're not saying you don't work hard
As a store attendant or a crossing guard
We're just saying capital works harder
While you're barely keeping yourself afloat
Investment bankers are raising all boats
About your future you simply need to be smarter

Given a corner office and a small stake
How large do you think you would have turned it?
The truth is likely not large enough
Because, unlike you, they earned it

Behind their eyes of blue serge
They get kicks out of making companies merge
And getting rid of the employees who love them
And the thing that really smarts
Is that when they were selling off the parts
Your job is usually not one of them

If this had earned you a hundred million dollar bonus
Would you really have spurned it?
Of course you wouldn't
Because you'd have earned it

The Zen of Spam

Milk Rocket Ice-cream Chisel Stomach?
Fire Necklace Staircase Ring Vulture Church Feather?
Teeth Backpack Space Shuttle Vulture Sex Thermometer School?
Pendulum Airport Kaleidoscope Pebble Stomach

? Videotape Explosive Bowl Man Tennis racquet Window Robot?
Typewriter Pocket Coffee Data Base Film?

Car-race Microscope Tongue Stomach Rifle?

Church Pepper Diamond Ice Dress Balloon Signature?
Gemstone Vacuum Film Cup Shoes Square Post-office?
Bank Worm Sports-car Foot Aeroplane Salt Slave?

Umbrella Shower Prison Cave Electricity Woman Wheelchair
? Meteor Slave Vampire Man Cappuccino Ring Star?

Room Teeth School Baby Fungus Bathroom Plane?
Junk Finger Woman Elephant Horoscope?
Finger Finger Adult Family Umbrella Pendulum Explosive?
Shoes Insect Bed Monster Child Signature Baby?

As I Meant It

I thought I was being clever as a fox
When I wrote that the Councilor should sleep in a pine box
I didn't mean it literally
The box was a metaphor for a nation descending into anarchy
I chose the image because it easily shocks

I didn't mean to ignite her ire
I was just writing a bit of harmless satire
It never occurred to me how much she'd resent it
Unfortunately the Councilor didn't read the poem as I meant it

The line about stuffing her in a garbage can
Was a comic reflection on man's inhumanity to man
I wasn't saying she was unfit for her civic role
Because she appeared to be obsessed with potholes
And not the city's larger urban plan

When I said she should be set on fire
The line was intended as satire
I suppose there was no way I could prevent it
But the Councilor didn't read the poem as I meant it

Yes, the words were harsh, and stranger,
But she was never in any real danger
I am a man who is old and feeble
And was merely trying to amuse people
In my way as a humble metaphor arranger

Try as they might, few can aspire
To writing anything as exalted as satire
And I do not intend to repent it
The Councilor really should have read it as I meant it!

Base Motives

You may think giving poor children health care is neat. Oh,
But the move will receive a Presidential veto
Because it leads down a path to Communism.
We Conservatives may not be credible as we say this from our rotundas
But believe me when I say that the people who fund us
See the issue through this very prism

We know that this is a hard truth to face
But the children must suffer to appease our base

Many poor cannot afford health care
This is a problem of which all are aware
Children will get sick and die if more money is not spent
We'd like to help you all, and yet
Don't you know we're running a huge deficit?
We simply cannot afford more government

And if you die and leave no trace
Know that you died to appease our base

Understand, to the people we're serving
The poor are simply undeserving
Of additional government assistance
You're just the victims of bad karma:
Insurance companies and Big Pharma –
To help you our supporters offer great resistance

Should 2008 come down to a tight race
We'll do anything to appease our base

Insecurity Agencies

Air Force Intelligence, as of today,
Can't figure out why it was looking the other way

Army Intelligence
Didn't reckon on insurgents

The Central Intelligence Agency has been in a funk
Since its director erred with the term "slam dunk"

Coast Guard Intelligence, for one thing,
Is not getting sufficient funding

The Defense Intelligence Agency and yo' mama
Failed to properly target Osama

Meanwhile, the Department of Energy is singing psalms
About ever more powerful atomic bombs

The Department of Homeland Security, so mysterious, so strong
Got all of their coloured alerts wrong

The Department of State
Refused to negotiate

The Department of the Treasury doesn't think it's funny
To fund the war by printing more money

The Drug Enforcement Administration
Has no cause for celebration

The Federal Bureau of Investigation felt it wouldn't be so great
With the other agencies to cooperate

The Marine Corps Intelligence agency
Can no evil hear or see

The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency shouldn't be proud
That it seems to have plucked its information out of the clouds

The National Reconnaissance Office cannot show
What it obviously doesn't know

The National Security Agency taps the phones of local podiatrists
Rather than the communications of international terrorists

Navy Intelligence, coy as can be,
Seems all at sea

Black ops, psy-ops
Bad, badder, baddest cops
But, do you feel any safer?

Cheney's Got a Gun

Cheney's got a gun
Cheney's got a gun
Lawyers are on the run

Lawyers on the run
What can the President do?
With his VP on the loose?

It was a trip for pleasure hunting
Dick was gonna shoot himself some quail
He shot his hunting pard instead
A barrel o' buckshot to the head
Now how's he gonna stay out of jail?

Drive away
Drive away and hide from the law
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
Drive away
Drive, drive and hide from the law

Cheney's got a gun
Cheney's got a gun
Lawyers are on the run
Lawyers on the run

What made Dick so bold?
Harry's only 78 years old

Dick didn't report it for hours
He wanted to get his story straight
He says he's got nothing to hide
Just a hunter's silly pride
Otherwise, the trip went great

Drive away
Drive away and hide from the law
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
Drive away
Drive, drive and hide from the law

Cheney's got a gun
Cheney's got a gun
Cheney's got a gun
Cheney's got a gun

With apologies to Aerosmith, but not especially heartfelt since I never much liked the band anyway

Snow W and the Seven Bushies

This is Know Nothing Bushie
Who, in self-interest, screams his defiance,
His hatred, and more, of the body of "lore"
That the rest of us know as science

This is Crony Bushie
A friend of the family, long-standing
Though incompetent, he will be sent
A plum job for his glad-handing

This is Programme Gutting Bushie
Who knows what government's truly for:
"What? Are you crazy? Entitlements make you lazy!
"We can't give any money to the poor!"

This is Religious Pandering Bushie
Whose interest in god is slight
He's trying to fool ya when he sings "Hallelujah!"
To win more votes for the right

This is Chicken-hawk Bushie
A man who sings of the glories of war
He's never lived through one, but he's always wanted to do one
(Using the children of the people next door)

This is Media Ally Bushie
Who can be counted on for editorial support
In return for funds for its conglomerate, it spews venomous hate
In every "fair and balanced" report

Lastly we come to Loyal Bushie
The one revered above all
For each Bush mistake, there must be somebody to take
The long, lonely, but well publicized fall

I Just Do (Wouldn't You?)

I want immunity from prosecution for war crimes.
Have you committed war crimes?
NO!
Then, why do you want immunity?
I just do.

I want immunity from prosecution for war crimes.
Do you plan on committing war crimes?
NO!

Then, why do you want immunity?
I just do.

I want immunity from prosecution for war crimes.
Are you being accused of committing war crimes?
NO!
Then, why do you want immunity?
I just do.

I want immunity from prosecution for war crimes.
Do you expect that somebody will accuse you of committing war crimes?
NO!
Then, why do you want immunity?
I just do.

I want immunity from prosecution for war crimes.
Could somebody misconstrue things that you have done as war crimes?
NO!
Then, why do you want immunity?
I just do.

I want immunity from prosecution for war crimes.
Do you expect that somebody will misconstrue things that you have done as crimes?
NO!
Then, why do you want immunity?
I just do.

Sounds good to me.

Attorney General Senate Testimony Scratch Mix

I can only recall...
I don't recall...

It appears... I was not responsible for...
Senator, I was never aware...
Senator, that's an answer that I have to get back to you...
Senator, of course, in hindsight...
Senator, I'd like to give you that information, but...

I can only recall...
I don't recall...

I think that's a fair question, Senator...
Senator, I do recall having a conversation with Mr. Rove...
Senator, I have no recollection about that, but I presume that that is true...

We've done great things!
I myself was confused, quite frankly, when I testified...
I believe that I had a good process...
Not the actions of someone with something to hide...

I can only recall...
I don't recall...

That rationale was not in my mind, as I recall...
Putting it in context, Senator, I would say that my involvement was limited...
I don't recall everyone who was there...
Senator, there may have been other discussions...
Based on what I thought, what I understood was going on...
My misstatements were my mistakes, no one else's...
Senator, I don't want to quarrel with you...

I can only recall...
I don't recall...

I did not know...
I have no recollection...
I'm not aware of any new facts here...
She's the other person, quite candidly, Senator, that I don't recall...
Senator, I don't recall specifically the genesis of the idea...
I don't have any recollection about the mechanics of the legislative process...
I have been extremely forthcoming with information...

I can only recall...
I don't recall...

History For People With No Time For History

Charles Babbage's
Hatred of cabbages
Set back the history of computers

Ada Lovelace
Won the footrace
Against all of her timorous suitors

Alan Turing
Lost his mooring
While eating a Glosette

Jaron Lanier
Tried to disappear

But ended up in a closet

Douglas Englebart
Put the horse into the cart
While wearing a wedding dress

Hans Moravec
Swabbed the deck
Without appreciable success

Theodore Nelson
Didn't use Selsun
And found that made him Blue

Marvin Minsky
And Tara Lipinski
Pitched a cacophonous woo

Nicholas Negroponte
Was the tauntee
Of bits and bytes munching kooks

Bill Gates
Really hates
Other people's peremptory looks

Vannevar Bush
Loved his tush
Which held a lot of stuff

Tim Berners-Lee
Hid up a tree
Before the going got rough

Nobody said the future was going to make sense

I Dreamt I Fucked Michael Snow's Walking Woman

I dreamt I fucked Michael Snow's Walking Woman.
She didn't have any hands,
But that was okay;
I would happily pick up after her –
Or before her,
Or in any other direction she might need.
True, she didn't have any feet,
But it wasn't like we were going anywhere,

And, anyway, that's why god created wheelchairs.
Okay, her head was a little freaky,
With its bulge in the back,
Like a silhouette of John Merrick,
And the top shorn off,
Like a victim in a Hannibal Lecter wet dream.
Still, nobody's perfect.

I dreamt I fucked Michael Snow's Walking Woman.
It was dreamy.

Love Letter To The Apostate

Is it any wonder that we, the press, love Irshad Manji?
Unlike moderate Islamics, she makes good copy
With her trenchant criticism
Oh, Irshad, Irshad Manji
She is modern Islam's Ghandi
And that's no witticism

We applaud her rhetorical spree
To set her unhappy people free
From the Imams that oppress them
Colonialism's surely not to blame
Their religious urges they must tame
So that god (our god) may bless them

I wouldn't want to raise her dander
I'm sure Irshad doesn't mean to pander
To anti-Muslim bigots
Truth, sweet truth, must have its day
Let the cow chips fall where they may
And don't worry about opening hateful spigots

Irshad calls 'em as she sees 'em
Their attitudes **do** belong in a museum
We need to restructure all of their nations
They're sure to kick up a fuss
But they need to be exactly like us
The winners in the clash of civilizations

Irshad, dear Irshad, you're the sort of person we love to embrace:
Denounce your heritage and you're a credit to your race

The Way The World Works

This is the story of the F-16
A mean, lean, fighting machine
From which General Dynamics made a killing
Because the US was so willing
To buy them by the crateful

That wasn't enough for GD's new owner, Lockheed
Whose bottom line it had to feed
So they agreed to make a sale: a
Bunch of planes to Venezuela
And other regimes that were hateful

The next step for Lockheed (now) Martin
Is, on production, to start in
On a new plane, the F-22 Raptor
To destroy all those foreign F-16s. After
All, when you've made a mess
You should try to fix it, more or less
And, Americans should, for a superior defense, be grateful

Nobody says, "Get real, you jerks!"
They just shrug and mutter, "That's the way the world works."

Bob Nardelli,
No nervous Nellie
Became CEO
Of Home Depot
And for six years at the company, he toiled

He could not prevent
The stock dropping six per cent
In the time, whole,
That he was in control
And the shareholder blood, it boiled

Should the Board look askance
At such a lousy performance?
The discussion is moot,
It gave him a 210 million dollar golden parachute
That's many orders of magnitude greater than
The guy who drives the company van
And goes well beyond the definition of "spoiled"

Nobody complains about those perks
Because everybody knows that's just the way the world works.

An actor who directed a film about a saviour
Engaged in the most outrageous behaviour
After getting caught driving drunk
He spouted racist and sexist junk
And we flocked to his films all the more

To the world's astonishment, our mouths agape
The hotel heiress made a sex tape
That nobody was allowed to forget
Because it circulated endlessly on the Internet
And helped her get real movie roles galore

The sports hero never passed up the chance
To, his modest talents, chemically enhance
With a drug
Given him by a medical thug
Who, with less and less rareness
Did not understand the meaning of competitive fairness
Just the value of a quick score

We indulge some people with the strangest quirks
But rarely complain about the way the world works.

The Zen of the Bank of Montreal

Can I...
...invest without risk?
...think without ideas?
...swim in water without getting wet?
...live without dying?
...watch television without wasting my time?
...make love without having sex?
...eat without putting food in my mouth?
...send email without a computer?
...go to a different place geographically without moving?
...watch a political campaign without feeling dirty?
...read text without words?
...bobsled without snow, a sled or Bob?

Relax – It's All In Your Headline

Washington fails, like Wall Street [A]
Every sector feels pain [B]
Canada's economy sound, Harper says [A]
"We're getting hurt but it's not the end of the world" [B]
TOUGH TIMES AHEAD [C]

Nothing to fear but fear itself [C]

Failure and frenzy [B]

Canadians brace for "bloodbath" as credit tightens, money dries up [A]

Markets worst adviser has seen [B]

Economy running on fumes [A]

Proponents see calming jitters as way to avoid recession [C]

Has the fear index peaked yet? [C]

No getting ahead of this curve now [A]

Down so long it looks like up [B]

Your best bet is to ride it out [A]

As economy tanks, luxury goods soar [B]

A) *Globe and Mail* headline

B) *Toronto Star* headline

C) *National Post* headline

The Former Prime Minister Regrets

You don't have to have the memory of an elephant

To give testimony at the hearings of Oliphant

You just have to have a story to tell

That would-be briber

Karlheinz Schreiber

Testified Mulroney had something to sell

The former Prime Minister admits it was rash

To accept an envelop full of cash

That it should have set off an alarm bell

But, he insists his morals weren't sleeping

It was just a matter of bad bookkeeping

A subject on which he would rather not dwell

Come on! You know the fact is

He did get around...eventually...six years later...to paying his taxes

So, all's well that ends well?

Seeing Is Believing

I Saw George Stroumboulopoulos in the Food Building at the CNE

I wanted to ask him why he introduced Tony Iommi (who wasn't there) when he interviewed Chris Martin (who was) in the clip from his show screened before movies

But I didn't

I Saw George Stroumboulopoulos checking out the Tilt-a-Whirl at the Exhibition

I wanted to ask him why somebody so cool so often looks so uncomfortable on camera

But I didn't

I Saw George Stroumboulopoulos walking through the Garden Show at the Ex

I wanted to ask him if he really thought helping the CBC get a youth audience was worth covering up all his tattoos

But I didn't

Because he could probably eat me for breakfast

And I like living

Everybody Lies

George W. Bush lied.

Dick Cheney lied, and told anybody who called him on it to fuck off.

Donald Rumsfeld lied, and was forced to resign when it looked like he might tell a little truth.

Condoleezza Rice lied for her President (and her oil tanker).

Colin Powell lied, and retired, embarrassed.

Alberto Gonzales lied about Presidential power – and the President believed him!

Paul Wolfowitz lied, and was given the top spot at the World Bank, where he could lie to a much bigger audience.

George Tenet lied, and wrote an unpopular book about it.

Scott McClellan lied, and wrote a much more popular book about it.

John McCain lies, but he's a maverick (or, at least, he once was), so that's alright.

Rush Limbaugh lied, and was rewarded with a contract worth millions.

Robert Novak lied, and his eyebrows remain well respected.

The New York Times lied, but what are a few weapons of mass destruction among friends...or enemies?

The Washington Times lied, but it suited Reverend Moon, so he will continue to pour millions into it regardless.

Everybody lies.

But, some lies are more destructive than others.

Forget Uninspired Californian Knowledge

Foul language is used by

Undistinguished politicians who think they're being

Clever, even though most reasonable people

Know that they are just being juvenile.

"You lie!" a legislator shouted, not unlike the one who shouted at Democratic President Obama, except for the

Unusual difference that he was yelling at

Republican California Governor Arnold

Schwarzenegger.

"Enough!" the beleaguered Governor replied in a message where the first

Letter of each of the first

Four lines spelled out a common Anglo–Saxon expletive.

Aahnold has worse problems to deal with.
Really: a huge budget deficit and
No way to raise taxes to get it under control.
I would have thought it was time to
End this silly word play and get serious about governing.

No Heroes Here

Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili
Sent his troops out willy nilly
To the separatists in South Ossetia
He said “I’m gonna get ya”
But it was his soldiers who were beaten silly

Although he’s only Russia’s Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin
Took control of the situation – he da man!
Not liking (post-)history’s evolution
He totally crushed the revolution
And now he’s making noises about Poland

American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
Was looking for designer shoes at the best price
When she got the 3 (pm) call
She was too busy in the mall
And figured a response after the weekend would suffice

American President...ial...whatever John McCain
Has some responsibility for the wreckage of this train
Although he didn’t have the power
He promised, on Georgia, military benefits to shower
And an American ally was hung out to dry (once again)

For The Good of the Party Country

Nixon’s conscience was never wracked
When, illegally, he ordered Cambodia attacked
Rumours of civil liberties violations never did abate
And he was chased out of office because of Watergate

For prosecution of Nixon and his cronies, nobody was hungry
Best move on for the good of the country

Then came President Ronald Reagan
Who was all for violently invadin’

Countries in Latin America and
Funding it with money from arms sales to Iran

Charges of treason were too funky
Everybody knew he did it for the good of the country

George W. Bush preferred the frontal attack
So he directed his military at (innocent) Iraq
When the world and his view of it were in discord
He had some POWs put to the waterboard

You can avoid prosecuting all manner of thuggery
If those who did it claim it was for the good of the country

Those who think war and torture are great
Have no problem turning their country into a police state
Arguing that prosecution is a tool that is poor
Encourages them to do it more and more
And, you have to wonder who that's really good for

Crime and Retirement

The rule of law? Oh, how quaint
In the United States that just ain't
The way it works

When Senate seats can be sold and bought
The only rule is don't get caught –
That only happens to jerks.

Forget all you thought you knew about the Constitution
The demagogic power around is practically Rooshian!
Might as well torture those you don't like

Dick Cheney learned a valuable lesson
The greater the pain, the sooner the confessin'
To terrorizing the country (or stealing a bike)

To start a war by falsifying circumstances
Isn't really to take your chances
Of being accused of the ultimate crime

If, in a court of law, your luck you don't want to be trying
Your best hope is to keep on lying –
Who is going to call you on it this time?

Wiggy for Iggy, Constitutional Crisis Version

Remember when you said you would go batty if
The Liberals were led by Mike Ignatieff?
Well, it's time.

No, do not cry; don't bother to pray
The Liberal leader won't be Bob Rae
He stepped aside, rising above the usual political grime.

Put into power by a backroom deal
With no convention? What a steal!
And, yes, I suppose that is a crime

But, although it can be hard to read her
History suggested that the Liberals needed a leader
Who could deal with the Conservative slime.

If They Only Had a Spine

You can hope for legislation to help folks in your nation
Below the poverty line.
But, pols will cave to protests by special corporate interests –
If they only had a spine!

They'll bark and they will bluster but the votes they'll never muster –
To money they lay supine.
To cross Pharma they don't dare...
So, goodbye public health care –
If they only had a spine!

Picture it – they sit and sit on all the ills they know.
The public good? Oh, no. Financial treat...
How sweet.

They're hopeless fickle prats, the feckless Democrats
Whose votes are for the buyin'.
Foreign wars and torture laws,
They accept without a pause –
If they only had a spine!

(with apologies to Harold Arlen and E. Y. Harburg)

The Franken Expedition

Can anything be worse than being a voter

In the lovely state of Minnesota?

The dreary weather will further danken
While you wait for the seating of Al Franken

Who couldn't help but play the spoiler's role, man?
Former Republican Senator Norm –

Oh, wait. Could it be? Yes. Almost eight months after the election, Coleman has finally conceded and allowed Franken to take the Senate seat. Never mind.

I Don't Mean To Burst Your Tech Bubble

I don't wish to be a bore on
The subject of how the Internet is making me a moron
But I feel I must

The Internet is truly great
You can play a game or find a date
Or your income tax strategies adjust

Online you can listen to a radio station
Or plan how you're going to spend your summer vacation
Or look up an old, forgotten friend

You can find all sorts of information
From endangered species to the Polish rate of inflation
The advantages of the Internet never seem to end!

In fact, when you think about it, the Internet has become a mirror that we can hold up to society. Most of the things we do offline we can now do online. This means that the ills that exist in the world are also replicated online – but, why blame a faulty school system and/or poor parenting for stupid children when it's much simpler to blame the Internet? To appreciate the causes of social ills you really have to know 'em –
Oh, wait, didn't I start off by writing a poem?

Every tech critic has to mention
The decreasing span of our attention
As a simple matter of cause and effect
It really is too easy, by heck,
To place the blame solely on tech –
Ooooh, look, a shiny object!

The Rap On Lobbying

It may not be funny

But, money, honey
Makes government run

It's not a bribe
That talk's just jive
It's just a politician trying to stay alive
Businesses thrive
When bosses strive
To keep lines of communication to the government live

Don't squawk
Cause they don't balk
Everybody knows legislation is based on talk
With those whose stock
Has gotta rock
Up and down the Wall Street block

You're not impressed
By political redress?
I gotta stress
Only the best
Should be allowed to talk to Congress
If you're part of the rest
With the wrong address
You're SOL, I guess

A Steele At Half the Price

Don't speak Ebonics, don't wear no fro
But I'm the future of Republican politics, yo
My name is Michael Steele
And I'm here to reveal the real deal
On the RNC
Connecting with our homies in the hip hop community!

Cutting edge? Please spare me, pundit!
This I pledge: we're so beyond it
And, what's beyond the cutting edge?
We're so hip, we're off the ledge!
...Or, off the hook.
Maybe I should read another "black" book.

The old guard in the party don't need to panic
We're just trying to get some voters, Hispanic
And, maybe even a black or two
But, you have to know we haven't abandoned you

We're happy you do the obstructionist thing
This hip hop talk is just so much bling bling!

Scarlet Faces, Pimpernel Not So Much

They see it stop appointments here
They see it change policies there
Its influence appears to be everywhere!

Is it in heaven?
Is it in Washington, D. C.?
That damned elusive Israel lobby!

Spare the A-Rod...

I'm here to take my medicine.
In the years 2001, 2002 and 2003
I experimented with a banned substance
experimented with a banned substance
experimented with a banned substance
I experimented with a banned substance
that eventually triggered a positive test.

I'm not sure what the benefit of it was.

I blame myself.
It was pretty evident we didn't know what we were doing.
I knew we weren't taking Tic Tacs.
When you are in denial and you're not being honest with yourself it's hard to be honest
with Katie.
I will say '06 was a blood test and next week was another blood test. That's as good as it
gets.

I'm here to take my medicine.
In the years 2001, 2002 and 2003
I experimented with a banned substance
experimented with a banned substance
experimented with a banned substance
I experimented with a banned substance
that eventually triggered a positive test.

In the streets it's known as "boli."

When I entered the pros, I was a young kid in the major leagues
I was 18 years old right out of high school
I was young. I was 24, 25 years old

I guess when you are young and stupid you are young and stupid.
I keep going back to – I entered the game when I was 18
I wish I knew. I was 24, 25. I was pretty naive and pretty young.
That's part of being young and stupid.
When you are 24, 25 there are a lot of things you don't tell a lot of people, not just that.

I'm here to take my medicine.
In the years 2001, 2002 and 2003
I experimented with a banned substance
experimented with a banned substance
experimented with a banned substance
I experimented with a banned substance
that eventually triggered a positive test.

We probably didn't even take it right.

Where, Oh, Where Shall We Find Such Comic Greatness In the Future?

Cathy
We hardly knew ye
Plain to see
Yet shrouded in a mystery
That must forever more be
Ack!

Cathy
All women will miss thee
Your obsession to disagree
With the effects of gravity
And fit into a size three
Ack!

Cathy
You are finally free
To marry
To have a baby
To do all things "womanly"
Ack!

The Conservative Approach To Open Government

The problem with forming the government
Is all those other parties in Parliament
Who are always getting in your face
About how much information you release, and its pace
They're not the government – hello!

They think just because they received a few votes, they have a right to know?

If there is information that secret must stay
Call on MPs Putov, Stahl and DeLay

Your soldiers capture a very bad man
And hand him over to the government of Afghanistan
Do they torture?
Oh, sure!
But, you have no choice, your soldiers must do it
Until the Liberals attempt to tie you to it

You duck and weave and calls for investigations reject
But, your efforts to tar your detractors as being against the troops are having no effect
Before all of your political capital is spent,
On fighting people's judgment, Androcles Putov (Athabaska–Tarr–Feathers) suggests:
prorogue Parliament!
On this, you can bet it:
By the time Parliament returns, everybody will forget it!

To keep embarrassing information out of harm's way
Look to MPs Putov, Stahl and DeLay

Your government has given feal–
Ty to the state of Israel
But government agency Rights and Democracy and its minions
Have been supportive of the rights of Palestinians
Replacing senior staff with people who will toe the line
At the arms–length agency has been like stepping on a landmine

You pass the matter on to Mountainview-Valley MP Geraldine Stahl
Who knows exactly what to do with the ball
When a Commons committee names all the witnesses it can muster
She keeps them from testifying with a filibuster!
How brilliant was this? One of the people whose knowledge the public may never know
Is the former head of the agency's widow!

To keep the opposition from using your mistakes to make hay
You really need MPs Putov, Stahl and DeLay

You want to continue slashing taxes, but, what's that you say?
When you return to Parliament, the Afghan detainee issue won't go away?
A Parliamentary committee wants documents that show
Who knew what was happening and when they did know
it?
Oh, shit.

Artimus DeLay, representing Carleton-Curfew
Knows exactly what to do
Ask a famous, well-respected judge
Which documents you have to release and which you can fudge
Give him a narrow mandate, and a small document selection
And make sure he doesn't report before the next election!

When politics is a game you intend to win, not just play
You can always rely on MPs Putov, Stahl and DeLay

All For the Love of a Pro Rogue

Once upon a time, there was a woman named Helena
Who was famous for yellin' at
An airport security guard.
She met a suave young thing
Who went by the name of Rachim
And she fell for him, fell for him real hard.

Love blossomed for the two MPs.
Then Rachim whispered in Helena's ear, "Dear, please
Help me with a little business venture."
Helena's part in the plot was murky,
Although it became increasingly clear Rachim was a turkey
Who deserved Parliamentary (and possibly legal) censure.

Whether real or just to impress,
Rachim claimed he could gain access
To men in the highest echelons of power
For his business associates.
When caught in the open, they abandoned him – the ingrates! –
And his political fortunes began to sour

Please pity poor Helena G.,
Who insisted, "This has nothing to do with me.
I know nothing about the wrong dealings of my husband!"
Unfortunately, the Prime Minister decided to take no chances –
He does not want her in caucus under any circumstances.
Now, for loving too much, she is a pariah across the land!

The Poor Know What Time It Is

You don't need political scholars
To tell you the Chamber of Commerce
Spends big anonymous dollars

For media hollers
For candidates wearing their collars
News at eleven

They don't want fair play
They want free airplay
They want politics done their way
While they tee off on the fairway
They bought and paid for the stairway
To heaven

Now, the spending
Is never ending
While their money the rich are sending
To the Chamber, the polls are trending
To the pols they're friending
This ain't 1777

The Warren Homosexuals

Rick, oh, Rick,
When did you become such a prick?
You were the populist holy man
Who had a purpose-driven plan –
Was it nothing more than promotional shtick?

Rick, oh, Rick,
What business is it of yours what a man does with his dick?
Everybody, forget the fuzzy-eyed propaganda:
They're proposing a law to kill gays in Uganda,
Legislators with whom Warren is thick.

Rick, oh, Rick,
Who are you to condemn gays as sick?
A loving god would have to bar
Killing people for who they are –
Was your public compassion just a trick?

Rick, oh, Rick,
Our sexuality we do not pick.
From your pulpit you can calmly whisper your defiance,
But this is a simple matter of science
Before you are silent on Draconian laws, you should really research the topic!

A Small Circle of Fans

I'd take the playing card out of my bicycle wheel spokes
For Phil Ochs.
I would perpetrate a hilarious media hoax
For Phil Ochs.
I would endure a dozen disrespectful pokes
For Phil Ochs.
I would go into the forest and live with mighty oaks
For Phil Ochs.
I would convince my mother to give up her smokes
For Phil Ochs.
I would stuff a politician on pork until he chokes
For Phil Ochs.
I would, an unwilling mongoose, coax
For Phil Ochs.
I would try to be friends with horrible folks
For Phil Ochs.
I would eat uncooked egg yolks
For Phil Ochs.
I would have less sex – yes! – I would give up some strokes
For Phil Ochs.
I'd almost be willing to give up jokes
For Phil Ochs.

Unfortunately, long ago Phil Ochs
Was broke.

This Political Message Has Not Been Approved By Anybody

He is a mystery wrapped in an enigma wrapped in a boot to the head of the South Carolina Democratic Party establishment.
He is an accused felon (but, at least we found this out *before* he was elected to office – makes a nice change).
He doesn't seem to be able to count: some precincts he won had more votes cast than citizens.
He is a magician – he made a \$10,000 nomination filing fee appear out of nowhere.
He has super powers – he was invisible during the primary campaign.
Not to be inelegant, but he is someone who has no chance of beating Republican incumbent Jim DeMint.

He is **not** a jazz musician.

He is a boot to the head of the South Carolina Democratic Party establishment wrapped in an enigma wrapped in a mystery.
He is Alvin Greene.

Internet Killed the Video Star

I saw you on the TV back in eighty-two;
I watched it cuz I had nothing better to do.
I wanted music but I wanted image, too.

Oh-a oh

They took the credit for your remixed symphony,
Mashed up by teenagers on bedroom PCs.
And now the copyright belongs to you and me.

Oh-a oh

I Med your children
Oh-a oh

What did you tell them?
Internet killed the video star.
Internet killed the video star.

Pixels came and broke your heart.
Oh-a-a-a oh

And now we meet in a virtual studio.
We watch what once was cutting edge video.
The special effects just seem so long ago.

Oh-a oh

You were the first on.
Oh-a oh

You were the last on.

Internet killed the video star.
Internet killed the video star.

In my mind and on my TV, we can't refine what we no longer see.
Oh-a-aho oh
Oh-a-aho oh

Internet killed the video star.
Internet killed the video star.

In my mind and on my TV, we can't refine what we no longer see.
Pixels came and broke your heart, put the blame on Microsoft.

You are a video star.
You are a video star.

Internet killed the video star.
Internet killed the video star.
Internet killed the video star.
Internet killed the video star.
Internet killed the video star. (You are a video star.)

The Future [1]

Here's to Future Days: [2]
Future Future Future Perfect! [3]
Future Legend: [4]
A Film for the Future. [5]
The Distant Future... [6]

Myths of the Near Future, [7]
A Future Like Ours, [8]
A Better Future. [9]

Girls of the Future, [10]
Built for the Future? [11]
The Future Embrace? [12]
Secrets from the Future: [13]
The Future is X-rated! [14]

Victims of the Future: [15]
Hit to Death in the Future Head! [16]
Future Shock? [17]
Future Brite, [18]
The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades! [19]

The Future is Worse than the Past... [20]
The Future Now. [21]

- 1) Leonard Cohen
- 2) Thompson Twins
- 3) Freezepop
- 4) David Bowie
- 5) Idlewild
- 6) Flight of the Conchords
- 7) Klaxons
- 8) Face First
- 9) David Bowie

- 10) B. B. Gabor
- 11) The Fixx
- 12) Billy Corgan
- 13) MC Frontalot
- 14) Matthew Good Band
- 15) Gary Moore
- 16) Flaming Lips
- 17) Curtis Mayfield
- 18) Demander
- 19) Timbuk 3
- 20) R. Stevie Moore
- 21) Peter Hammill

It's Not The End Of The World As We Know It (And I Don't Know How To Feel)

Condolence cards for people who are disappointed that the Rapture didn't happen:

1. Short and Sweet

Roses are red
Violets are blue
I'm still here
And so are you

2. Long and Gloating

It was always going to be the loopest of trips,
This religiously predicted apocalypse.
I may be being less than kind
When I tell you that no one has been left behind,
But it's not my intention, your heart to capture.

I just want to remind you that it didn't happen, the crazy rapture.
When you realized the truth, you must have hurled
Knowing it wasn't the end of the world.
I cannot imagine what you would say
If you ever bumped into Tim LaHaye.
Still, I am not giving the Cadillac
Back, Jack!

3. Haiku

Float up to dark sky
White heaven is for the pure
Oops, wrong religion

Hudson on the Moscow

Federal Judge Henry Hudson
Put his stomping boots on
Glanced at the Constitution
And ruled health care reform down

His stake in Campaign Solutions
Which lobbied against reform with nonsensical pollution
Of the debate reeks of prostitution
It should start a revolution

But judicial abuse
Is a snooze
Recuse
Is a word judges refuse
To use
So poor Americans who cannot afford health insurance lose

Just in Time For the Fall Season

With their funny accents and those ugly scarabs,
You know you cannot trust Arabs.
Every single one of the billion plus is a terrorist;
You know that's true – it was said by Bill Frist.
How can you trust anybody of that terrible race
When their women are too embarrassed to publicly show their face?

It's all for themselves and to hell with compassion,
Because bigotry, baby, is back in fashion.

Most Latinos have nothing to do with a drug cartel,
But that's not the story that conservatives sell.
The truth is they want three squares and a comfortable bed;
The story is they run around the desert cutting off each other's heads.
They look funny and they take away Americans' jobs –
They intimidate the cops when they gather in their mobs!

Americans won't pay attention if the economy you're crashin',
Because bigotry, friend, is back in fashion.

So many minorities to vilify – which one should you choose?
When in doubt, the fallback position is: the Jews!
On the media, you know, they have a firm stranglehold –
Some racist accusations just never get old!
Everybody knows Israel has way too strong a lobby

(Ignore Christian groups that support it – for them it's just a hobby).

Find all the ignorant and harness their passion,
Because bigotry, sweet unreasoning hateful bigotry, is back in fashion!

Next Up: "Auld Lang Syne" Is Rewritten As A Defense Of Climate Change Denial

Twas the day before Christmas,
When all through the paper
Columnists played with Clement Clarke Moore's classic poem,
With wit they hoped was rapier.

I decided not to be one of them.

Who Believes In Democracy?

You would think they consider it a joke,
The brothers Koch,
That it gets in the way of making cash hand over fist.
Consider this:
If their attitude towards democracy was so perverted
Would they go to so much trouble to subvert it?

You would think that democracy is broke
Watching the antics of the poor Tea Party folk;
But, for all of their talk of revolutionary shocks,
They have fought their battles at the ballot box.
They will be voting with great enthusiasm,
Electing crazoid candidates will give them a big...thrill.

Karl Rove is a right jolly bloke
Who never passes by an opportunity the Democrats to poke.
He has spent a lifetime perfecting the art of the fix
Since the hall monitor election in grade six.
Rove knows the ins and outs of electoral politics
(Even if he considers voters a bunch of dumb hicks).

One final group is worth noting:
Progressives who do not plan on voting.
They'll stay home in a fit of pique
Their vengeance on a perceived betrayer to wreak.
But, they will never get their hour –
They do not really believe in democracy's power

Okay, This Poem Is Kind Of Cheesy

"The poets have been mysteriously silent on the subject of cheese." - G.K. Chesterton

Milton
Loved stilton
Shakespeare
Oft liked to spear
A wedge of gruyere
Dante Alighieri
Could not resist Pave du Berry
For his sanity's sake
William Blake
Would every morning of brie partake
Samuel Coleridge
Always kept some wensleydale in the fridge
Robert Frost
Without his double Gloucester would be completely lost
Edgar Allan Poe
Could not pass a day without his Fontainebleau
William Wordsworth
Gobbled Denhany Dorset drum for all he was worth
Guillaume Apollinaire
Got off on Pouligny–Saint–Pierre
As did Charles Baudelaire
Lord Byron
Had a fetish for Morbier cru de Montagne
Robert Burns
Rejected everything but Malvern
Oscar Wilde
Preferred his Red Leicester mild
William Butler Yeats
Was one with Texas goat cheese
Anna Akhmatova
Would now and again enjoy some Friesla
Ezra Pound
Would show up wherever Orkney extra mature cheddar was found
Emily Dickinson
Devoured Port Nicholson
Pablo Neruda
Was crazy for the gouda
Willa Cather
Quartirolo Lombardo would rather
Raymond Carver
Enjoyed a simple cheddar
Robert Bly
Could never pass ricotta by
Maya Angelou

Would kill for a slice of Buchette d'Anjou

Care for some p'tit Berrichon
Or pant ys gawn
Or perhaps some common parmesan
Mister Chesterton?

The Ballad of a Thin Mind

Did anybody call for a Conservative pundit
Who can make the corporate agenda sound like profundit-
Y? Well, I'm your man! Your man is me!
Today's your lucky day!

I have a bag of rhetorical tricks
Guaranteed to bedazzle and bamboozle hicks.
By the time I'm done, they will be certain
(Just do not look behind that curtain)
Their problems are all other people's faults – and those other people must be made to pay!

Put your faith in the Conservative pundit –
If an organization promotes social justice, I'll shout: defund it!
Get tough on crime, we really need to
So the rubes' worst instincts for revenge are...uhh...seed to.
In me, you know you have the staunchest friend.

Tax breaks for the rich? – I'm all for it.
Screw the poor? – oh, I just adore it!
After all, in this life, nothing is free
(Go away, kid, you bother me)
Yes, yes, the sweet welfare ride must end!

Humbly, I remain power's pundit:
If it helps the common man, I've ruined it.
I'll justify the latest war
Even if I had opposed it the day before
And never admit the contradiction.

As long as the money into my bank account is flowing
No idea is below my sneerful showing.
Lower taxes lead to higher government revenue?
For sure! Of course! Of course they do!
Eternal war will bring us peace?
Let the cannons blare without cease!
The opposition wants to destroy the country?
You won't hear anything different from me –

I promise to make reality out of your chosen fiction.

Rand Be Damned!

Tony Hayward is no John Galt

Richard Fuld is definitely no John Galt.

James Gorman is definitely no John Galt with sugar on top.

Rupert Murdoch is definitely, positively no John Galt with arsenic on top.

Lloyd Blankfein is no John Galt, on the phone or in person.

Kenneth Lewis was no John Galt. Bryan Moynihan is no John Galt. The next CEO of Bank of America will be no John Galt.

Rex W. Tillerson isn't fit to use his oil to shine John Galt's shoes.

Phil Anschutz is no John Galt, although he'll soon have everybody on MSNBC claiming he is.

Comparing John Mack to John Galt would give any reasonable person a heart attack.

Vikram Pandit is no John Galt – the bandit!

David J. Lesar is no John Galt – to a fault!

By supporting plutocracy, Rand (the politician) betrays the individualistic ethos of Rand (the author).

Little Jimmy Flaherty

Jimmy Flaherty took an axe

And gave Ontario 40 whacks

When voters saw what he had done

He gave the country 41

The Commitment

Writing a short story is a sprint; writing a novel is a marathon.

Writing a short story is like getting a quickie divorce in Reno three days after you were married; writing a novel is like celebrating your 65th wedding anniversary in Paris.

Writing a short story is like eating a Cheez Doodle; writing a novel is like eating a 12 course meal at a five star restaurant for six hours.

Writing a short story is like having a hangnail removed; writing a novel is like having quadruple bypass surgery.

Writing a short story is a summer job at a fast food restaurant; writing a novel is climbing the ladder to become the President and CEO of a fast food restaurant chain.

Writing a short story is like listening to a George W. Bush speech; writing a novel is like listening to the Lincoln–Douglas debates.

Writing a short story is like being buried in a pauper's grave; writing a novel is like having a state funeral with a 21 gun salute and ticker tape parade down Main Street.

Writing a short story is a Commodore 64; writing a novel is a Dell PowerEdge M905 Server.

Writing a short story is a trip to the corner store; writing a novel is a trip to the moon.

Democracy Is What Happens To The Other Guy

Journalists can always have fun
With a couple of crazy extremists waving their guns.
The power of the people they intend to seize
By applying some “second amendment remedies.”
Of this, there can be no doubt: there
Will always be space on the front page for loonies who are out there.

But, look sharp because your glimpse will be fleet
Of a protest called Occupy Wall Street;
Hundreds of folks have occupied Liberty Square,
Demanding justice for the greedy criminals who work down there.
The sponsors at We are the Ninety-nine Per Cent
Might wonder at lack of coverage of their ongoing event.

"We have limited space," the editors insist,
"Which forces us to choose."
But, if their ideology it does not fit, let's be honest,
It just is not considered “news.”

Plaudits from most of the pundits doth ring
In response to the Arab Spring.
One could find few mass media remonstrations
As waves of people lined the streets for peaceful, pro-democracy demonstrations.
Journalists love it when the common person fights
For his natural (and not threatening to our interests) rights.

Meanwhile, over at the White House in Washington,
Peaceful protestors are being arrested by the ton.
They are protesting the Keystone XL oil sands pipeline –
They even arrested Naomi Klein!

That got a little journalistic attention;
Otherwise of the protests there was no mention.

Be not too surprised when you find yourself bereft
Of coverage if your protest comes from the left.
Meanwhile, the most marginal right wing nutter gets national views,
Because this is how today's media defines the “news.”

Grey Christmas

I'm dreaming of a grey Christmas
Not like the ones I used to know
Where the trees are browning,

And children frowning
Due to a lack of snow

I'm dreaming of a grey Christmas
With every news show I replay
May we get snow some day
So our future Christmases aren't grey

But, It Rhymes!

Gunter Grass
Might be an ass
With a Nazi past
But he may just have a point

Anybody who can
Imagine bombing Iran
Without a World War plan
Is just a silly goint

Pardon Me If I'm Going Forward, But...

There is a seven-point plan going forward.
We are very committed to ensuring that there will be no gap with respect to our ability to provide air fighter capabilities for Canada going forward.
When it comes to the close combat vehicle procurement, this procurement is going forward exactly as it should.
I should also say that going forward we are dealing with estimates.
I think there is no doubt that Canada is in a strong and enviable position going forward.
It has already started and will continue to flow because people with money to invest look at countries that are safe, reliable and predictable in their plans going forward.
It is important that as we go forward, we go forward with programs that respect the use of taxpayers' money as well as their needs.
That is a matter that can be discussed as we go forward with respect to the disposition of assets.
Data gathering and reporting procedures were amended to report this information in the Public Accounts of Canada on a go forward basis
Research and development is one of the pillars of our economy as we go forward.
The government is going forward with a greening government program.
We will ascertain the facts that he chose as necessary in decision making going forward.

"What Are You Against?"

"Whaddya Got?"

You want an example of how the Republicans have abandoned all ration?
In the US Senate a motion was tabled

To enter an international treaty on the disabled
That had been signed by one hundred fifty-five countries and ratified by one hundred
twenty-six nations.

Even though it was totally absurd,
Thirty-eight elephants in the Senate
Voted to completely end it.
The treaty failed because it did not get two-thirds.

“The United Nations wants to control us, we can just sense it!
So, of course, we are against it!”

Despite all of the right wing’s terrible booing,
The funny thing, and it’s a fact,
Is the treaty was modeled on the Americans with Disabilities Act
And mirrored what the States was already doing.
Opposing it must have been a strain – err,
The treaty supported a worthy cause
While requiring the enactment of no new laws –
It should have been a no-brainer.

“By foreign laws we do not want to be fenced. It
Should be totally obvious why we are against it!”

Former Republican Presidential candidate Dole,
To support the treaty was there,
Frail, at 89, and in a wheelchair.
For all the good it did, he may as well have been in a deep hole.

In addition, to show their enthusiastic support,
There were very vocal veterans groups
Who represent disabled troops;
But the GOP responded with a derisive snort!

“We have no defense, it
Is just that we cannot help being against it!”

The Trauma of Not Killing Osama

Because the Oval Office they do seek,
The right must paint the President as weak
On foreign policy.
Republicans argue it was a great error
To not more forcefully prosecute the war on terror
Just as it was getting juicy.

You'd think his foreign policy they would be applaudin'
Since the President was the man who gave the order that got bin Laden.

The right says, instead of defending the Libyan Embassy
The President was giving a big, fat apology
For America to the world.
Somebody with shame might embarrassed be,
For making political hay out of a tragedy
Even as it unfurled.

Foreign affairs may no longer be a field that he will plod in,
But Mitt Romney is not the politician who got bin Laden.

The President, the opposition argues, has no plan
To save Israel from evil Iran.
Instead of initiating an attack, he just keeps talking.
It appears to be a goal of the right,
A regional war to ignite,
Although, given recent history, you'd think that they'd be balking.

The holy land may be the place to find (votes and) god in,
But that does not change the fact that the President was the one who got bin Laden.

The I'm Okay Flap, Jack

Climbing rates of cancer in Alberta
Are not cause for concern in Ottawa.
They result, at best, in a minor brouhaha
(As Canada grows into an environmental pariah).

Money helps to wish difficult problems away –
We've got oil, so we'll be okay.

It's hard to arouse the masses
To protest the creation of greenhouse gasses.
Public outrage develops slow as molasses,
While deadline after deadline to slow the calamity passes.

It's what people want, relevant governments say.
In any case, we've got oil, so we'll be okay.

What pipelines do to wilderness, pristine
Is quite obscene.
It's like a horror movie scene
With the car standing in for the alien queen.

Honestly, who needs deer, elk or bears anyway?
We've got oil, so we'll be okay.

And, what will happen to us when the oil runs out?
Which it will eventually, no doubt.
What will happen to Canada's international clout
When we have stopped being the world's Boy Scout?

But, that's a problem for another day.
For now, we've got oil, so we're okay.

I Like /Writers/ I Like

Robert J. Sawyer
Is near future's voyeur.
Stephen Pearl
Sure can create a fascinating world.
John Scalzi
Is pretty ballsy.
J. M. Frey
Can write! (My, oh, my!)
Michael Swanwick
Writes with a kick.
Nicole Chardenet
Likes to play.
Karl Schroeder
Is a great future narrator.
William Freedman
Is so funny, I peed, man.

Odd Words Coming From Somebody Who Has No Sense of the Common*

Remember, I said we want to take a common-sense, step-by-step approach to replacing Obamacare.
As I – as I said Republicans believe in a common-sense, step-by-step approach to replacing this law.
We're going take a common-sense, step-by-step approach that puts in place the kind of policies that will make our – our health insurance system more what I call patient-centered and lower cost.
No, this has to be – this has to be ripped out by its roots.
While we replace this, we can have a common-sense debate about which of these provisions ought to stay and which ought to go.

* John Boehner in an interview with CBS's Norah O'Donnell

Entertaining the Possibility

Making war in the growing killing fields from Afghanistan to Lachine.
If necessary, going it alone.
Using our mighty war machine,
Or targeting individual enemies with drones –
This is how a country stays strong.

Death and destruction, and bankrupting the national purse –
Leading the free world sure is a terrible curse.
But, it could be much worse:
I could be wrong.

Corrupt corporate heads get hastily bailed
Out – destroying the world economy is how you get ahead
While ordinary folks get jailed
For a decade or more for stealing their third loaf of bread.
It's an old, old, very old, ancient, really, song.

How you end up often depends
Upon the number and quality of your friends.
Although – heaven forbid! –
I could be wrong

I always have an instant opinion
(Usually free of uncomfortably pesky facts);
Luckily, I have a million minions
Whose attitude towards proof is relaxed,
And who are willing to become part of an angry throng.

They will always listen to me
Because, of course, I'm on TV,
And it will never occur to them that maybe
I could be wrong.

The Pusher, 2011 Stylee

I am thinking
You wanna know what I am drinking
So you can have my style when you get stinking

You know how much I love to party
Still, my performance wasn't foolhardy
But the payment was tardy
From Bacardi

And, I must say

Hoo-ray
Cause I got better pay
From Courvoisier

I'm not sayin' they tried to steal a
Dime from me – I ain't no squeala'
But I didn't feel a
Whole lotta love from Patron Tequila

Looking back
I got a ton of jack
All in one whack
From Hennessy Cognac

Booze has been good to me is what I'm sayin'
And I got the biggest financial gain
From Cristal Champagne
Boy, could they make the money rain!

Course, I don't really drink any o' this shit
I try to keep my body fit
But my audience, man, you can go for it!

Sartre Was an Optimist

This knowledge may be a little dated,
But while Plato the old Greek pontificated
The majority of people were slaves.
While Aristotle mused on justice and beauty,
Everybody else waded knee-deep in doody
And found themselves in early graves.

It should be no surprise the common Greek lived in dreck:
The Little Guy always gets it in the neck.

While all about them poverty did rage,
Corporate barons enjoyed the spoils of the Gilded Age.
Not for the rich, disease or violence to brave.
Widows and orphans would suffer the lash
As they twiddled their (admittedly cartoonish) moustache –
No amount of material excess could give them what they craved.

It may not be fair, but what the heck?
The Little Guy always gets it in the neck.

While the economy the rich plunder,

From debt you are going under.
Still, you mustn't expect a political save.
While society crumbles, it is paramount
Their money be safe in off-shore accounts.
It will do you no good to rant and rave.

When whole economies for their sport the wealthy wreck,
The Little Guy always gets it in the neck.

The Heart is a Lonely Cost Accountant

When thinking about the lives of ordinary people and such
Republican Mitt Romney does not appear to know much.
He does, however, seem to have contempt
For anybody who belongs to the forty-seven per cent.

You may believe that Mitt, an old plutocratic fart is,
But you should at least consider that where you put your money is where your heart is.

Now, this may come across as rude,
But a person's character you can always tell
By whether they choose to spend their money on food
Or a junket to Cozumel.

You may believe that wisdom can be found where the art is,
But, I side with Mitt: where you put your money is where your heart is.

Do whatever the bottom line demands,
Whether you invest in the Alberta tar sands
Or sock away your profits in a bank in the Cayman Islands.
The trick to running for President is to seem to have clean hands.

That may be where the hard part is
When you live by the creed that where you put your money is where your heart is.

You say you love America –
The country's Presidency, you want to win it.
Your critics shout, "Aha!
How can we believe you when your money is not in it?"

Avoid an anti-psychotic drug from Novartis
To be sure where you put your money is where your heart is.

Brave, Brave Tony

The MP from Perry Sound-Muskoka

Took fifty million bucks
Despite the fact that the government is broke – a
Fact about which his Tories cluck.

The money that was meant to go to the G8
Summit went to other projects in his riding.
Despite the opposition's fury at Gazebo–gate,
The tumult he is abiding

If anybody looks out of his element,
It's Treasury Board President Tony Clement

A lesser man might rush
To defend his reputation,
But Tony just sits on his tush
For the Question Period's duration.

They taunt him once, they taunt him twice,
They taunt him thirty times or more.
To answer would be cowardice,
So Tony does not take the floor.

He watches with a face carved from cement,
The brave (not bold) Tony Clement

Hang Up! Hang Up!

Your country has strong social services
Because unemployment makes your citizens nervous. Is
This something you can quite easily rearrange?
Because if you find yourself in great debt
There is only one obvious way out of it to get,

And when the IMF comes a-calling
Everything good in your poor country will change.

If the only seeming way out
Is to get a massive bailout,
You'll go begging to the International Monetary Fund.
This'll leave your country defenceless
Against the popular Washington Consensus.

Unfortunately, when the IMF comes a-calling
All social values are considered moribund.

Of course, there will be a lot of ravers

When you are forced to levy a tax on savers –
People who thought their money would be safe in banks.
Though buffeted by international forces,
They'll have no legal recourses,

For when the IMF comes a-calling
You'll have to protect the wealthy's assets with tanks.

The citizens, they can all vent,
But this is the only way to keep your country solvent,
Even if many homeowners are reduced to the status of squatters.
Although the results are perverse,
Letting your country go bankrupt would be much worse.

Sadly, when the IMF comes calling
You better lock up your daughters!

Ballad of the Engaged Citizen

I don't want to hear a-
Nother word about Syria;
I like stories that have good guys and bad.
The side we support has, like Hannibal
Lecter, people who are – ugh! – cannibals,
While there's the war criminal Bashar al-Assad.

When everyone is a so-and-so,
I just don't want to know.

I hear the economy is a mess,
Decisions governments make keep wages depressed,
But I'll never be part of an Occupy mob.
Sure, companies are shipping good jobs overseas
And governments treat unions like a horrible disease,
But, hell, I'm just happy I have a job.

So, while off to the unemployment line my friends do go,
I really do not want to know.

Tough on crime legislation is an epic fail.
The only thing it does is fill our jails.
Still, the government does not want to hear of it.
Evidence of global warming
Or of the long gun registry's demise harming
People's safety – the government stays clear of it.

On these and many other subjects I wish I could be thorough
But I'm just trying to get by, so I really, truly don't want to know.

Class (Of 2017) Act

You have no idea
Of how much harm you can do
Underage girls by chanting for
Them to be raped.
How could anybody think

It was a good idea?
St. Mary's University students

Were so into the rhythm of the chant that they
Apparently paid no attention to its meaning.
Sure they were.
The administration claims it was clueless
Even though this has been going on for years.
Darn it all. Still, how could this have happened?

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The Coulda Fooled Me Blues

Silly Emily
Prima Donna Shawna
Inane Jane
Fool Jules
Bad Bet Yvette
Dense Hortense
Dumb Tatum
No Win Bryn
Obtuse Lucy
Phony Joni
Frail Gail
Slow Rhonda-Jo
Dim Kim
Ditzy Mitzy
Shrew Debby-Sue
Weird Shakira
Ludicrous Jess
Meanie Queenie
Stupid Enid
Obscene Maxine

Nutty Betty
Freak Angelique
Long Gone Yvonne
Mad Ariadne
Harridan Jan
Insane Elaine
Damn Pam
Crazy Daisy
Devil Raquel
Scary Mary
Dread Winnifred

No, I don't hate women – why do you ask?

R. B. Bennett
Never Had to Deal With the Senate

Liberal Mac Harb
Took it too far
Turncoat Patrick Wazeau
Took too much for passing Go

On the other hand, Conservative Pamela Wallin
May have gone all in
But her investigation we will be stalling

And, Conservative Mike Duffy
Is fluffy
So no need to get huffy

Unenlightened Self-Interest

Health scare?
I do not care!
With me, the ACA's going nowhere.
Oh, don't give me that disapproving glare –
Pain is something I am willing to bear.

If there is an affordable way to get medical attention, I don't want to know the trick –
I just want to be sick.

I love the sympathy
For me
When I can't pee
Or see,
Or I have a serious injury

To my right knee
Which makes moving it an impossibility.

Better insurance? You can shove that shtick!
I just can't help it, I want to be sick.

So, please, spare me the medical plans of President Obama
(Yes, I know he wasn't born in Yokohama!).
Because I love the exquisite drama
Of finding a melanoma
That has grown much larger than a common comma.

To this position, against all reason I stick
Cause I really, truly, madly, deeply want to be sick!

Everybody Must Get Droned

Well, they'll drone ya when you're trying to be so good
They'll drone ya when you're walkin' in your hood
They'll drone ya when you're drivin' to your home
Then they'll drone ya if you're with friends or alone

For this, I feel we surely must atone
Everybody must get droned

Well, they'll drone ya when you're standing in the street
They'll drone you when your fannin' in the heat
They'll drone you when you're dancin' on the floor
They'll drone you when you're steppin' through the door

For this, I feel we surely must atone
Everybody must get droned

They'll drone ya when you're tryin' to get high
They'll drone ya when you're life passes you by
They'll drone ya when you're gambling out of luck
They'll drone ya and then they'll pass the buck

Tell ya what, I feel we must atone
Everybody must get droned

Well, they'll drone you til the very bitter end
Then they'll drone once more and then once again
They'll drone you when you're drinking in a bar
They'll drone you when you're smashing your guitar

Yes, but I feel we must atone Everybody must get droned
Well, they'll drone you while your singin' all your songs
They'll drone you though you've done nothin' wrong
They'll drone you and ignore that they are cowards
They'll drone as into your grave you're lowered

For this, I feel we surely must atone
Everybody must get droned

Say Hooray for the CRA!

As the Harper Government of Canada consolidates its power far and wide
Those who'd publicly speak truth are a rarity.
When not subject to derisive hilarity,
Truth tellers are dealt with with increasing severity.
This is even true of any unlucky charity
That gets on the Prime Minister's bad side.

Remember the line about freedom of speech? You mean you really bought it?
Oh, my goodness, brace yourself: you're heading for an audit!

The Harper Government of Canada has breathed new life into old tricks.
You don't want to be on the bad side of the CRA –
The Canadian Revenue Agency, as they say.
You would think they would focus on wealthy people hiding their money in the Cay-
Man Islands, but that's not how revenooers work today:
You can come to the CRA's attention for talking 'bout politics.

At the best times, politics is fraught, it
Is, however, the hardest hard ball to subject your enemies to an audit.

There's nothing subtle here, no positive subtext:
Can you afford to lose the ability to accept tax-exempt charitable donations?
The United Church, Amnesty International, The David Suzuki Foundation
And others of the biggest charities in the nation
Could do nothing to avoid this altercation –
Say the wrong thing in public and you could be next!

You thought you'd be spared because you've had many a plaudit?
When I have stopped laughing, prepare for an audit!

Doing good works will not save you
When the CRA approaches you with ill will.
Better to just swallow the bitter pill
And allow your freedom of expression to chill;
The public interest in your cause will wither, but still,

That's the only option the government gave you.

You want trouble? Oh, boy, have you got it!
There can be no more horrible fate than a tax audit!

Playing Shootsies With Our National Identity

I imagine Canada as a sprawling land
With mountains, prairies and...lots of water.
To protect weak nations, we take a stand
And fish such as cod, and seals we slaughter.
Okay, not everything we do is grand,
But we do make a large effort to do as we oughter.

To define our country, advertisers jockey
By telling us Canada is hockey.

Hockey is a wonderful game.
I used to enjoy watching it – I know I did.
Of course, it's not the same
As it was when I was a kid.
In fact, the violence has made it lame,
As the quality of the play has slid and slid...

Equating national identity with a game is schlocky;
Yet, for many, Canada is hockey.

In this logic, it is hard to make dents,
No matter how hard you may try.
One can imagine so many more important accomplishments,
Yet with winning goal scorers (or brutal enforcers), so many people identify.
When you think about those more deserving of adulation, it does not make sense,
But the irrational patriotism of the couch potato will not be denied.

Am I overthinking this? Am I being too Spocky?
Perhaps, but I do not buy the idea that Canada is hockey.

The Commutative Law of International Relations is Put to the Test

To fight the mighty Russian war machine
We armed the raggedy Mujahideen.
When they succeeded and we left Afghanistan
They morphed into the Taliban.
(You know, the folks who, to get their 77 virgins in heaven,
Were responsible for 9/11?)

To cover up our complicity in our horrific losses
We were told not to look at terrorism's root causes.
What is important in the end
Is that the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

To end the Iranian Ayatollahs' reign,
We supported Iraq's Saddam Hussein.
Long after we put an end to that production,
We waged a war to get rid of his non-existent weapons of mass destruction
Nobody mourned the loss of this particular strong-arm boss,
But the country then descended into chaos.

Today, are we fighting the Muslims or Shias?
Don't look at us! We have no idea!
Do we know what we are doing? Heaven forbid!
But we know that the enemy of my friend's enemy's enemy is a...friend?

Time passes, and we soon confront another new crisis,
For into the Iraqi power vacuum comes ISIS!
Our war against them may make you think we've been had:
It mostly benefits Iran and Syria's bloodthirsty tyrant Bashar al-Assad!
That's what we get, you might think, waging war in an area that's medieval,
But how'd we end up fighting **on behalf of two thirds of the axis of evil?!**

We are told we can bring peace and freedom to the region through war
(As though this has worked the dozen times we tried it before).
One thing, though that has not been sufficiently debated,
Is that the enemy of my friend's enemy's enemy's friend's friend's enemy used to
be...holy crap, this can get most complicated!

The Imaginary Military Has Our Enemies on the Run

With ships that are aging
And tanks we find are no longer raging,
Will poor Canada's war waging
Be up to the 21st century?
If, on military action your heart is set,
You can't fight with a reduced armylet.
But what can you do if a bigger military budget you can't get?
Call on the Imaginary Military!

So itching for battle are Conservative ranks,
They've cancelled an order for trucks that act like tanks.
Without so much as, "Let's do lunch and thanks"
To the corporations which on it were bidding.

You want military intelligence? Here is a scoop:
The Imaginary Military will move our troops!

There is a certain on again/off again pain
To the government's attempts to replace our aging fighter planes
That has military suppliers singing the refrain,
"Oh, man, you've got to be kidding!"

As the air force scrimps and scrapes and somehow manages to get by,
The Imaginary Military off into the sunset will fly.

For pols who love war, you'd think the Conservatives would be bolder
In replacing Sea King choppers that are 50 and continue to grow older.
Meanwhile, specs get simpler and manufacturers' hearts grow colder
As on their hands the government's sitting.

A sad story to be sure, but you had best bet
The Imaginary Military will protect us from all foreign and native threats!

Words Get Battered
(But They Still Matter)

The rumble of tanks is easily detected
In a land where the government was properly democratically elected;
But, the Generals felt they were better equipped
To run the country of Egypt.

The people on the streets have spoken – waddya gonna do?
Just don't call it a coup.

Nobody could foresee
The illegal arrest of Mohamed Morsi,
Or, for the so-called greater good,
Other prominent leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Thus ends a Muslim government's debut:
In something we're discouraged from calling a coup.

The protesters who took to Egypt's streets
Represent the country's educated elites.
Their ideal of democracy was none too deep: all
It represents is the will of certain people.

In the west, there's little ado
As long as nobody calls it a coup.

In other circumstances, we would shun
A military government that had suspended its country's constitution;
But on "religious fanaticism" we need to keep a lid,
So the western response has been strenuously tepid.

In other circumstances, Egypt would be in deep, deep doodoo,
But today it's all good, as long as nobody calls it a coup.

Shit is in the Eye of the Beholder
(Be Sure to Have Plenty of Antibiotics on Hand)

It's enough to make your manhood shrivel,
The assignment to produce poetic drivel.
Through thesauri you must fervently trek
To find new ways of writing drek,
And, it's not as easy as you might think to succeed.

I mean, just when the rotten poem is out the door,
You notice you've come up with an engaging new metaphor.
Or, when you think you have run out of time,
You write a particularly clever rhyme,
When you thought on the page you had merely peed.

To lay a proper literary turd
It helps to be indifferent to the meaning of words.
Of course, if you are attuned to the latest lexiconical memes
You can always box yourself in with an abstruse rhyming scheme –
That's one way to...get treed? score weed? work for pigeon feed? More time, I need!

To create a truly awful English language bon bon
Make sure there is at least one line that runs on...and on and on and on and on and on and
on and on and on.
And, like a commode smashed by a brick,
An ugly, obvious metaphor should do the trick.
Work hard at it, and for mercy your readers will surely plead!

Dumpty Diplomacy

Old Mother Russia relied on a wall
Old Mother Russia had a great fall
All of Putin's bluster
And all of Putin's guns
Couldn't give Old Mother Russia another run

As We Would Find Out In Time,
The Situation Was Not Made Better By Rhyme

There once was a man named Boris
Who didn't know what a political whore is
Despite his many quotes sinister
He was named Britain's foreign minister
And plunged the world into a deep, dark morass

Baudrillard Was an Optimist

Rumours of Satanic rituals portrayed as fact
With copious details that seem exact
You might want to consider the degree of fantasy
As you sort through the debris
Left by somebody who found the report a reason to attack

Fake news for a fake President
Where nothing that is said is meant

The inauguration is at hand
And the best Trump can muster is the B Street Band
A knock-off of Springsteen
Who responded to his invitation with something bordering on obscene
Because nobody with a name (or talent) wants to attend

Fake music for a fake President
There is a high cost for being low-rent

Donald Trump claims to be the man
With the economic plan
To avoid conflicts of interest
Unfortunately, it doesn't exist
It's just a series of blank pages with a tan.

Fake deals on self-dealing for a fake President
You'll wonder where the money went

Judge Not

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas
Knows how to make out of himself an ass,
But his latest pronouncement may all his previous ones surpass:
He argues that an official religion can be established by each state.
So, if Texas wanted Sharia law it could – oh, wait...
Why do strict constructionists propose theories the Founding Fathers would obviously hate?

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia
Has a permanent case of verbal diarrhea.
Here's an idea:
Whenever you get the urge to say
Blacks would be better off in less academic schools anyway,
Hit yourself in the head with a brick until it goes away!

Water You Afraid Of?

Why dig into a budget deeper
When you can get your water cheaper
From a new pipeline from Lake Huron?
So the tragic thinking ran
In the city of Flint, Michigan
After the state appointed to run it a fiscal conservative and environmental moron.

Nobody was given any water quality alertz
By Emergency Manager Ed Kurtz.

The city was unable to meet its deadline,
So water from the Flint River filled its old pipeline
(From out of which sewage sometimes spilled).
Unfortunately, the water was poorly treated
And lead flaked off the aging pipes (especially when heated)
Thus, with toxic chemicals they were filled.

That's the thing that really hurtz,
Emergency Manager Ed Kurtz.

Flint water was thick as mud
And did nasty things to its drinker's blood:
Child lead poisoning rates doubled.
An EPA study was flushed down the drain.
Parents who complained were called insane –
Insults were what they got for their troubles

What do you think about the lead poisoning spurtz,
Emergency Manager Ed Kurtz?

On democracy, this can be seen as an attack
Did I mention the majority of Flint citizens are black?
Obviously, they cannot be trusted with their own finances.
With a manager parachuted in by stealth
Who cares more for budget numbers than a city's health –
These days, this is how racism advances.

This is the result when a politician democracy subvertz:
I'm talking about you, Governor Rick Snyder, you who appointed Emergency Manager
Ed Kurtz.

And We Ain't Talkin' No Crackers Here, Buddy

Of his manliness there can be no debate, or
Have you not seen him wrestle an alligator?
Many Russians want a strong leader who will never blunder.
Foreigners may think it odd – ha!
That Russians would rather drink themselves to death with Vodka
Than watch the president...or prime minister of their country let his friends loot and
plunder.

Who's amassing millions while his country goes on the fritz?
Putin, on the Ritz

Millions cheer when the ruler for life appears without a shirt
Even while they can only afford to eat wood bark and dirt
As kleptocrats steal money by the billions.
To tighten Russia's grip on Ukraine
His allies blew up a Malaysian Airlines plane,
Even though it's a war crime to target civilians.

Who appears to be nostalgic for the Blitz?
Putin, on the Ritz

In case the world is still having trouble hearin' ya,
You're backing the brutal dictator of Syria?
The butcher known as Bashar al-Assad?
Stability in the region, you claim, is what your aid is for
But how stable will the world be if you reignite the Cold War?
Was glasnost all just a façade?

Who won't be happy until he's torn world peace to bits?
Putin, on the Ritz

Ode On A Grecian Bowl

Les dames pipi
Are set to become figures of *la nostalgie*
Due to a Parisian makeover;
Public toilets, once proud and free,
Will only be accessible for a small fee
Owing to a Netherlandian takeover.

In Paris, you did not have to be pure at all
To clean a public urinal:
Les dames had come from places like Vietnam, Togo and Guinea.
But the tradition of cleaning the city's bathroom stalls,
To the needs of more upscale residents must fall –
The new dames will be tall, blonde and skinny.

Welcome to the new France,
Where you can now go in public with elegance,
And to hell with a century of tradition.
Of course, you will have to pay a Euro and a half for the chance
To use paper decorated with the Eiffel Tower when you lower your pants;
You can be forgiven if you feel something is missin'!

The State Has No Business in the Comedy Clubs of the Nation

Anybody exercising the god given right to be a jerk'll
Have to contend with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel.
For any citizen who wants to express the most offensive thing they can say,
Be aware that she will slap you with a charge of *lèse-majesté*.

There is no reason for Turkey's President Erdogan to gloat
That he'll be exonerated of the charge of having sex with a goat.
This matter would likely have been most quickly forgotten
If he hadn't insisted on exercising his right, however misbegotten.

No credit should go to "poet" Jan Boehmermann,
Who must think of himself as a Germanic David Letterman.
His attempt at humour should not merit time in a penitentiary,
Even if jokes about sex with farm animals is soooooooo so thirteenth century!

Hard as it may seem, a poem that elicits a response of "pee-eww!"
May derail a refugee deal between Turkey and the EU.
Unfortunately, when it comes to satire's sins
Nobody ever wins.

The Fuck Not Given

Two opinions diverged on the darkest net
And sorry I could not hold both
And be one thinker, before I placed my bet
I wondered if the first I would less regret
If I approached it with all due sloth;

Then took the other, with no little fear,
For making just the tiniest bit more sense,

Although its claims were terribly unclear
And a logical conclusion lay nowhere near
The end of prose that was hopelessly dense.

Both that morning I duly read
On my computer screen in white and black.
Oh, I kept the first for times I'd dread!
Yet, knowing how history can be turned on its head,
I was grateful to be holding something back.

I shall be telling this with a "My, oh my,"
When no one will come to my defence:
Two opinions diverged on the net, and I –
I gave the one less fucked by,
And that has made all the difference.

Success Requires So Many Factors To Gel...

Dev Patel
Has a movie to sell;
I think it would be swell
If it did well,
But only time will tell.

How to Tell if You Are Truly Cultured

You can tell Bruno Mars from Veronica Mars from Mars bars.
You can tell Danger Mouse from Mickey Mouse from a computer mouse.
You can tell Chris Pine from James Levine from a can of turpentine.
You can tell Mozart from op-art from a go-kart.
You can tell Tom Cruise from Ted Cruz from J. Crew.
You can tell Bob Dylan from Matt Dillon from Nathan Fillion.
You can tell a pearl from Steve Earle from French vanilla swirl.

Police State, Your Case

James Comey has a reputation for being a straight shooter.
He says he had to reopen the Clinton email investigation because of what he found on
Huma Abadin's computer,
So, we are supposed to believe it must be true.
The fact that many of his underlings
Were about to, at Clinton, the dirt fling –
Well, do I have to draw a map for you?

How to respond to the most obvious FBI interference with a democratic election to date?
Welcome to the new police state.

Senior officers in the FBI, so white, so male,
Could not stand to see a woman prevail;
So, mere days before the election, they had, for Clinton and the Democrats, a surprise.
Although the issue of her email use had been thought dead,
It once again reared its ugly (not to mention pointless, partisan) head,
And the fortunes of the long moribund Republican Party began to rise.

Do you think national police interference in the democratic process is great?
Then you're going to loooooooooooooove the police state!

Now, for cops, blacks won't be throwing any parades;
They've been living in a police state for decades.
For them, this kind of behaviour (and worse) is nothing new.
And for natives throwing cops a party, there's no hurries;
They have been living in a police state for centuries,
And have no love lost for our boys in blue.

Better never, I would have thought, than late;
Still, whites now know what it's like to live in a police state.

Full (Of Crap) And Open (To Abuse)

The nomination of Brett Kavanaugh
Stuck in many people's craw
Sexual aggression while drunk seems to be his fatal flaw
So he shouldn't be on the Supreme Court (or even practice law)

The nomination seemed like a done deal
A life sentence, with no appeal
But when allegations of sexual misconduct were revealed
His background check had to be reopened (though not with zeal)

We want a full and open investigation
(Just not by the FBI! Not the FBI!)

To keep the lid on this nasty can
A list was drawn up by White House Council Don McGahn
To limit the witnesses who could be interviewed was the plan
In a brief one week span

We want a full and open investigation
(Hide the list! Hide the list!)

President Trump couldn't help but weigh in
Starting with the usual anti-Democratic spin

Publicly, he said the FBI could do a complete investigation
Privately, his administration only lifted a few minor limitations

We want a full and open investigation
(Is the week over, yet? Is the week over?)

Anita Hill was tragedy, this is farce
No matter how badly this nomination goes off course
As the allegations go from bad to worse
Mitch McConnell, a Senate vote will force

We want a full and open investigation
(No, we don't! No, we don't! No, we most certainly do not!)

Getting a Bad Rap

Yo
Pharma Bro
Waddya know?

Martin Shkreli
Was really
A dilly

Raising the price of anti-parasite drug Daraprim
A bill of \$750 per pill
Made a lot of sick people's lives grim
But enriched him
What a tribute to capitalism!

Yo
Pharma Bro
Off to jail you go

Not, of course, for playing God
But for securities fraud
I'd like to applaud,
But ain't that odd?

Maybe not
Think of all those suits in cubicles
Figuring ways to make money off pharmaceuticals
Curing cancer or ingrown cuticles

Yo
Pharma Bro

You woulda been fine if you'd only gone slow

500 Hours

When I get fired, well I know I'm gonna be
The gal who gets fired on national TV
When I go out, yeah I know I'm gonna be
The one who goes out on Donald's firing spree
If I get fame, well I know I'm gonna be
The one who earned it because nothing comes for free
If I have it all, yeah I know I'm gonna be
The gal who made it on a show of reality

And, I would talk 500 hours
And, I would talk 500 more
Just to be the gal who talked 1,000 hours
To get a great big score

When it works out, yes I know I'm gonna be
I'm gonna be a gal who works entirely for me
And when the money comes in for my work on the qt
I'll keep almost every penny of it for me
When I come home (when I come home), well I know I'm gonna be
I'm gonna be the gal whose White House worked for me
And if I get fired (if I get fired), well you know I'm gonna be
I'm gonna be the gal who goes back to TV

And, I would talk 500 hours
And, I would talk 500 more
Just to be the gal who talked 1,000 hours
To get a great big score

Omarosa! (Omarosa!) Omarosa! (Omarosa!)
Tweedledum Tweedledum Tweedledum Tweedledum Tweedledum dumb dumb
Omarosa! (Omarosa!) Omarosa! (Omarosa!)
Tweedledum Tweedledum Tweedledum Tweedledum Tweedledum dumb dumb

The Ballad of Jesse Duplantis

Oh, Lord, won't you buy me a cool new French jet
I have three already, but I'm not done yet
If I can't fly faster, Satan will win, I'll bet
So, oh Lord, won't you buy me a cool new French jet

Oh, Lord, won't you buy me a massive mega-church
My friends' can seat 30,000, don't leave me in the lurch

If mine's not the biggest, your name it'll besmirch
Oh, Lord, won't you buy me a massive mega-church

Oh, Lord, won't you buy me some prime time on TV
Otherwise how'll my followers ever find me
I need a good slot, say afternoons at three
Oh, Lord, won't you buy me some prime time on TV

Oh, Lord, won't you buy me a cool new French jet
I have three already, but I'm not done yet
If I can't fly faster, Satan will win, I'll bet
So, oh Lord, won't you buy me a cool new French jet

That's it... (giggles) for now...

The Lesson of Two Evils

Sebastien Gorka
Dancing the hora
On the Constitution;
Brave talk on China turning wussy;
A President proudly boasting of grabbing pussy;
Russian electoral collusion.

Sure, these are bad, but let's get one thing straight first:
Hillary Clinton would have been worse.

Immigrant families living in fear
That ICE will take their children (who will then disappear);
Drilling for oil in national parks;
Personal wealth increased by international trade;
An almost daily anti-journalist tirade;
Dozens of school shooting larks.

We may have a President who is truth averse,
But Hillary Clinton would have been worse.

Casual promotion of white supremacists;
Abortion rights dissolving into mist;
Agreeing with the last person who, on bended knee flattered;
Enflaming the Middle East with an embassy move; and most of all:
Who will be paying for what border wall?
Living in an alternate reality where facts don't matter.

The corpse of democracy is being loaded into the hearse,
But Hillary Clinton would have been worse.

Ode to Ignorance

For saying this, I may be hated
But knowledge is vastly overrated
When facts are being hotly debated
I just want to be sedated

Don't tell me that!
If I wanted to know it
Don't you think
I'd find a way to show it?

If I don't know the truth, I can fear you
So, la la la la la, I can't hear you
While others might like to cheer you
I don't ever want to get near you

Don't tell me that!
In my defence
There's plenty of bliss
In my ignorance!

Don't teach my children about sex
They should not know what goes on below their necks
Oh, sure, there may be adverse effects
But I demand control over what they're told next

Don't tell them that!
Boo to sex education
I must share my ignorance
With a new generation!

What Republican Voters Tell Themselves to Help Them Sleep at Night

White supremacists like Neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan
Feel emboldened their hateful rhetoric to espouse
They prate on about the inferior races they are better than
And cheerfully bring violence down on whomever they can
Because they know they have a friend in the White House

The white male masses for blood have a thirst
But Hillary Clinton would have been worse

Claim the United States was founded as a Christian nation
(The Founding Fathers would roll over in the graves, but still)

Hold a "War with Islam" celebration
Jail immigrants and call it liberation
And don't stop at abortion – outlaw the pill!

From the Book of Donald American theocrats sing chapter and verse
But Hillary Clinton would have been worse

Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller
Was hired to look at Trump collusion with the Reds
But his investigation is rather fuller
Of financial records he is a puller
At least until his job is cancelled by the feds

The Trump administration is living under a curse
But Hillary Clinton would have been worse

Throw tens of millions off Medicare with a wink and a lie
To pay for billions of dollars of tax cuts for the wealthy
Don't even try
The policy to justify
Just argue that it's not a human right to be healthy

On this subject, I will be terse
The effects of Robin Hood in reverse
Are perverse
Buuuuuuuuutttt...

All The Things We Should Thank John Kelly For

Anthony Scaramucci
Wouldn't be caught dead in Gucci
It was drab grey business suits all the way

To ensure the president won the day
There was nothing obscene he wouldn't say
Til he sounded a lot like Il Duce

Jeff Bannon
Liked to be considered a loose cannon
Although he isn't all that smart

After eight months destroying the government from within (a good start)
He returned to Breitbart
Where he collected a salary as his mouth ran on

Sebastian Gorka

Was a dork, a
Man without a job description

Every time he spoke, he'd give reasonable people conniptions
Against his propaganda, rationality wasn't always a reliable prescription
Fortunately, he's done. Stick in him a fork – ahh!

Putins Just Wanna Have Fun

The President sends a middle of the night tweet
That's nonsense, but to his base is very red meat
Oh, Donald, dear, you've got the world on the run
And Putins just want to have fun
Oh, Putins just wanna have fun

Across Europe, and even in France
Elections are subject to interference
Oh, Nathan, dear, why are you looking so stunned?
And Putins just want to have fun
Oh, Putins just wanna have fun

That's all they really want
Some fun
When democracy is done
Putins just want to have fun
Oh, Putins just wanna have fun

Some leaders take a beautiful world
And twist till international order's unfurled
Against this NATO doesn't have enough guns
And Putins just want to have fun
Oh, Putins just wanna have fun

A Special Clinton Lullaby

Hush little baby,
Haven't you heard?
If you're were born a girl
You dare not say a word.
It may not be right,
It may not be fair,
But if you are a woman
The men won't care.

Hush little baby,
Don't make a sound.

So what if Russian hackers
Drove your poll numbers down?
To your endless whining
You must put a halt –
Losing the election
Was your own fault!

Hush little baby,
Don't make a peep.
The FBI director
Had the status quo to keep.
He may have outed you
While keeping Trump up on the shelf,
But when it comes to losing,
You have to blame yourself.
Hush little baby,
Don't you cry,
I'll tell you what to say,
And leave you to figure why...

A Microscopic Honour

I know it will probably sound silly
But I've always wanted my name to be on a bacilli
I could put up with all of the gigglers
If my name graced any of those microscopic wrigglers
Sadly, while I've been waiting for some microbiologist to do it
The band members of Rush have beaten me to it

If you want a microbe that can screech a high c
You now have *pseudotrichonympha leei*
If you are always on Ayn Rand alert
Watch for lyrics written by pseudotrichonympha pearti
Want guitar licks that sound like strife, son?
Get a load of tiny *pseudotrichonympha lifesoni*

They don't quite trip off the tongue
As would pseudotrichonympha neilyoungi
And they wouldn't be as fine
As a name based on mine
But if you're musical legends in your own right
You can look forward to being part of the name of a microbe in a termite!

The Next Hit Song For Political Rallies Everywhere

Fascists. Fascists

Roly-poly fascists
Fascists. Fascists
Beat them up
Yum

In the morning, losing, hacky fascists
In the evening, swimming in the muck

Fascists. Fascists
Roly-poly fascists
Fascists. Fascists
Beat them up
Yum

Tell a fascist anything you want to
They won't listen, they can't think

Fascists. Fascists
Roly-poly fascists
Fascists. Fascists
Beat them up
Yum

They can't play baseball, they don't wear polo shirts
They're not good dancers, they don't play drums

Roly-poly fascists are never seen drinking cappuccino
In Italian restaurants with Oriental women
Yeah

Fascists. Fascists
Roly-poly fascists
Fascists. Fascists
Beat them up
Yum

With apologies to Barnes and Barnes

Ontario: Open For Business, Closed To Compassion

If you're a person on disability
Your benefits will rise by 1.5 per cent instead of three
Sure the amount you can earn from work
Will take a monthly \$100 jerk
But anything over \$300 will be hit with a 75 per cent tax levy

The disabled are doing alright
Getting good grades
Their future's so bright
They should throw the Tories parades

This may make some people rage
But there won't be an increase to the minimum wage
Instead, the working poor will get a tax credit called LIFT
Which will be less than half of their promised gift
And workplace protections will return to an earlier stage

The working poor are doing alright
Getting good grades
Their future's so bright
Why are so many spouting tirades?

The wealthy are getting their share of...well, no
Cutting **their** benefits is a no go
If the government thinks of them when taking up its axes
It will be to cut their taxes
Which just goes to show...

The wealthy are doing alright
Getting good grades
Their future's so bright
The rest is charades

Scott Pruitt

If You Don't Like This Article, Don't Sue It

Scott Pruitt
Was crooked and knew it
He went to Morocco
To get liquified natural gas to flow
Despite conflict laws telling him not to do it
Scott Pruitt
Is part of the swamp, to wit:
For his trouble he was lent
An apartment at below market rent
That is when he really blew it

Scott Pruitt
Exchanged favours. If true, it
Falls with a big WHOMP
On the idea the President will drain the swamp
At this rate he'll never get to it

You May Be a Loser Who is Already a Winner!

Online, I hobnob with Ethiopian princes,
Watching...croquet? And, eating...blintzes?
They want financial aid, and I would let 'em
Use my bank account, but then I would forget 'em
As I move on to how my lottery winnings mount,
And I deal with the corruption of my bank account.

Make loads of money
Buying and selling useless stuff.
I'm a junk mail junkie,
And too much is never enough.

Looking for the best gift for any member of your brood?
We can show you how to make anything out of wood!
Looking for a business opportunity deep down in your bowels?
We can help you sell paper towels!
I get excited when an email shows up
That tells me how to survive when the world blows up.

I want to know
How to make any hobby pay.
I'm a junk mail junkie –
I've already had 47 just today!

Although they fill other people with dread,
I love to receive emails from lawyers for the dead.
Some people think spam is really sleazy,
But I want to learn all I can about an online cure for diabetes!
Against spam I have no need for a legal injunction
I want to hear what you can do to alleviate erectile dysfunction!

Looking for love?
Try Russian...or Chinese...or even Ethiopian girls...
I'm a junk mail junkie
In a spam filter world

Come On Over And Set, Haspel

The CIA's new director Gina Haspel
Believes in the gospel
of Torquemada:
Turn the screws! Pour the water!
There will be no consequences later!

Then, we'll all go out for a tasty tostada.

To rational beings, it may be vile,
But torture, baby, is back in style!

There once were 92 video tapes
That showed CIA agents behaving like apes:
Waterboarding and force feeding prisoners anally.
With the reputation of the agency at stake,
Haspel ordered the tapes erased
So there would be no repercussions penally.

You think you live in a country of laws, meanwhile
Torture, friend, is back in style.

At Haspel's confirmation hearing
Some Democratic senators' criticism was searing,
But some, wanting to support a woman, refused to defeat it.
Although they wanted assurances for sure,
Haspel refused to denounce the CIA's torture,
Ensuring the CIA is doomed to repeat it.

When the President supports it without his usual guile,
You have to know, folks, that torture is back in style!

The Strength of a Cabinet Depends Upon the Materials You Use To Build It

Scott Pruitt
Truly blew it.
The right thing? He knew it,
But he chose not to do it.

Not nice,
Tom Price!
Profiting off the public purse is a vice,
Especially if you do it thrice!

Betsy DeVoss
Is the boss;
She's way past the line she shouldn't cross,
But at least she's not as bad as Wilbur Ross!

John Kelly
Went through hell, he
Trudged through the beast's belly
And came out smelly.

Ben Carson
May be responsible for petty larcen—
Y, but while at HUD he stars in
a movie about government departmental arson.

Mike Pence
May look dense
But his worst offence
Is obsequious obeisance.

How Many Words Rhyme With “Deadly?”

Charles McVety
'S worldview is petty
He hates liberals and gays.
But if, as he has long wanted,
His college is university status granted,
He will change his ways.
(Or so he says...)

Charles McVety
Is a good bet, he
Knows all the right people.
He doesn't teach
So much as preach
Instead of a halo, he sports a steeple.

Charles McVety
Was the Premier's friend, steady,
When he gave the Ford campaign some rooms.
Nobody saw
This violation of election law,
Which cemented their relationship, one assumes.

Charles McVety
Ain't so pretty
When he talks about a woman's right to choose.
If he had his way,
Abortion would be banned yesterday
And the least powerful among us would lose.

Charles McVety
Is always ready
To cloak himself in the mantle of God.
He knows the “truth”

And he wants to bring it to youth
But isn't the state sanctioning this odd?
(Premier Ford – need a prod?)

It's The Poetry Of The Trump Administration...And You Can Dance (On The End Of A
Rope) To It

If it's just not done
To cheat and lie
Who you gonna call?
(Normbusters)
If you must attack
Poke you rival in the eye
Who you gonna call?
(Normbusters)

I ain't afraid of no norms
I ain't afraid of no norms

If you wanna make bucks
But it's not allowed
Who you gonna call?
(Normbusters)
The emoluments clause
Needs to be hollowed out
Who you gonna call?
(Normbusters)

I ain't afraid of no norms
I ain't afraid of no norms
Who you gonna call?
(Normbusters)
Who you gonna call?
(Normbusters)
The Supreme Court can't hear you!
(Normbusters)
Aww, who you gonna call?
(Normbusters)

The Royal Family Has Produced Many A Clown
But They're Still Fun To Have Around

The royals are coming to town, hoo ha
The royals are coming to town
Nothing will ever again get us down
Because the royals are coming to town

Canadians killed in a plane shot down by Iran?
That's as nothing compared to Prince Harry's tan!

China holding innocent Canadians to hostage for a national named Meng?
Can't hold a candle to Harry and Meghan's royal wedding!

The United States renegotiating an international trade deal?
Who cares? What will be Harry and Meghan's first Canadian meal?

Alberta threatening to secede because of stalled pipelines?
Will Meghan go back into acting? Will she remember the right lines?

Are Canadian troops' lives endangered by potential war in the Middle East?
Whose royal reaction to the move do we care about the least?

Is the federal government unable to impose a carbon tax?
Prince Harry and Meghan will entertain us, so relax!

The royals are coming to town, hoo ha
The royals are coming to town
Nothing will ever again get us down
Because the royals are coming to town

You're OK, I'm Ageist

The future is bright, so long as you can afford to hunker
Down in a heat-proof, flame-retardant bunker,
Or, if you live on the coast, you manage to grow frills
Like webbed fingers and toes, or a set of gills.
Let's face it: this planet's a junker!

Think every Millennial's a doom and gloomer?
That's just their reality, but OK boomer.

You can be forgiven for wondering where all your money went
When you have to hold down three jobs just to almost, maybe, not quite pay the rent.
A small minority of the world's population uses stealth
To maintain its hold on a vast hoard of wealth,
While you enjoy the benefits of precarious employment.

For Millennials, home ownership is distant rumour,
But you're enjoying your cottage, so OK boomer.

Like the most critical desert vulture
You believe nothing good came of post-1970s culture.

To reinforce your belief that nothing original remains,
You'll play the same songs over and over...and over again.
Anything new will be thrown into a mulcher.

When you fear new art is a cultural tumour,
There's nothing to be said but: OK boomer.

Are they out of their gourd? Could their egos be any bigger?
That old people equate "OK boomer" with...the n-word? ...?
They need some corporal punishment, or some kind of corrective,
To deal with this tragic lack of perspective.
They have a lot to answer for! They need to stop being so susceptible to a trigger!

For people who "invented" laughter, they don't seem to have much of a sense of humour.
Just smile at them and say: OK OK OK OK OK boomer.

Where There's Hopelessness

Nancy Pelosi
Would not give up the ghost, she
[No witnesses! No witnesses!]
Gave impeachment articles a go see
Because it was the right thing to do (mostly).

I got them deep down exoneration blues,
And the terrible feeling I've just been used.
Them deep down exoneration blues,
And I have no idea what to do.

Adam Schiff
Needed a drink, stiff!
[No documents! No documents!]
He saw the nation walking off a cliff
While Republicans shrugged and asked, "What's the diff?"

I got them deep down exoneration blues,
And the terrible feeling the process is being abused.
Them deep down exoneration blues –
Can somebody please tell me what to do?

Chuck Shumer
Heard a rumour
[No evidence! No evidence!]
That the White House tumour
Was in a state of permanent ill humour.

I got them deep down exoneration blues,
And the terrible feeling we'll never know what's true.
Them deep down exoneration blues –
Does anybody know what to do?

Mitch McConnell
Is too far gone, he'll
[No justice! No justice]
Swallow any poison pill
To avoid doing the people's will.

I got them deep down exoneration blues,
And the terrible feeling the death knell for democracy just blew.
Them deep down exoneration blues,
And, there may be nothing to do!
Nothing to do...
Nothing...

There's a Lot of it Going Around

From your life you may find something missing
If you practice "social distancing."
Sure, your social life is bound to take a hit,
But deep down inside you know it's true, some
People are going to experience a death that's gruesome –
How badly do you want to avoid it?

Being housebound getting you down?
Don't worry – there's a lot of it going around.

When a loved one starts to hacking,
That's the time to send them packing –
Where's a bloody ice floe when you need one?
You, of course, will live forever,
If those other...jerks will just get it together.
You've always known a bad situation when you seed one.

Go ahead, resent not being able to go out on the town.
You're not alone – there's a lot of it going around.

It's a principle that could have been written on papyrus:
Somebody has to be blamed for the spread of the virus.
With Covid-19, the stupid money's on China.
Don't be surprised to witness
Attacks on Chinese people and business.
Is it really their fault? No way, not even kinda.

Dumbfounded that compassion is thin on the ground?
Surprise! There's a lot of it going around.

It's only natural to want to find fault
When the world economy grinds to a halt
Because stores and factories have to be closed.
Being in large gatherings, whether entertainment or bridal,
Is no longer fun – it's suicidal
So, despite the financial havoc, you can understand why authorities are opposed.

At better retail outlets, fear and panic can be found
For a reasonable price, because there's a lot of it going around.

Les Pages aux Folles: The Back Story

A Nayman family legend has it that I decided to devote my life to writing comedy/humour when I was eight years old. Most boys that age wanted to be hockey players or astronauts (or, so I have been told) – why comedy? Through my thirties and forties, it was important to me to understand why I developed the way I did (after a couple of decades filled with unanswerable questions, I decided to stop wondering and accept myself the way I was), so I gave this question considerable thought. Unfortunately, the best I could come up with was a cliché.

I grew up in an emotionally abusive household (as did many funny people). I realized early on in my life that laughing made me feel better; I figure my first impulse to write humour was to help ease myself through a tough childhood. I also suspect that I thought that if I could make my parents laugh, they might not fight so much, but that turned out not to be the case (intense therapy succeeded where my youthful ambitions failed, but the ambitions remained).

Honestly, if my early life had been any more of a cliché, I would have started this piece with: "It was a dark and stormy night..."

COMEDY HISTORY ASIDE: Years later, I was watching a terrific series called *The Green Room*. Comedian Eddie Izzard was telling the story of how he first met his idol, Richard Pryor. After a few minutes of small talk, they found that they had something in common: they both knew that they wanted to be stand-up comedians when they were four years old. You know how I thought I was precocious because I knew I wanted to be a humourist when I was eight? I was actually already half a lifetime behind the curve!

My original inspiration in my early teens was Art Buchwald. If he is remembered at all these days, it is for being the person who sued Paramount Pictures for stealing his original idea for what would become Eddie Murphy's *Coming to America*. And, winning. This case exposed the arcane Hollywood bookkeeping that allowed studios to claim films that had grossed a billion dollars never made a profit, and introduced the world to the

term “monkey points.” But I remember him as the preeminent newspaper satirist who, in his prime, wrote creative and biting (and very funny) political commentary.

Not a bad role model if that’s what you’re into.

Between 1984 and 1987, I wrote 300 articles for a satirical newspaper column (enough for three books). I called the project *Les Pages aux Folles*, playing off the name of the then popular film *La Cage aux Folles*. I thought the title translated as “cage of crazies,” which would have made my version “page of crazies.” This tickled me. When the English version was released as *The Bird Cage*, I thought, Bird Pages? *Okay, I can make this work.*

Three years into the project, I was no closer to becoming the preeminent newspaper political satirist of the 1980s than when I had started. Years later, I would realize that one wasn’t given a newspaper humour column because one was actually, you know, funny (although some naturally are and others grow into it); they usually went to people who had proven their service to the newspaper in other departments. In defence of my naïveté: teenager.

I moved on to scripts and university, but the satirical bug never quite left me. Between 1987 and 2002, I kept coming back to the form, writing over 100 new articles (enough for a fourth collection). Then, a number of pieces of my life came together to drive me to the internet.

At university, I studied emerging technologies and the arts. My Masters thesis (from the New School for Social Research) was on the challenges interactivity posed for fiction writers. My PhD dissertation was on fiction writers who posted their work to the World Wide Web. I know, I know. Today, that’s a big **duh!** But, in 1999, when I wrote the bulk of the dissertation (I was awarded my PhD in 2000), it was still relatively – ahem – novel. ACADEMIC ASIDE: the problems I identified in 1999 have scaled up nicely, with few changes over the years. Was I prophetic? Naah – I was just paying attention.

When I returned to Toronto after three years living in Montreal (a residency requirement of McGill University, where I studied), I volunteered for a public interest web page developer called The Electronic Commons; it was championed by a woman named Liss Jeffrey. The project was run out of a building called Chelsea Mews, deep in the heart of the University of Toronto; that is where I met the woman who would become my Web Goddess, Gisela McKay.

As we got to know each other, Gisela pointed out something odd about my life that hadn’t occurred to me: I wrote fiction, and I had studied people who post fiction on the internet, but I hadn’t posted any of my own fiction on the internet. While I agreed that that was a bit strange, I demurred; although my Masters degree was done entirely online, I didn’t know the first thing about creating or maintaining a web page. Gisela, who, among her many talents, is a professional web developer, offered to design a page and

walk me through how to keep it going. To ensure that I couldn't refuse, she offered me free space on her server.

I couldn't refuse.

But, what would I write? Reviving *Les Pages aux Folles* as an online project was the most logical way to proceed. When I started it as a print project, I aimed for each article to be around 700 words (in the mistaken belief that this was standard newspaper column length; depending upon the newspaper and the column, it could actually be anywhere from 400 to 600 words); this relative shortness turned out to be a good length for the internet, where long stories require a lot of scrolling and can give some readers eye fatigue. You don't want to give readers eye fatigue.

So, I immediately started posting fiction to the web? Slow down, speed racer. I took the summer of 2002 to build a stockpile of articles. This wasn't meant to supplant weekly writing (since much of the writing would be topical, it would be best to post pieces soon after they were written, something the internet easily facilitates); it was meant as a safeguard against weeks when I was unable to write an update, whether through life circumstances or lack of inspiration. The wisdom of this choice is most vividly illustrated by my experience in 2005, when I had to have triple bypass heart surgery: I prepared four weeks of updates from my stockpile and posted them a couple of days before going under the knife. (As it happened, although I was advised to give recovery at least a month, I was eager to get back to writing after about two and half weeks). My stockpile started with 40 articles; it has fluctuated between 10 and 50 (but mostly closer to 10) ever since.

By the first week in September, 2002, I felt comfortable enough with the cushion that I had produced that I took the plunge and went live with *Les Pages aux Folles*. Years of writing had given me the confidence that I could pull it off (although, like most people who start a project like this, I had no idea how much work I was letting myself in for). It had also given me four complete books that I could place in an archive on the site, which helped me avoid the problem that many web sites have when starting out: a paucity of content. There was enough writing on the web site from day one that anybody interested could stay a while, or be encouraged to keep coming back.

The first three books had been written on a manual typewriter; the fourth on an electric typewriter and a computer. Because of this, I had to type the articles into my computer before I could post them. This forced me to reconsider the material I had previously written, which proved salutary. I gather many writers are highly critical of their own work, but I found that I really enjoyed becoming reacquainted with mine. (Having had to read through the entire project to collect stories for these special anniversary issues, I feel more or less the same way.) The worst that I will say about my past writing is: "I wouldn't write exactly that, or in that way now."

PEDANTIC ASIDE: Is *Les Pages aux Folles* a blog? On one hand, it is a regular publication (every week, without fail; by the 20th anniversary, that will entail 1,040 consecutive weeks) written by a single person. On the other hand, blogs automate the

process of posting to the internet (with tools such as WordPress), but I code my text by hand and upload it and any images I may create using tools Gisela taught me. Also, blogs tend to be a single page of text with newer posts higher up (occasionally breaking into an archive page or two), while each piece I post is on its own separate page. It may be a moot point, but I am reluctant to call *Les Pages aux Folles* a blog.

Except...

In trying to explain what an achievement 20 years of *Les Pages aux Folles* is, one of the facts I point out is that, depending upon the year they were started, between 80 and 90 per cent of blogs are abandoned within the first six months of their existence (I assume that the numbers for personal web pages are roughly the same, but I'm not aware of that research). Writers can be exhausted by the commitment (I often refer to my web site as "the insatiable maw;" no sooner do I finish one update than I have to immediately start working on the next). Writers can run out of inspiration. Other life priorities can leave writers without time. Lack of a readership can cause writers to quit out of despair (because I was emotionally driven by a need to write, the lack of readers was never a disincentive for me, although lately I do despair of ever finding an audience, if for no other reason than I know there must be a lot of people out there who would enjoy my writing...if they knew that it existed). Some people might lose their internet access. Twenty years on the internet is a looooooong time is what I'm saying.

By the 20th anniversary, I will have written 38 books of prose and produced nine books of cartoons for *Les Pages aux Folles*. The project will contain over 3,500 pieces of writing, and somewhere between two and a quarter and two and a half million words.

Nor has this been my only writing project. In 2010, I decided to write my first novel. Blame Terry Pratchett. I had never wanted to be a novelist; I was happy writing my short articles. But, in 2010 I learned of a contest for first humorous science fiction novels that was sponsored and would be partially judged by Pratchett. This seemed like a great opportunity for me to do what I do best: be goofy. The only problem with entering a novel writing contest, though, is that you have to write a novel to do it. So, I sat down to write what would become *Welcome to the Multiverse**.

I don't usually talk about this, but since we're all friends here, I feel I can state the truth: my first novel took two months to write. Starting from nothing but the desire to write a novel, the first week involved developing the ideas; the next six weeks involved the actual writing; the final week involved rewriting and polishing. This was a stupid short amount of time in which to write 80,000 words (the nine novels I have written since have taken anywhere from six months to a year to produce), but there were extenuating circumstances, your honour. For one thing, by that time I had been writing for 40 years, so unlike many first time novelists, I had already developed my voice and knew my way around a story. More importantly for this essay, many aspects of worldbuilding that contributed to the novel (for instance, the Transdimensional Authority and the Alternate Reality News Service) had been introduced on *Les Pages aux Folles*, so I wasn't exactly starting from nothing.

Perhaps most important: working on the web site taught me how to quickly turn ideas into prose. When you have a weekly deadline, you have to write fast. Under these conditions, there are two ways writers can go. Like a nuclear explosion, they can burn themselves out. Or, like a nuclear chain reaction, their creativity can feed off itself, allowing them to constantly write new material. I was fortunate that my writing took the latter path.

What's next? I have no idea. I know I have a need to write; if life forces me to go a couple of days with writing even a little, I start to get antsy. Humour is not something that a writer can turn on and off: it is a way of looking at and interacting with the world that becomes a constant in your life. At least, it has become that for me. It does help if it has an outlet, though, so I foresee writing as long as I have the words. (Both my father and my grandfather on my mother's side had Alzheimer's, so there is no guarantee that I will always have the words, or for how long.) Regardless of what happens in the future, I already have a creative legacy (including novels, short stories and unproduced screenplays – so many unproduced screenplays!) that I can be proud of.

I hope you enjoy 12 from 20.

** Sorry for the Inconvenience*

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