



CANADA

Allen Bell

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Bell, Allen
Canada / Allen Bell.

Poems.
ISBN 978-0-9736853-9-8

I. Title.

PS8553.E4555C36 2009 C811'.54 C2009-901515-3

Printed and bound in Canada

Canada [1976 - 2003]

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THE SIMON POEMS

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SIMON

Looking at your golden body
The dross
Seems vague
The nonstop seconds
So far removed
From any terminus
And now resembling always
I have a cough Daddy
I have a fever
Innocuous
Devoid of import
Part of the toxic charm
Every third word Daddy
Your Daddy's cough and fever
Keep him from hearing the pain
The dissonant changes

SIMON

When Simon cries
Tidal waves crash against the world
Statesmen are engulfed
Banks inundated
Buildings totter and capitulate
The salt in Simon's tears
Plays havoc with automotive bodies
Rust and corrosion pour onto the streets
Even the pavement occasionally bifurcates
Even weapons are appropriated
Spare parts perish
When Simon cries
The tenuous day to which I cling
Loses its elasticity
Those tears threaten my world too

SIMON

Simon

The 'burning to sheathe it'

The generic imbroglio

The carnivorous fears

The compulsive manipulation

Daddy worries

You will be caught in the maelstrom

Swept into the vortex of

SIMON

Simon

I liked Judy Goodchild
She had brown eyes, brown hair
I met her on a blind date
I heard about her in a delicatessen

It's a funny thing about delicatessens
I was hungry
And had gone to buy some food
The wife of the delicatessen owner asked me who I was
And what I did
And I told her
And next thing I knew she was giving me a phone number
Just a minute I said
What does she look like
She's pretty
And a nice Jewish girl
Okay I said
And bought some corned beef
And pastrami
And a rye bread
I didn't know delicatessens were so dangerous
Or there was so much misery
In a corned beef sandwich

SIMON

Simon

I like Stravinsky's music
I love the brutal sounds
And melodic panache
And I like Penderecki's Violin Concerto
And Kosmogonia
And De Natura Sonoris
Conductors are wrong to prettify Stravinsky
They should listen to how he conducts
And not be asses like Haitink

Simon

These composers
And others
Write violent music
And fantasize
But they don't hurt
They give pleasure
Pulcinella hardly shoots us
And the bloodletting
And corporeal maiming
Of l'Histoire du Soldat
Is just pretend
The violence is subsumed
And charming
And nice
And that is the violence
Your Daddy likes

Simon

All this is by way of preamble
Because I worry

Because I am your Daddy
And you are a child
And not all fantasies are innocuous
And not all violence is art
There are so many people
And some are destructive
And hurt grown-ups
And children
A few years
Before you were born
Millions of adults and children
Were slaughtered
In concentration camps
But I can't talk about that
And I can't talk about
The children being murdered
And the countless children
Maltreated and brutalized
What Dickens called
The heap
Spawned for violence he said
And growing up to be violent

Simon
The feeling is undistinctive
I can't particularize
And I don't have the distance

Simon
Shakespeare took Hamlet out of Denmark
Insight through oversight
The character needed some distance

Then it was okay to come back
Denmark was rotten
But now he had distance

Simon
You're good
And gentle
And for your age
Quite intellectual
But you're four years old
And you don't understand
That Daddy worries
And to talk
About things
That are bad
I have to look for an incident
The particular incident
That elicits a subjective reaction
And has the requisite distance
And with which one can cope
Comprenez-vous
In other words
Violence is ubiquitous
And a bubonic plague
And Daddy's poems
Can't cope
With generalities
Except indirectly
I have to latch onto an incident
One such occurred
In Port Moody, British Columbia
A year before you were born

Simon
This was a fantasy that went askew
A twelve year old girl
Abby Drover
Was kidnapped
And sequestered
In a neighbour's bomb shelter
And kept there
For 181 days
The neighbour
Donald Alexander Hay
Was known to the child
As was the woman
With whom he was living
And the woman's children
The families were friends
And went on outings
And visited
And he seemed a nice adult
And the child assumed he was
And when he phoned
And said he would drive her to school
And would be in the garage
She walked the distance
That separated
Their houses
And when she was in the garage
Donald Alexander Hay
Overpowered her
And forced her into a bomb shelter
That she didn't know existed
Nor did anyone else

Simon
There was a cupboard
With a false bottom
And underneath
A ladder
That led to a plank door
One and a half"
In thickness
And lined
On the inside
With two"
Of foam rubber
And locked
On the outside
With a two-by-four
In brackets
The bomb shelter per se
Was seven' by eight"
And six' seven" high
And complete
With bed
Chemical toilet
Shelves
Wash basin
Mirror
Lengths of chain attached to the wall
Metal handcuffs
Belts
Dog collar
Etc
All the accoutrements
Of a bomb shelter

Abby was handcuffed
And chained to the wall
And Donald Alexander Hay
Attempted to copulate
Standing up
She remained
In the bomb shelter
The aforementioned 181 days
And the one person
To whom she had access
Was Donald Alexander Hay
He would come to the bomb shelter
For intercourse etc
And threaten to kill her
And in the lining
Of her boot
Abby concealed a note
And said whoever this may concern
If you find me died
My killer is Don Hay
Of 1601 Gore Street Port Moody
He kidnapped me March 10 1976
In the morning
I also died if so
After my thirteenth birthday

Abby was often unattended
Donald Alexander Hay
Being absent
Sometimes for days
And once for two weeks
She was fed sporadically

Usually chocolate bars

After the disappearance
Donald Alexander Hay
Was questioned
And denied all knowledge
Of same
And participated
In search parties
And was a good neighbour
And citizen

On or about
September 6 1976
Donald Alexander Hay
Said he wanted to die
And would waste himself
In the garage
And the woman
With whom he was living
Called the police
And the garage was locked
And they forced the door
And no one was in the garage
And they left
And the woman's daughter
Said something was under the cupboard
And the woman went back
And opened the cupboard
And lifted the false bottom
And looked down the shaft
And saw feet

And surmised he was dead
And called the police
And the dispatcher said go back
And they went into the garage
And Donald Alexander Hay
Had climbed up the ladder
And was doing up his pants
And the police heard a whimpering
And looked into the hole
And Abby was trying to climb up the ladder
And was completely hysterical
And said she wanted her Mom

And Donald Alexander Hay said
Why don't you guys blow me
And at the police station he said
Let me out the back door
And blow my head
And the prosecutor said
It was a tempting request
And he said
It spoke well
For the discipline
Of our police forces
And their regard
For the rule of law
That the request was not acted on
And the judge asked about Abby's condition
And the prosecutor said
She had a vaginal infection
And her personality had changed
And she'd lost weight

Otherwise she was okay

And Donald Alexander Hay
Was charged
With unlawfully kidnapping Abby Drover
On or about the 10th day of March
A.D. 1976
At the City of Port Moody
Province of British Columbia
With intent
To cause her
To be confined
Against her will
Contrary to the form
Of statute
In such case made and provided
And he said he was guilty

And Donald Alexander Hay
Was charged
With unlawfully having sexual intercourse
With Abby Drover
A female person
Not his wife
And under the age
Of fourteen years
Contrary to the form
Of statute
In such case made and provided
And he said he was guilty
And the judge said
He must not be allowed

To get his hands
On another child

And before the trial
He was questioned
And he said the morning it started
She came
For a ride
To school
It just so happened
She came
At the wrong time
And got tangled up
And ended up
In the room
She didn't go down voluntarily
But I didn't mean to keep her
But once I started
I didn't know how to stop
I told her
She should write a story
And sell it
And she would get money
I only used handcuffs
The first few days
But once she got out of them
She's a clever girl
After a while I didn't use force
We were on good terms
And had a good relationship
It didn't do her any good mind you
But it didn't do her any harm

Sometimes we'd talk for two or three hours
I started seeing her less
When the room got messy
She wouldn't clean up
And the garbage spilled over
And she plugged up the vent
And the smell got terrible
And her clothes smelled
I didn't buy her new ones
But I brought her my younger daughter's bra
Because she had outgrown her own
During the summer
The wife and kids were on holidays
And were around all the time
A policeman interjected
Did you make sexual advances
And have intercourse
And Donald Alexander Hay said
She's all right
She's a healthy girl
And then talked about blackouts
And said he didn't want to remember
Some things he had done
And when asked what things
He said a variety of things

Abby was also questioned
And said after Mom left for work
Don phoned
And said he would give me a ride
To school
And to come to the garage

And I went there
And he grabbed me
And pushed me into a hole
And made me go down a ladder
And when I was in the room
He said we are going to play house
And took off my pants and underpants
And my top
And tried to put in his penis
But couldn't get in
And handcuffed me
And chained me to the wall
And tried again
Then he went out
And came back with my books
And took off my chains and handcuffs
And let me get dressed
And he came every day
And used chains and handcuffs
To keep me tied up
Sometimes he'd talk about letting me go
And sometimes he'd threaten to kill me
And he said if I made any noise he would strangle me
He kept me in the room all the time
And used boards and chains
To close the door
He kept promising
To let me go
Finally I didn't believe him
The night the police came
He came down
And made me take off my clothes

And entered me
And climaxed in me too
And sat there afterwards
Touching my breasts
And smoking with his pants off
Then we heard noises
And he put one hand over my mouth
And one around my neck
And said don't make a sound
And if I did he would kill me
Then he went out
And left the door open
And I climbed out
And the police helped me
He was always saying he would kill me all the time
If I did anything bad
He said he would strangle me

Simon
Mommy and Daddy are here
And we have to love you
And look after you
And keep you away from bomb shelters
And Donald Alexander Hays
And we will be here
Till our trysting days
And we want you to be secure
And not need us
And of course we worry
But though she worries
And is very protective
Your Mommy has a lot of common sense

But your Daddy is an out of control worrier
And now that I've gone on ad nauseum
I expect it's time
As when I visit you
At your house
In Victoria
And it's windy and raining
And we want to go out
And I tell you to put on a sweater
Or a warmer jacket
And you say don't talk Daddy
Stop it Daddy
Or when you scare me
And I say Simon I'm scared
And you say don't cry
It's just pretend Daddy
I expect it's time to say stop it
And it's just pretend
And to play a scary record
Pulcinella
Or Kosmogonia
Or one of the other records
You like to listen to
With your Daddy

SIMON

Simon
Paper money is burgeoning inflation
And metals oscillate wildly
Governments don't know what to do
Or what they are doing
Keynesian balderdash
Cartesian crap

Simon
In addition to the sundry other conundrums
Of this capacious century
One's currency is enigmatic

SIMON

Simon

When my mother died
I was a bit upset
Had it been my father or my brother
I would have cried
But it was mother
Not father or brother
But mother
And I was a bit upset
For though she was coarse and vulgar
And a neurotic on the side
She loved me
And though her love made me incapable of love
She was, as it were, my fellow conversationalist
Someone with whom I could talk
When there was nothing to say
In her harmless way
She spoiled my life
But she told me I did not appreciate
What she had done for me
And was doing for me
And though I assured her
She was never convinced

The cancer was a surprise
She had been “full of life”
And now the doctor said “a few months”
And in those few months her body changed
And she lost not merely her strength but appearance
And she become not merely old but ugly
And no longer functional
Her legs stilts on which she could not walk

And the arms that had inflicted
So many remembered beatings
Were now hopelessly inept
And I had to lift her out of the bathtub
And into the bathtub
And . . .
And she knew I was not at ease

But I wanted to tell her I loved her
And would miss her
And was sorry . . . a waste
And wished we could have a few days of health
And we would speak with calm voices
And I would be eloquent
And she would be kind
And the past . . . a mirage
And the present a masterpiece

A few hours before the hospital phoned
She phoned
And I said no
And slammed the receiver
And she phoned again
And told me to listen
And I listened
And she repeated herself
And I said yes
And she told me to promise
And I promised
And there was silence
And I said goodbye
And she said goodbye A
And we put down our receivers

SIMON

Simon
Your Mommy and Daddy
Have had their ups and downs
The downs on the whole
Predominating the ups
She treats me very badly
And belabours my presence
And makes it hard for me to see you

Simon
She has gone out of her way to be bitter
And has told all and sundry
That I betrayed her
Though it was your Mommy's idea to have you
I did not know
When I saw her burgeoning body
When I waited out that long gestation
That she was bringing forth my son Simon
I thought you were another baby
One who cried
And with whom it would be difficult
To live
And your Mommy was so hard to be with
She demanded a commitment
That was not forthcoming
And so she changed
She no longer liked
Or had time for
The grown-up baby in her life
And when a job in another city came up out of the blue
I encouraged her
And she acquiesced
And blamed your Daddy

Simon

She has tried to hurt me
And to some extent succeeded
Because you are my Achilles heel
Because of you
She can throw me into a mud puddle
And make me apologize
Because a drop of water
Splashed her
And it hurts me that strangers see you more than I do
That she begrudges your Daddy his time with you
That she doesn't listen
When you say you want Daddy to stay with you forever
She begrudges me even one day with you Simon

Simon

Sometimes I wish your Mommy had inserted her diaphragm
Had not decided to run the risk of Daddy's semen
Which could then have been protected
From your conception

Simon

She once tried to like me
The Jewish professor she believed to be the object of her quest
We did it every day
Often several times a day
With polymorphous abandon
Your Mommy has no inhibitions
And she knew how to hold me
She used to write me notes
And bring me food
And call me darling
Once she was in bed

With the flu
And told me not to come too close
And I got into bed
And we talked
And were very close

SIMON

Simon

In the course of the conversation she said she would like a child
I did not reply
But thought for several minutes
Then said I would discuss it with him

She said she already had
And he was of a like mind
I said why not let him be the father
She said they had tried for years
Unsuccessfully
Well why not adopt a child
She said they would prefer my being the father
Did he say that
She said he had

For some reason I was angry
I wanted to hurt her
I would have like to have bloodied her nose
I wanted to clobber her
And punch her stomach
The idea of her writhing on the floor
Appealed to me
At that moment
I might even have kicked her

But . . .
There was so to speak
A contract
No emotional predilection . . .
She could screw with impunity

SIMON

Simon

Once Daddy was arrested
By the RCMP
And photographed
And fingerprinted
And charged with damaging
The University of British Columbia

Simon

When Daddy is in Vancouver
He stays at the Sylvia Hotel
Always the same room
A Friday morning
Sleeping in as usual
A pounding on my door
Who is it I yelled
More pounding
This was not the first time
Daddy had been subjected
To pounded doors
So to speak
So with more equanimity
Than the circumstances warranted
I opened the door
Then I opened it wide
What happened I said
Who did that
I'm leaving him
I've already packed
Don't do anything precipitate I said
I'll go and see him right now
Went to his office at UBC

And made a shambles of same
Including his Eskimo carving through a window
Also verbal pyrotechnics
Shouted something about interfering
You mean you don't like your children
No of course he didn't mean that
Well the prerequisite was impregnation I said
There had to be interference
The children come under the rubric of interference
Said he meant interference between a man and wife
Shut up I said
And threw something on his desk
Against the wall
If you do that again
You can forget about this man and wife crap
She'll leave you I said
It's already touch and go I said

The noise and commotion
Pervaded the adjoining offices
And a small crowd gathered on the lawn outside
And attracted – or someone called –
The security people
Three of whom barged into his office
And to some extent
Roughed me up
Then subsequently the RCMP
And the aforementioned photographs
And fingerprints
But the damage was paid for
And the charges dropped
UBC not wanting the publicity

Simon
Things are better now
I don't get dinner invitations anymore
But occasionally go there
Albeit infrequently
She has told me privately
That things have improved
He's different
I see her once in a blue moon
But what with the children etc
She doesn't have time for me
Nor is she interested

And Simon
I am gradually losing my friend
We don't play chess anymore
And seldom see each other
Our friendship has encountered desuetude
The last time
I had occasion
To be
In Vancouver
He said to me
In a nice way
It would probably be a good idea
To call
Before I dropped in
In case it wasn't convenient

SIMON

Simon

You're spoiled

And intemperate

And a four year old potentate

And tell Mommy and Daddy what to do

And are always peremptory

Sometimes your behaviour drives me up the wall

And it is hard to recall

That you are perfect

And sometimes nice

And put your arms around me

And say you love me

And call me Daddy

SIMON

Simon

It took so long

For the race

To evolve

So many years

And a few seconds

To create a technology

That may destroy it

In minutes

Simon

The nuclear guillotine

Will chop off your head

And there is nothing Daddy can do

Except worry

Even heroic fantasies are impotent

Penderecki wrote Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima

But there may not be anyone

To write

Anything

And there is nothing Daddy can do

Except talk about how the ball bounces

Before it touches the ground

SIMON

Simon

The ologies are very much in vogue

But don't succumb

But run if necessary like hell

And be wary of ologists

Theocratic practitioners

Putrid minds

Committed to jargon

And linguistic destruction

SIMON

Simon

Once at university
Having missed a few classes
And not knowing the seating arrangements
I inadvertently usurped a chair
And she sat next to me
And said you took my place
And of course I apologized

Simon

That woman left Winnipeg
And didn't answer the phone
And doesn't remember
Or like me
And I have forgotten her
But Simon
She is a wound
That festers
That doesn't heal

SIMON

Simon

If you are married
And haven't eaten for days
And you wife is deprived
And your children are crying
And you visit your friends
And they don't have enough
But still want to share
Then say you're not hungry
And wait till they're sleeping
And go to the garbage
And look for potato peels

SIMON

Simon

If you are old enough to read these poems

You will not know the boy I wrote about

But I wanted to write you a poem

And talk about things

And tell you that I was your Daddy

And loved you

SIMON

Simon

I can write sonnets

I can write villanelles

I can write heroic couplets

And I love these forms

And it's a relief to have a ready-made form

And Simon

I let them go

And opted for poetry

The voice . . .

And I hope you find your voice

Simon

That life is 'scary' is secondary

What is paramount is that you find your own voice

That is the gesture

That will sustain you

SIMON

Simon

When Victoria is wind and rain

We like to walk

We like walking in the rain don't we Daddy

And I say my feet are wet and you laugh and say I don't care

And we walk

And when we cross a street

You hold my hand

And sometimes you talk about Castlegar

And I reassure you

And say I don't have to go there

I can stay in Victoria for awhile

But you don't have to go now do you Daddy

And I say no

Not for a few days yet

We have lots of time to have fun

And you hold my hand

And we walk in the rain

And you say we're having fun aren't we Daddy

And I say we always have fun when we're together

And you say I know Daddy

We always have fun Daddy

And we hold hands

And talk

But sometimes it's too windy

And my eyes water

SIMON

Simon
Daddy lives
In Castlegar
Years ago
I realized
My life here
Was not satisfactory
But at least
Before you became extant
I pretended to be free
I could live or die
I wasn't beholden
I was free
Now I have this godawful responsibility
I'd always been able
To jettison entanglements
To extricate myself from
Now I'm enthralled
Simon
I was goaded into marriage
But I let that marriage go
And I shied away from living with anyone
Including your Mommy
And I fought off manipulation
Many women
With whom I would be happier
Than I am being alone
Have moved outside the parameters
Of my life
And Simon
The truth is
I don't like being by myself

In Castlegar
There isn't anyone
With whom I can talk
Your Daddy is an anomaly
And interloper
In the context
Of Castlegar
And I can't find a sensibility
That appeals to me
And it is a couple-oriented society
And for a single person
The social focal point
Is the High Arrow Arms beer parlour
All in all
The place
To put it euphemistically
Is a bummer
I've ended up in a hellhole
But Simon
As the years evolve
A residual agoraphobia
Makes me want to stay in my house
And read
And listen to music
And sleep
And not encounter that species
Of which I am one example
I've tried to leave Castlegar
I've taken unassisted leaves
They've cost me a lot of money
Not to mention all that lost salary
But eventually there is tension

And to some extent fear
And I look forward
To Castlegar
My sanctuary
And Simon
It's hard when one is in transit
And if something does stick
It quickly dispulverates
Once in Israel
A beautiful woman
A teacher
Became fond of me
Her husband was gutted in one of the wars
There's a shortage of men in Israel
A lot of the young ones are in cemeteries
And I think she found me a change
From the macho Israelies
And it was a relief
To meet a woman
Whose sensibility I liked
But as things became serious
I began to pull back
The day before Pesach
Her father phoned me from Tel Aviv
I had moved to Jerusalem
And asked me to come to the Seder
And I said I'd get back to him
And hung up
And packed
And a sherut to the airport
And flew out of the country

And continued flying
Till I was ensconced
In Castlegar
And Simon
This is where I work
And I need my job
On one level it's demeaning
A mediocre community college
Dottards and clods for students
Illiterate shit for essays
And I teach a semester
Of composition
They can't comprehend
A poem
And I have to teach composition
But Simon
The job compels a routine
Without which I'm disfunctional
Some people need leisure
To write
But I need the pressure
Of a job
Some semblance of routine
Otherwise I flounder
And the job is easy
I like talking about books
And it's nice to have a captive audience
And the pay is okay
When I think of what some people do for their pittance
Which is less than mine
It amazes me
That this college

Pays me to talk
A dollar would be exorbitant
So I can put up with
The inanity of composition
The acts of administrative absurdity
My horrific colleagues
These 'students'
Because I can talk about
Chaucer and Swift
And other people I like
And have something
To look forward to
And I have my paycheck
To look forward to
Daddy's salary is thirty-seven thousand dollars
And it goes up every year
Perhaps it's not that great
But at the present time
It's enough to live on
And I have my investments
I've made piles of money
And am probably more affluent
Than one Billy Cain
The resident Croesus
Of Castlegar
And every few years
My net worth doubles or trebles
Though I keep few assets in dollars
Having a jaundiced opinion of paper money
So I live
In Castlegar
Letting time dwindle

And you
Materialize
As Claggart says in Benjamin Britten's opera
Billy Budd
Would that I ne'er encountered you
Would that I lived in my own world always
There I found peace of a sort
There I established an order
But alas alas
The light shines in the darkness
And the darkness comprehends
And suffers
Simon
You are playing havoc
With my life
Can your four year old brain
Assimilate that
Everytime I visit you
At your house
In Victoria
It takes me a month
To partially recuperate
It entails readjustment re Castlegar
Last time I visited you
You wanted to see the ocean
Which you stared at for twenty minutes
And then said
Daddy the water has wrinkles on it
Simon
I don't want to hear things like that
Say something
That might make me dislike you

Keep me from dwelling on you
I have to think about the stock market
I'm in the middle of a real estate deal
Don't say things that endear me to you
Try to make things easier for your Daddy
And don't jump on me
Or say you want to play a scary record
Or go to a scary movie
Or to Sealand
Or the museum
Or the bus depot
And don't cry so much
When Daddy has to go
To Castlegar
Simon
Daddy is mad
You shoved your way into my life
I was free
Now I'm enthralled
Alas Alas

SIMON

Today I went to the College
Where I work in Castlegar
And talked to my students
About books
And I told them about you
And about how much I miss you
And love you

Simon
Sometimes Mommys and Daddys
Don't live in the same house
Or the same city
But you know how much Mommy loves you
And you know Daddy loves you
And we will always love you
And take care of you
Because we are your Mommy and Daddy
And you are our wonderful Simon

And if you want to talk
Then call me
On the phone
And when I fly over the mountains
And come to see you
We can go downtown on the bus
And go to the bus depot
And get a drink
You can have orange juice
And I will have soup
But Simon
If we go to the museum
I don't want to see the scary lady

But I don't think she is there anymore
Because she was in the movie
And they are showing a different movie
I miss you

Love Daddy

A MOTLEY TO THE VIEW

A Motley To The View [1981 - 1983]

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Simon was watching television
And saw an American Presidential Candidate's
Advertisement
What does he mean
Well politicians like to talk about all the things they say will happen if they are elected
And this person is saying that if he gets the job
He won't hurt anybody
He won't make war
Oh good
Then I hope he gets it
Then there wouldn't be war with that man

LOVE

Sometimes I wish that I could fuck a fish
Or hump a whale
Or goose a moose
Or eat a cow
One could learn how

Love
Teaches us
To forego
Slaughter and experimentation
And read Peter Singer et al
And not do almost unto other species
That which we do unto our own

CRUISE SHIPS

Sometimes I travel
On freighters
And cruise ships
E.g., the Queen Elizabeth
And while still extant
The France
And the food
And the women
Make me hallucinate
And see a world
Of fantasy
And make-believe
It is all one can do to guard against herpes
But eventually the opulence would pall
One would get sick
And unable to cope
With crapulous days
And sex
The ship was a vomitorium
And brothel
And I would stay in my cabin
With the door locked
And lie in bed
And spit on the wall
Like Goncharov's Oblomov

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALBERT PIERREPOINT

Sometimes I think about batch strangulation
And the white or black hood
To mask the agony
And facial contortions
And I think of our English method
Which I perfected
A Royal Commission queried me
Re same
The English method is foolproof
I said
And cannot be improved
I said
Provided an experienced man
Does the job
The knot, I pointed out, is the bottom line
And must be under the angle of the left jaw
Otherwise the knot finishes behind the neck
I.e., strangulation
Whereas the knot
On the left-hand side
Finishes in front
And throws the chin back
And breaks the spinal cord
I was asked about the drop
Where the person stands
If that is important
I don't think so
I said
The knot is the criterion
And must be on the left lower jaw
And if the knot is on that side
Then when the person falls

The knot will finish
Under the chin
And throw the chin back
But the knot
On the right-hand side
Would finish up
Behind one's neck
And throw the neck forward
And make a strangulation
Field Marshal Keitel
Is alleged
To have lived
Twenty-four minutes
On the rope
At Nuremberg
And Hermann Goering
Told his American Army chaplain
Mr. Gerecke
He was convinced
His hanging
Would last fifteen minutes
I have hanged several people myself
He said
And I know the procedure
The hangman will make the knot somewhat loose
And I shall be slowly strangled
And Mr. Gerecke said
That was why the Reichmarschall
Ingested poison

*

I linger

In the chambers
Of the mind
With myriad sea-girls
Moribund and blind
And hear their sundry voices
Scream and lie
And then I pull the lever
And we die

NORAH

Sometimes I think that the biological syndrome is misleading
That the source of intelligence is radioactive material
That the radioactivity
That nullifies us
May, in time, regenerate us
So because of a tenuous
And, perhaps, desperate
Hope
I view
With a modicum
Of equanimity
And a degree
Of resignation
What appears to be an irreversible process
But I am also appalled
By the potential manner
Of our respective deaths
And the deaths of our children
Though our intimacy per se
Has already died
In the hurly burly of your life
In the mute commands of your omnipotent husband
Your demented job
Your selfish guilt
And the feeling that once consumed us
Has become for you
A nuisance
An irritant
Something to suppress
A mutant
Warped, nasty, disfigured
And your conversation
Once so loving and looked forward to

A sub-text
But the truth is
I like it when you itemize my faults
And tell me what I know is wrong with me
And belabour the conduct you say you always secretly belittled
Your voice caresses me
Your remote body penetrates me
And as I watch
The process
By which you begin
To phase me
Out of your life
Sad eyes beseeching
I see again the blossoming woman
Who came to fruition
On my bed

PARIS

I went to Paris
And ingested
And imbibed
And sundry social activities
And sightseeing
Even the sewers (Les Egouts)
As well as the catacombs
I had a wonderful time
I went to Paris
In an effort
To put some distance
Between us
And I did
I put some distance
Between us
And now
I don't even think about you anymore
I don't even like you anymore
I eat
And sleep
And get on with my life
As if I were in Paris
Admittedly
When I'm in a restaurant
I notice
I'm looking
At someone
Other than you
And when I sleep
I can't control my dreams
But other than the aforementioned
Everything is fine
Almost Parisian

THE MUSTARD SEED SOCIETY

I went to the Mustard Seed Society
In Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
For a turkey dinner
Gratis
And four hundred indigent Victorians
Accompanied me
But before we received
Our free turkey dinner
We heard about Jesus
How he came to a world that rejected his message
How he suffered and was crucified
How we are celebrating his birth
How the dinner was being bestowed upon us
In his name
How those who believe in him
Are saved
But those who reject his message
Are doomed to eternal perdition
I thought of Torquemada
And the messages
Of other centuries
And I thought of the messages
Of this century
And the nuclear terminus
To all messages
In all centuries
A lot of perdition
And indubitably eternal
And while my mind was saturated with messages
Theocratic messages
Ideological messages
The guest opposite me
(five elongated tables stretching the length of the hall)

Said hey this is good stuff
And I noticed my dinner
And tasted same
And the good stuff appellation was apropos
Turkey and homemade stuffing
And carrots
Cooked in the juices of the turkey
And potatoes
Dampened in the turkey's gravy
And cranberry sauce
One's plate was replete
And the turkey per se
Was gargantuan
A substantial repast
And not the least bit bogus
This was not cafeteria food
One's most optimistic expectations
Had been transcended
The guest adjacent to me
An Indian
Ingested noisily
And with apparent zest and gusto
But he looked sad
And appeared to be knowledgeable
Re suffering
And crucifixion
One could see where the nails had gone in
So to speak
Certainly, facially, a godawful mess
Gloucester after III.vii
An eye
And, also, an ear
Were not especially aesthetic

A nose approximated crushed tomato
And, also, scars
One ugly streak
At time of infliction
Must have cut his throat
I alluded to same
And inquired half-jokingly
If he'd been tortured
He said he'd been in knife fights
With white guys
And a lot of other crap he said
But he was through with that shit
Jesus had saved him
But that was not why he'd accepted the Society's public invitation
He'd come because he was damn hungry
Our waiter
A jolly gentleman
Dressed in red
Said to a man who seemed to be in charge of the proceedings
From maitre d' to waiter
And the man looked up
And smiled
Our Lord wants us to talk to them
And suffer for them
Think of what the saints did
And the maitre d'/waiter said
I'm trying to keep that in mind
Dinner was receding
And the speaker again said
Ladies and gentlemen can I have your attention please
And he said something about the Mustard Seed Society having prepared a wonderful dessert
Apple pie with real apples

But first . . .
But people were talking
And a few had decamped
(I heard one man say he wasn't that hungry
And saw him get up and leave
And a mother told her children
To hurry
And finish eating
So they could all go home)
And in the general mêlée
The speaker's words were indistinct
I'm a slow eater
And was in the process of putting more cranberry sauce
On the residue
Of my turkey
And as the speaker talked
And the room emptied
I regretted the paucity of condiments
That was my message
I wanted more condiments
A modicum
Of mustard
O reason not the need
I wanted some mustard
To season my turkey
And make that free meal
Almost edible

NIGEL

In the township of Dartford
In the county of Kent
A white horse
Stands on two legs
The horse is Invicta
The white horse of Kent
At Gravesend Grammar School
In the township of Dartford
In the county of Kent
They caned me
Every morning six of the best
I would bend over
And the Headmaster
His surname was Stevens
The boys called him Sir
Would slowly count each stroke
He opened his grandfather clock
Which was filled with canes
Choose a cane he said
And smiled
Six of the best
I bent over
My hands on his desk
And he caned me
I didn't do my homework
And each day he caned me
At night
I knew that when I awoke
I would be sent to the Headmaster
He would open his grandfather clock
Stevens his name was
I called him Sir
Once a history mastern

Who several years later became Gravesend's Headmaster
Caned me on my fingers
On nerve-endings
On scar tissue
Underneath a scab
And I bled
An older boy stood up
Don't do that Sir
And the teacher said sit down
Or you'll get the same
And they looked at each other
And the boy sat down
And I cried
Because I was grateful that someone had helped me
Because I was grateful that someone had stood up
Because of my gratitude
Stop it
I'm a little boy
Don't hurt me
And when they gradually saw he was funny
They expelled me
And my grandfather disowned me
And after multiple difficulties
I travelled to Canada
Where I live somewhat close to the knuckle
But I do my homework
And study
And they cane me
But I draw the human figure
I always draw the human figure
I'm learning to draw the human figure
Stop it
Stop it

Stop it
Stop it I cry
And I think of Invicta
In the township of Dartford
In the county of Kent
Where Gravesend . . .
There is a white horse
Standing on two legs
The horse is Invicta
The white horse of Kent
The statue at Dartford
I think of Invicta
The white horse
The white horse
Standing
On two legs

SABY

Cavorting on Moss Street
And Linden Avenue
Barking
Chasing birds
Running so fast
One could not even begin to keep up
But always – always coming back
For Susan's requisite pat and 'good girl'
Susan's friend and companion
Lying under her bed at night
And by the desk in her office during the day
And waiting outside stores when she was shopping
Always together
Car, ferry
And the countless walks
Saby spotting a bird
Careering out of sight
Believing one can embark on adventitious quests
With impunity
Because birds never fall
To the earth
Then suddenly reappearing
Tongue hanging out
Homing in on her Susan
Even in the dark days of Castlegar
The indefatigable Saby
Exuded life
As she ran around the circular mile track
In Kinnaird Park
And we ran with her
And when we were out of breath
And had to pause
And separate

And Susan went on ahead
Saby kept looking back
As if expecting me to catch up
And unable to comprehend
Why I was falling behind
Then on to Victoria
And protective of Simon
And jumped on me
And licked my face
And lay on her back
During the sporadic visitations
And Susan and Saby loved one another
And if Susan was sad or mad
Saby was more agitated
Than Inga and Terza
The cats who loved her
And of whom she was also fond
And who are now Susan's only animals
Because Saby was uncomfortable
Her body as strong as ever
But her nose bleeding
A tumour likely malignant
The blood would bother her sometimes
And the cortisone made her sleepy
And before cancer gutted her body
Susan put her to sleep
She lay on Susan's lap
And Susan talked to her
And she didn't even feel the final needle
Because her world had always revolved around Susan
And when Susan talked she was oblivious of distractions
The drug overpowered her
And Saby fluttered -- fluttered awayk

THE PLACE

The right place to be in the world
The archetypal dwelling
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem
She hadde passed many a straunge strem
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne
She coude muche of wandring by the weye
But the ubiquitous self prevails
And one studies geology
Rocks and fossils
Emotionless
Petrified and extant
One needn't cope with feelings
Whereas pre-nuclear people
Are redolent of emotion
And they make demands
And life per se makes demands
I thought I would find the place where I'd enjoy living
Where I would be happy so to speak
But the world is an island
And global parameters keep one enthralled
And if one found another planet
And had the technological wherewithal to become domiciled therein
The self, of course, is not a siamese twin
Cut and jettisoned
A locale palls
A geographical cure is not tenable
And one remains on one's island
And studies . . . geology
And learns the appropriate . . . terminology

SOMETIMES/MY NAMESAKE*

Sometimes I think of my namesake
The painter
His 'success' did not preempt
Self-slaughter
And I think of Chief Joseph
Of the Nez Perce
He said I will fight no more forever
And I think of other Indians
Spoiled lives
Squandered generations
And I think of myself
And sometimes I look in a mirror
And I see the stereotyped image
The drunk Indian
The dumb Indian
The misfit
The interloper
The deadbeat
The loser
The transplanted Thersites
The forgotten Hector
And I say to myself what has this to do with me
But it is this image I sometimes . . . perceive
And sometimes -- sometimes . . . believe

*I entered a 'literary contest' under the pseudonym Benjamin Joseph.
The reference is to Benjamin Chee Chee.

STOCKS

Sometimes I think about stocks
Whether to buy long
Or sell short
A gargantuan roulette wheel
And one must choose numbers
And make money
And many people lose money
(And I have lost money)
And some go the route
Of Dostoevsky's compulsive protagonist
But profit or loss notwithstanding
A perception of bondage
Keeps one enthralled
I look at presidents
And other politicians
And read the business section
Of the Globe and Mail
And watch news
On television
And listen to commentaries
And sometimes I watch the proceedings
From my stall in Grub Street
And on Sunday
I stare at a football game
And the owners of America
Chortle

SOPHIA

But shall I live in hope?

All men, I hope, live so.

(Shakespeare)

Jews

And then to an ever greater extent

Christians

Split the world

And the passion

For power

And dominion

Predominates

And now we are up to our armpits in gasoline

And the elite play with matches

But I will still fantasize

And embrace Sophia

And she takes me to her room

And I lie in the center of her bed

And she embraces me

And the Judeo-Christian catastrophe fucks off

And the impending apocalypse gradually recedes

And we embrace her

And impregnate her

And she renews

And anima calms the world

And there is light

THAT CIGAR

My first job was the University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon campus
And I wrote a paper entitled
The American Invasion of South Vietnam
Which I sent to faculty staff students
And a week later
I received a phone call
From the secretary
Of the chairman
Of my department
And was summoned
And faculty had phoned him
And Political Science was up in arms
And complaints
From students
And parents
And a few hours later
I received a long distance phone call
And was advised
To cool it
This was my career
And a few days later
I was playing chess
In the faculty lounge
And an American academic
Approached me
And pounded the chessboard
And scattered the pieces
And told me what he thought of me
And what he would do to me if I sent him anything else
And insofar as I could understand him
I had transgressed the parameters

Of discussion
And was so far out of the margins I didn't exist
And after that incident
I was shunned
But then the complaints stopped
Though there were other papers
And they were distributed
And that was my last year
And years later
I left academe
Tired and jaundiced
And somewhat reclusive
And several months later approached me
And was sitting on a sofa
At the faculty club
And sat beside me
And sipped scotch
And smoked a huge cigar
And after several minutes
Of thought and reflection
You know
You're crazy
But everything you write is publishable

OBITER DICTUM

When I was in Amnesty
I wrote a lot of letters
But epistolary appearances notwithstanding
I pissed against the wind
Shakespeare: O Goneril
You are not worth the dust
Which the rude wind
Blows in your face
And when our Group-in-Formation
Disbanded
And I lost my motley of misfits
Simon: Why are you a weirdo Daddy
I decided to throw in the towel
But while I was in Amnesty
My job was Latin America
Arguably the world's worst torture chamber
So my focal point was torture
And what with epistolic endeavours and so forth
I suppose I was somewhat knowledgeable
And even by America's Latin American standards
Somoza's National Guard
Was noteworthy
And I was nonplussed when the propaganda system talked about freedom fighters
And revolutionaries
Just because the N.G. was being rearmed under American auspices
And given carte blanche to wreak havoc
(Which as of the date of this poem they are certainly doing)
And I recall an interview
That I transcribed for Amnesty
To which I listened in awe
Because the interviewee talked about what he was doing
And resembled a pilot who said he didn't like dropping napalm on Vietnamese women and children
Because of what it did to them he said

And he seemed exasperated
As if what he was doing was so obvious that even a dumb journalist could conceptualize
Do you think this is a game he said
Go to Honduras
See the refugees
Talk to them
Maybe you'll learn something
This is not a game
This is war
You'll see some of the things we do
I don't like doing them
Especially women
Some of the guys do but I don't
We have to
Because we need information
And if a guy's mind doesn't go
We get it
We use electricity of course
Testicles nipples you know
And blowtorches under their armpits
And nails
And toe nails
But some of those guys are really tough
So we pop out their eyes with spoons
When we do women
I listened to this recounting
Of his sponsored activities
But the words ceased to be audible
Though I heard the sound
And I was transported
But I heard the sound
And I was naked

In a shower
Without water

SYNAGOGUE

When one is young
One goes with one's parents
And I often went to the synagogue
And on one occasion
Money was being pledged to Israel
And there were several speakers
And one speaker said he had lived in Germany
And had been sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp
And had survived
And his wife and all his children had not survived
And he had moved to Israel
And had made a success
And remarried
And he was now visiting his grandchildren in Canada
And he said he could never have imagined in Buchenwald
That one day he would live in a Jewish country
This was beyond his dreams
And he said in Israel
He had found a home
He had found freedom and dignity
And not contempt
And death
In Buchenwald he said
He was concerned with survival
But afterwards
He discovered
That when he left Buchenwald
He was still trying to survive
And was suffering
And ate so much he almost killed himself
And he said Israel had assuaged his suffering
And enabled him to survive

And he thanked God
That unlike so many Jewish people
He survived the holocaust
And experienced Israel
And he said Israel's survival depends on you
And the congregation looked at him as if with one face
And as he was leaving the pulpit
An old man passed him
And took his place
And he was not a scheduled speaker
And he said he had worked hard
But was not successful
And as the English writer William Shakespeare said in his play for the theatre
King Lear
He did not have bags of money
For his children
And they did not respect him
And sometimes abused him
And were making him unhappy
But he didn't care
Because for many years he had worshipped in God's synagogue
And was rich beyond all measure
And I heard the word mishooga
And there were murmurings
Because the subject was Israel
And people had come to hear
And to talk about
And no one wanted to listen to
The synagogue's eccentric
And he said a synagogue is inviolate
And can be defaced
And spat upon

And burned to the ground
But cannot be desecrated
And he said during the pogroms
And deprivation
And slaughter
The churches said nothing
That religion said nothing
And we raise money for Israel in a synagogue
And say nothing
Palestinians he said
And he repeated
Palestinians
Who are people
Who have children
Who should not be dispossessed
And demeaned
And made scapegoats
They are the Jews
And we are the Germans
And Christians
And suddenly he pointed to the man who had lived in Germany
You, especially, he said
You you you
You cannot only love Nazis
And the rabbi got up
And there were shouts
And then
In a feeble but strangely audible voice
That was heard throughout the synagogue
Go back to Israel
Marshal the survivors of the holocaust
Establish a moral force

That the military juggernaut
Cannot trample
And he said Israel is an obscenity
And will move from horror to horror
And walked down from the pulpit
And into the congregation
And stopped in front of the preceding speaker
And the man from Buchenwald stood up
And the two survivors
Embraced
And I was close by
And saw tears

*Issam Sartawi was shot by an unknown assailant (April 10, 1983) while attending a conference in Albufeira, Portugal. There is no evidence whatsoever that this scenario was orchestrated by the Mossad.

WHEN THE MOSSAD MURDERED SARTAWI*

Countries opt for what they conceive to be strength
And their secret police
Receive assignments
And also work elsewhere
And one becomes inured
To a modus operandi
One sometimes hears about
After facts are rearranged
And distorted
But when the Mossad murdered Sartawi
I was surprised
Because their prime minister said they don't pose a military threat
In fact he said militarily they're negligible
But he said they pose a very serious political threat
And Sartawi embodied
That threat
Because he endeavoured to persuade
And could not be characterized
And was moderate
And talked about compromise
And peace
And, in a larger sense,
Symbolized sanity
And I was surprised
Because his sense of humour
Was Swiftian
And he said countries have a penchant
For territory
And although Lilliputian
Are imperial

And he said morality
In politics
Is a misnomer
And moral degeneracy is a drop in the bucket
And he said the direction . . .
And this country is symptomatic
And he was civilized
And a humanist
And eschewed war
And talked about peace
And endeavoured to persuade
And was too disconcerting
So someone stood behind him
And fired point blank
And I was surprised
And the bullet
That smashed his head
And shattered his brain
And stilled his voice
Murdered centuries

SI VIS PACEM,

The state religion is sacrosanct
But totalitarian countries bludgeon
Whereas western democracies lobotomize

MONKEY

When I was a teenager
I often went to the movies
And still do to some extent
And saw a film called Primate
Directed by Frederick Wiseman
And this director was a beautiful stylist
Spare and elegant
And very rigorous
And there was a musical quality
And there was a crystallizing simplicity
And I would have liked to have seen his other films
But was never able to do so
And had to be content, for the most part, with Hollywood gibberish
But I was somewhat shocked by his Weltanschauung
Because he seemed to believe
We had created concentration camps
And that animals pay an incredibly exorbitant price
For our experiments
And our subsequent
Technology
And I especially disliked
The startling juxtaposition
Of monkey and rocket
Because he seemed to suggest
That the price
That our own species
Was paying
Was not retractable

Simon was watching television
And saw an American Presidential Candidate's
Advertisement
What does he mean
Well politicians like to talk about all the things they say will happen if they are elected
And this person is saying that if he gets the job
He won't hurt anybody
He won't make war
Oh good
Then I hope he gets it
Then there wouldn't be war with that man

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JACK FALSTAFF

I asked him not to banish
I'm old I said
Banish the others
Banish Peto
Banish Bardolph
Banish Poins
But banish old Jack Falstaff
And banish the world
You will banish the world I said
All the old Jack Falstaffs
I do. I will.
And he did

IRVING LAYTON

I used to read under the bed
Because that was the safest place
In the house
And my mother got mad
If I stayed too long
In the bathroom
And on fseveral occasions
I endeavoured
To talk
To my father
But to no avail
Because there was reticence
(Albeit noise)
And finally I left Winnipeg
And for years I taught at universities
And ended up at a college
But was still under the bed
Or in the bathroom
And gradually I realized
I was not enamoured
Of the 20th
Which is arguably the penultimate
Or last
And is not even safe
And I wrote four books
And they languish unread
And I stopped writing
And became a specialist
In an area of investment
And that pays the bills
And enables me to put money aside
For a radioactive day
Since one never knows what will happen

And there is no guarantee
That one will be immediately vaporized
And on the whole
Things have been awkward
And on several occasions
I almost threw in the towel
And suddenly I met you
And there has been an outpouring
Including five poems
Re A Motley To The View
And I regret they were not included
When I mailed you the manuscript
And I want you to know
That meeting you was my camelot
And that whatever happens
To The Simon Poems
And A Motley To The View
I once met a great poet
With whom I could talk
Without words
And there was a rapport
And an understanding
And a quality
Of mind
And a generosity
Of spirit
That went against the grain
Of the century
And I want you to know
That our meeting
Engendered poems
But this is my private poem

My thank you

DANTE ALIGHIERI

When you met her you were nine
And when she died you were twenty
And you were distraught
And your voice has reverberated
And transcends planets moons stars solar systems galaxies
And all comparisons are invidious
And Goethe is a bad joke
And Shakespeare
Even Shakespeare
Is made of straw
And the universe
Is a cramped room
Adjacent to a gorgeous palace
And Bach Mozart Brahms and Beethoven
Are gesticulating pebbles
Vis-à-vis the Mount Everest
Of your music
And when I saw Guido
We talked about good old Bice
Old Bice Portinari
And her vaginal characteristics
And smooth thighs
And somewhat stocky bum
And how we used to take turns
And she was always forthcoming
But I wanted to talk about hubris
And the rationale
And why did she Beatrice a Dante
But the subject
Was beyond our scope
And our flames wagged aimlessly
And we could only exchange pleasantries
And reminisce

And talk about the weather
Which in the circumstances was of no climatic importance
Whatsoever
And is the most boring subject
Imaginable
And I told Guido
I would miss him
But this was the last visitation
And insofar as I could see
And the flames notwithstanding
There was darkness
And your voice
Which has reverberated
Since the 14th
Has encountered
The 20th
And even you Dante Alighieri
Even you
Even you

'BICE BELL'

I think about acid rain
And ecological destruction
And thirst
And famine
And the nuclear holocaust
And America's infantile lunacy
And that crazy country's technology
Which will obliterate
Our species
And we were here
For a few
Geological
Milliseconds
And as I watch the planet recede
Memories obtrude
And one thinks of one's mother
And so many familial contretemps
And a domesticity
That was relatively merciless
And the sundry violence to which one was so casually subjected
Almost ameliorated anguish
At least that is my spiel
In any event
Two incidents
Were prominent
The first was a garage
And a girl who was also six
And was showing me her body
Now you
I don't have that
Where do you pee then
Here

Playing
Garage
Back of house
Curious about bodies
I will if you do
You first
Dress panties pants shorts
Bodies
I don't have that
Why
Because that's why I'm a girl
Where do you pee then
Here
Let me see you make a pooh-pooh
I can't now
Try
Squats
I can't
Then pee
Now you
Okay
Laughing
Lots of fun
Door opens
Hi Mommy
Look at me and Marjie
Yells
Hits me
Put your clothes on and go home
Drags me out of the garage into the house hitting me and scratching me
Why did you do that
Such a dirty girl

Kitchen
Phoned Marjie's mother
Bedroom
Hitting pillow
Hard to breathe
Get off bed
Pencil
Scribbler
I don't like Mommy anymore and girls
And I am not going to play with them
And the second was being spat upon
By my grandmother
And I was four
And hadn't expected to see her
At suppertime
And I said Hi Grandma
What are you doing here
And she spat in my face
And her spittle was corrosive
And she did not stint re same
And my face was soaked
And I looked like I was crying
And Mother threw food and dishes
And chased Grandma out of the house with a broom
And Father threw Mother against the wall
And punched her
And threw her onto the floor
And kicked her
And she was pregnant
And Dr. Levant
And an ambulance
And I wanted a sister
And never forgave her

Because she couldn't have more babies
And she said afterwards she was glad she would not have to bring up another one
And when I was a teenager
She died
And I was especially angry
And I still miss my sister
And sometimes
At night
I fantasize
And we talk
And I am very happy
And a lot of stress
And tension
Dissipates
And America seems sane
And bearable
And even benign
And during one conversation Marjie materialized
And I did the honours
'Bice' this is my friend Marjie
Marjie this is my sister 'Bice'
And they embraced
And held hands
And I made tea
And then Mother and Father materialized
And they were holding hands
And Grandma materialized
And she poured tea
And everyone was smiling
And talking
And happiness overflowed
And I did not want to leave the primacy of my dream
And reenter the wakefulness of that ephemeral world

PININA PININA

My grandfather called my grandmother Pinina
And when he was especially endearing
He said Pinina Pinina
And even in his eighties he was amorous
And she said she worried he would tire himself out
Have a heart attack
And she would be alone
Pinina Pinina

In Russia
She loved a revolutionary
And he wanted her to go with him
And she smiled and said he wanted me to leave my family
And then I met Viktor
And he changed his shirt three times a day
They were together for sixty years
And always were in love
Pinina Pinina

In Russia
Dad and his younger brother Daniel
Contracted typhoid
And she moved out of the house
And grandfather looked after the children
And barely survived
She said I did not know I would have to be out of the house for so long
Pinina Pinina

In Canada
I had a special record
The great cantor Pierre Pinchik
Singing Roza D'Shabbos
And grandfather took my record

And she said we'll get you another
And I said give me my record
She threw
Dad stepped on
And I said Dad you broke my record
Pinina Pinina

She offered Mom money
And Mom said I was tempted
Because Dad was a miser
And Mom said I knew I could get pregnant later
Well why did you have me
Mom looked at me
And didn't answer
Pinina Pinina

There was always Pinina
There would have to be Pinina
And when my Mom and Dad went to a party
Or for a drive
Or to a movie
Or whatever
There would have to be Pinina
And when she and grandfather went on a holiday
Dad went with them
And drove them
And once Mom went to a reception
And forgot about her
Grandfather came to the house
And talked for several hours
And my Dad hit Mom's face
Pinina Pinina

She did not like Daniel's Ruth
And once said you're just like your mother
And I'm glad your mother is dead
And Ruth tore my grandmother's face
Grandfather phoned Daniel at work
And they all went to the police
And the police said go to a lawyer
The lawyer said you could be put away and Daniel could be sued
And she sent Daniel back to his house
Pinina Pinina

Mom had cancer
And wanted to go to Houston
And she said give her money
She's toit
But we still have to spend
Pinina Pinina

When my Mom died
Dad cried
And Dad said she will never be the same
Without your mother
And when I left Winnipeg
She and Dad sat on the sofa
And looked at me
And she said why are they giving you so much money
I said goodbye
And no one spoke
Pinina Pinina

She yelled at me
She laughed at me

She talked about me
She made my Mom miscarry
She *killed* my *sister*
And once I said you are a witch
You are like the pawnbroker in Crime And Punishment
And grandfather said be a mensch
And Dad took off his belt
I got under the bed in time
But Dad pulled the mattress off
And used the end with the buckle
She screamed through the house
Pinina Pinina

After Mom
My grandfather
And Dad left our house
To live with her
He said you have to take care of yourselves
And I have to take care of her
And the refrigerator was empty
But sometimes Dad brought us food
And sometimes we went to her house
And Dad made supper
She said I never believed your father would do so much for you
Pinina Pinina

When she was ninety
She began to die
And there was an air strike
And my brother lived in California
But he went to the funeral
And I said was Dad upset

He said I've never seen him happier
And I said why did you go
Pinina Pinina

In the hospital
She phoned Ruth
And said I'm sorry
And said I'll see your mother in heaven
She said forgive me
Both women cried
And Pinina died

SIMON CORMAN

You keep showing me
Your unfinished novel
About a ship
In Africa
And each time I see you
I have to hear about the new chapter
And read same
And tell you that it's good
And not talk about the other unfinished novel
And how one eventually stops reading
Though the novel continues
And there are chapters
At least that was the heretofore
The other centuries
Is it good Daddy
Well I've never read anything like it
When I was seven I couldn't write like this
I couldn't even write
Do you want to know what happens next
Certainly
But you have to promise not to tell Mom!
Well maybe you should whisper
Promise Daddy!
I promise
Because she has to be surprised
Okay I promise -- what happens
They think they are on an island
But they are really in Africa
Oh no
Yes! Cannibals!!

MICHAEL DRAYTON

Your mother and I have had a falling out
And no longer thrive on each other's company
Because adults like to vitiate
And circumvent
But you are five years old
And a one-child fan club
And in you
Her selfishness
And sorrow
Are endearing
And when you see me
You shout
And take my hand
And drag me off to your playroom
For records
And books
And machines
And explanations
And you play with colour-coded wire
And batteries
And flashlights
And tape recorders
And radios
And record players
And cords
And plugs
And sockets
And wrenches
And pliers
And screwdrivers
And wire
And more wire

And your ingenuity
Is infinite
And no matter how well something works
You are able to fix it
And as nonstop volubility
Pours forth
From your little body
You explain
With operatic intensity
And all-inclusive detail
How everything is accomplished
And how each wire has to be placed
In the exact aperture
No matter how infinitesimal
And notwithstanding manual dexterity
And the innards
Of every machine
Wrenched
And removed
And replaced
And then again removed
And substituted
And -- as you point out -- this mechanical transplanting is imperative
Or the whole human enterprise would collapse
And many eviscerated flashlights
That might otherwise have expired
Bear testament
To your scrupulous ministrations
And your room is inundated
With machines
You have repaired
And once

Your mother and I
Were watching you eat honey
And that was a precious moment
And you were the big bear
And your marvellous brother
Who is three years old
And moves through the house like an earthquake
Was the little bear
And you were both eating honey
And, fortunately, you are five years old
And your life was that moment
And your present was your past and future

NORAH DRAYTON

During orgasm you dug your nails into my back
And told me not to stop
And I wondered what the hell was going on
And whether all your men were premature
But after the second or third
You were less insistent
And eventually the plangent nails were calm
And eventually even I was calm
But I worried
Because things were going well
And I was too happy
So I had a foreshadowing
So when you suddenly dumped me
There were only deep scratches

ARNOLD STENNER

We were both horny womanizers
But you always found fault
And vice versa
And when I hear your wife's voice
I still cringe
And philosophy is still not your forte
And you talk about medical ethics
And are riding that hobby-horse
And prestige
And speaking engagements
And money
And your alternate income competes with your sinecure
His purchas was wel better than his rente
And articles for magazines
And The Globe and Mail
And you said they pay well
And several interviews
With one P. Gzowski
For the radio program
Morningside
Which pay well
And transmit one's reputation
And Director of Medical Ethics
And the Philosophy Department
Etc
And you said you had committed your aunt
And P. Gzowski was doing very well
That was a subtle point Peter
That is very profound Peter
I am glad you asked that question Peter
And I remember the old Arnold Stenner
And how you railed against the injustices of the society of which you are an integral part
And the mediocrity of the university at which you are happy to be a tenured employee

And which is an expanding focal point
For your sundry other
Profitable activities
And you told me you were happy
But we would be lucky if we managed the decade
But in the interim
This was the best of all possible worlds
And you were shocked
And said I was crazy
And had relinquished my birthright
And would need four hundred thousand dollars
To receive the equivalent salary in interest
You've always been destructive
But this time you've really done it
Someone like you was so lucky to have a job
And now you've thrown that away too
And you went out of your way to tell me
I was doomed
And you are a pimp
And your writing is constipated
And there never was feeling
And during an anal foray
She said why don't you put your big penis into Arnold Stenner's hole
Because when she was hurt she wanted to hurt
And she knew we were friends
And you were the best friend
And during the weekly get-together
At Kelekes
And our ritual hamburger
And fries
I was regaling the company
With the latest crisis
And announced my decision

And was through with university
And this fucking fiasco
And would get some pills
And choke on my vomit
And we both laughed
Though the others were agitated
And at your instigation
I wrote the Dean Groberson letter
An all-time sob story
And we laughed hysterically
And that letter was read
And professors congregated
And *pace* my grades
An assistantship
And academically
I never looked back
And my father's prediction
Re skid row
Was held in abeyance
And while we were laughing
And before I crumpled the paper
You purloined
And ran
And I was incensed
And wanted to smash you
And we were young
And ran and ran and ran
And ran
And though I lost sight of you
I saw you forever

REGAN GONERIL

I went one better than my sister
And proffered the precious square of sense
My sister is not accurate
Because eyesight sufficed

We both knew he had but slenderly known himself
That the best and soundest of his time had been rash
But in this scene the destructiveness is apparent to everyone
And we
The inheritors
Were destroyed

I loved Edmund
Because he was appropriate
My husband was milk-livered
And Edmund knew that two plus two equals one

Even with the power pre-eminence and all the large effects that troop with majesty
Cordelia was his tenuous hope
But he relinquished
And realized
After the facts
And possibility

UNION CARBIDE

The gas that sequestered the sleeping city
Was your toy
And the dead multitudes
Were just human

MARILYN MONROE

And then there was Jack
And then there was Bobby
And then there was me
And my first was The Asphalt Jungle

And if I read poetry
I would paraphrase Donne
Because when everyone is murdered
Death will die

MARY MOON

Where is the Nazi I said
Where is Klaus Barbie
Where is Klaus Altman
Where are you hiding him
How is he helping you
Where are the documents
Freedom of Information I said
Article 2+2=4
And the Central Intelligence Agency
And the Federal Bureau of Investigation
Responded
(March 13)
And temporized
And I wrote again
Freedom of Information I said
And I wrote again
And, finally, a reply
And large men brought me an envelope

THEODORE REICH

I was not Klaus Barbie
Or Wernher von Braun
I was Theodore Reich
And abhorred Nazis
And wrote
So there were no funds
And there was no safekeeping
But after much tumult
And a lot of travail
I, finally, escaped
And reached Fort Leavenworth

SALVADOR ALLENDE

Augusto Pinochet

EUGENE KOLBE

Nazis are our friends
Because
They help us
And Klaus Barbie
Bathed Jean Moulin
And so forth
And post-war assistance
And look what Wernher von Braun did for us
And they need not be Germans
Because
We are not racists
Luis and Anastasio
Fulgencio and Augusto
And that is our area
And the Gestapo run our show
And George Papadopoulos spearheaded a coup
And established
The first fascist regime
In Europe
After WW II
And he was our friend
And employee
And liquidated
Parliament and constitution
And instituted
Latin American style state terrorism
And we were fraternal
And prodigal
Because
Nazis are our friends

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall
And had a great fall
And busted his arse
And all the king's horses
And all the king's men
Helped him climb the wall again
And fall again

JEAN MULTON

I was apprehended
And things were done to my body
And to make a long story short
I was broken
And betrayed many colleagues
And post-WW II
My compatriots called me a traitor
And I was convicted
And killed

ASSIM SARTAWI

We are offered annihilation
And have nothing
And from nothing
Must try
To create
Options

KING LEAR

You rubbed my nose
In shit
You plugged my nostrils
You stuffed my mouth
Then you took Cordelia
And made me the cause
You son of a bitch
I killed the slave that was a-hanging thee

Not what I did
How I perceive
A wretch whom nature is ashamed almost to acknowledge hers
I am ashamed to acknowledge Cordelia
I identify with nature
There is no discrepancy
My enraged responses are natural
Of course it is worse now that I am old
But that is all
So I am not just making a mistake
The scene brings out a fundamental dichotomy
That I have never seen
For you, great king,
I would not have your love make such a stray
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
To avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
Almost to acknowledge hers

My rage violates my intention
And drives out the middle
And Cordelia is the middle
And what should be a three-fold split
Becomes a two-fold split

And so for the first time
And therefore symbolically
I wiped out
That middle realm
That sustained me
We have no such daughter
Nor shall ever see that face of hers again

My rage and authority
Are inseparable
But split
And when a role is transformed
Then rage is transformed
Greater
More impressive
But impotent
I do invest you jointly with my power
Cordelia's love
Apart from her role
Can't avail
I throw her into the storm
We have no such daughter
Nor shall ever see that face of hers again
Therefore be gone

Her love remains intact
But impotent
My rage remains intact
But impotent
They throw me into the storm
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall -- I will do such things --

What they are yet I know not, but they shall be
The terrors of the earth

I discarded my role
And prevented Cordelia's
And when I disowned her
I was disowned
And could not encounter Regan and Goneril
On an objective battlefield
So I can't remember whether I was shocked
At the end
By what happened
To Cordelia
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage;
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
And ask of thee forgiveness

But in the other endings
The bad are punished
And the good rewarded
And in V. iii
I thought the ending would be the ending
Albany would make the speech
And wrap things up
All friends shall taste the wages of their virtue
All foes the cup of their deservings
So why am I on stage
O see see
Holding the body
He is making his speech
Wrapping things up
Good guys and bad guys

The highest ranking character
The ceremonial language
Hamlet etc
Wrapping
And I hold the body
I know when one is dead and when one lives
And Edgar
Who played parts
Whom we have seldom seen
Makes the speech
The weight of this sad time we must obey,
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say

The ending is not formal
Northrop Frye said that once I was annihilated
By time
Then the order would return
And lesser men would go on with their business
As usual
And the order would survive
Because the order does not survive
And for Edgar the schism is too huge
I was the legitimate son
I loved my father
And I got screwed
And unlike me
His own rage did not do him in
His brother's rage does him in
And exposes
The balance
That he took for granted
He childed as I fathered

Having been shattered
He makes the final speech
Instead of Albany
And the speech talks about
A shattering
That is irremediable
And roles
That were easy to assume
Are impossible to assume
And he can't say
What has been said
And he can't see
As I saw
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long

And he knows
That a global occurrence lasts half an hour
And longevity is passé
And to see so much
Is to experience
Elliptically
The limits
And if one lives long enough
The square of sense
That seems so foolproof
Will be especially fragile
The worst is not
So long as we can say 'This is the worst'

So he is the criterion
Because he was also screwed

But by an external force
So he can externalize the whole process
And retreat
Into another mode
And turn his back
And recognize
That my path
Is self-destruction
And my retreat
Is madness
Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir

Straight into madness
If you had left it at never never never never never
And had me Othello
Or whatever
Then life would be unbearable
My fate would be unbearable
And my existential response would be suicide
I would gladly kill myself
A renunciation
Of life
Cordelia's death
Or some other reason
But by opting for madness
You made me renounce
The categories
Insanity is so specific
An intellectual rejection
The categories
Of my development
Were renounced

Conceptually
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir

So, at the end, there is no end
And I am alone
And very old
And non compos mentis
And dead
And, finally, filled
And the stench is distracting
And I can barely discern
Your behind
As you surreptitiously decamp
And hightail it to Stratford-on-Avon
With your money
And build your house
And live happily ever after

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

The notes suffer
But flourish
And in a silence
Are clear

RACHEL FELDMAN

When my marriage went down the tube
I went to London
And rode the subway for hours
And eventually something would stick
Usually a tourist
And once I picked up or was picked up by an Italian woman
Sophia Borghese
Who may have been twenty
And she studied languages
And spoke English
And several days later she wanted to go to Greece
And we visited Delphi
And met Larpos
And went to a tavern
In which everyone appeared to be screaming
And which was packed to the brim
And she was the only woman
And drinks were conveyed to our table
From all over the tavern
Because we were guests
And one couldn't refuse
And soon I didn't know where I was
And then someone was nudging my chair
And I was sitting next to an old man
Who exuded ferocity
And was grinning
Or leering
And I saw his teeth
And tried to smile
And Larpos said this man is my uncle
You are looking at a legend
This is the man who killed more Germans than any man

In our village
And the old man grinned
And they said some words to each other
In Greek
And Larpos said his uncle was having a special drink prepared for us
And eventually we were handed tall glasses
And I had never tasted anything so vile
And I said do you mind if I sip this because I have already had a lot to drink
And Larpos said that would be okay
And I pretended to sip
And Larpos said my uncle told me not to tell you about him
And the old man grinned
And Larpos said I told my uncle I told you about him
And I looked at the ferocious old man
And the same leer or grin
And though the noise level appeared to have increased
And was rattling my mind
And breaking my eardrums
At our table there was silence
And I realized that something was expected
And that a gesture was mandatory
And stood up
And was hit
With a crescendo
Of silence
And staggered
Because the tavern had been exploding
And now this clamorous silence
And I hesitated
And then I raised my tall glass to the old man
And gulped the contents
And collapsed

And everyone in the tavern stood up
And clapped
And stomped
And shouted
For ten minutes
And Larpos was in his glory
And the old man had me in an iron bear hug
And his expression did not change
And I knew that one was a goner
And could never be extricated
And the naked men
Swimming
In the Aegean
Were pulled under the water
And Larpos said there was never a mark
On a body
And my Italian girl friend
Of whom I had become fond
But with whom things were not going well
Rejoiced
And was radiant
And several weeks later
In Crete
She met a Greek
And our lives diverged
But I hope she remembers

MARTHA BLACK

I left America
And came to Canada
For the Klondyke gold rush
And my husband and I made arrangements
To walk the Chilkoot Pass
But he chickened out
And talked about hardship
And said I was pregnant
And wrote me a letter
And I said I don't give a hoot
You're unreliable
And make me unhappy
And the ten years have been an ordeal
And I will never see you again
And years later I heard that he died
In Hawaii
And I walked the 42 miles
Of the Chilkoot Pass
First to Sheep Camp
At the foot of the Pass
Then to the summit
And down to Lake Lindeman
And, finally, the little village
Of Bennett
And there were humans and animals
Pushing and straining
And every man toted an eighty-pound backpack
And drove dogs and horses
And herded pack ponies
And for five miles the road was good
And the woods cool and shady
And we forded mountain streams

And stepped stone to stone
And the Pass became rockier
And tons and tons of stones and boulders
And four miles of valley without vegetation
And my clothes were too bulky
And the walking was hard
Then finally a wayside cabin
Strong tea
And ham sandwiches
So refreshed
We continued
And reached Canyon City
Striking the mountain trail
That led to Sheep Camp
A trail of heartbreaks
A trail of broken hopes
A trail of mute clamour
Horses slipping and falling and carcasses visible
Caches of outfits
A deserted shanty
Mildewed clothes
I was glad
To be able
To call it a day
At Sheep Camp
The one street shack and tent village
Huddled
Among mountains
And an isolated glacier
And the debris
Of a snowslide
And thirty adventurers

Such as we
Underneath
And I saw the large cairn
Of stones
And looked up
And can still see the Pass
That upward trail
A perpendicular wall
Of ice-covered rock
Clinging humans
And animals
Slowly mounting
Single file
To the summit
But at Sheep Camp
Fatigued and footsore
The Grand Pacific Hotel
Which resembled a woodshed
And grateful to the elderly couple
Who gave me hay
And two army blankets
And a feather pillow
Then a wonderful sleep
And a hearty breakfast
Corn meal mush
Cold-storage eggs
Condensed milk
Prunes
And a whole orange
And we started to climb
That three thousand feet
That steep narrow icy mountain trail

And before we climbed we were told the summer was cursed
Because sun melted snow
And avalanches crashed down
And crushed
And already 100 lives
And during the first hour
I walked on melting snow
And saw blue ribbon
And bent down
And tugged
And a baby's bootee
And the snow melted and melted
And the tumbling torrents
And the dangerously thin ice
And the treachery underfoot
And streams
And ledges
And precipices
The trail steeper
The air warmer
Footholds impossible
My sealskin jacket
My hot high buckram collar
My boned corsets
My long corduroy skirt
My full bloomers
I curse
And cling
To stunted pines
To spruce roots
To jutting rocks
And in some places the path too narrow

And feet tandem fashion
And the upward climb
Sweating panting pounding
Stumbling staggering crawling
And the cursing procession
Men shouting and swearing
Too heavily loaded horses
Losing their footing and screaming
And falling on rocks
The sheer wall
The wall
Of rock
The granite wall
I am pulled
I am turned
I am twisted
I am wracked
My joints creak
My foot slips
My balance lost
I am the falling horse
But a crevice
Within the rocks
Saves me
My boot is split
The leg's flesh
Weight
Weight heavier
Legs shakier
Sharp rocks
Snake-like roots
Scrub pine forests

Tree roots curling over rocks and boulders
Rocks rocks rocks rocks rocks
Boots torn
Hands bleeding
Finally the broker's tent
The canvas structure
On the summit
The wind blowing between spheres
Wounded body
Soaking sock
Iodine
Tea
Then through customs
The shivering wind
Canada
North West Mounted Police
The finest sturdiest men
And then the descent
And overflowing anguish
But I can't remember
But the summit was easier
But somehow Lindeman
And Bennett
The Tacoma Hotel
Stretched canvas
On four logs
A straw shakedown
But in reality
A down comforter
A queen's palace
And as I slept the exhausted sleep
I knew I had walked the 42 miles

And the Yukon was my home
And the Chilkoot Pass was my memory
I had already found
My Klondyke gold

JERRY FALWELL

40,000,000 Born Again Christians
Are against abortion
But endeavour
To precipitate
The great abortion
But apropos your television commercial
When your archetypal couple
Were driving the automobile
And heard
The radio
And salvation
Was impending
In the guise
Of intercontinental ballistic missiles
And summarily vacated that automobile
Via the window
And jettisoned everything corporeal
And began the long ascent
Accompanied
By Jesus
And angels
And 'music'
And children
Should I have smashed Simon's television set
Thereby alienating him forever
And two days
Or had things gone too far by then
I.e., was the commercial prepaid

ALEC GUINNESS

You are incomparable
But of all your creations
The priest in The Prisoner
Was the alpha plus
And at the beginning
Notwithstanding everything they did to you
You easily parried
Because the man in charge was concerned with your public appearance
Because the trial was not in camera
But he said he would work on you another way
And that would be more interesting
And more of a challenge
And eventually you recanted
And signed the confession
And at one point in the proceedings
You finally went to the cell
And it had been a long evening
And his aid said you were a tough nut to crack
And the man in charge stared at the window
And smiled
Look at the city
Each of those lights is a human being
That can be broken
That is the fascination
And the pity
And at the trial you said you were very very guilty

JIMMY STEWART

I can't remember the name of the movie
But you were talking to your son
About kindness
And he was my age
And your words were so true
And the deviation so false
That even though I've grown up
I remember
And you said it was nice to be smart
And rich
And successful
But it was more important
To be kind
That was far more important
And you seemed to suggest that in comparison the rest is superfluous
And you seemed to believe that the essence of kindness is powerlessness
And later I visited Simon
And as usual he was watching television
And suddenly you materialized
And were being honoured
And interviewed
And I discovered that you are a soldier
I think a brigadier general
And a patriot
And your son went to Vietnam
Because he loved America
And I listened to jingoistic incantations
And there was another question
And there was a pause
And then you began to reply
And suddenly you broke down
And you said a day doesn't go by when I don't think of him

He was so good
And wanted to help his country
And you looked bewildered

VLADIMIR DANCHEV

For six days
On Moscow English Language World Service
You shot your mouth off
And told your countrymen
To lay down their arms
And get the hell out
Of Afghanistan
And on the seventh day
You ceased from work
And rested
And a spokesperson
For the ministry of truth
Said you were not a criminal
Because a sick man was not responsible
And there was psychiatric refurbishing
And, finally, you were functional
And employable
But your American counterparts
Cronkite
And Rather
And Reasoner
And Chancellor
And Walters
And Wallace
And Brinkley
And Severeid
And so on
And so forth
Ad infinitum
Talk
In unison
And did not shoot their respective mouths off

And tell their countrymen
To get the hell out
Of Vietnam
Or blow the whistle
Re Cambodia
And they will never be sick
Because the propaganda systems
Are not compatible
Because one is crude
And the other ultra-sophisticated
And one enforces
And the other co-opts
And you do not shoot your mouth off
And jeopardize a very lucrative job
When you
Are part
Of the process

JIMMY MING

Among all the variables
Of a trip
To Vancouver
There are two constants
The Sylvia Hotel
And the Yangtze Restaurant
They are focal points
And purveyors
Of stability
And equilibrium
And as long as all is well
With the Yangtze
And Sylvia
Then all is well with the world
And one is able to function
And eat well
And sleep well
And as regards the former
Whenever I am in Vancouver
I look forward to the incomparable Mandarin food
Of the Yangtze
And one dish in particular
Hot cashew chicken
With snow peas
And Jimmy always finds me a table
And we chat
And he seems genuinely interested
In the comings and goings
Of A. Bell
And afterwards he goes into the kitchen
With specific instructions re my hot cashew chicken
Because he knows I like snow peas

Rather than beans
And for some inexplicable reason
He always charges me less than the going rate
And if I go to the Yangtze for lunch
His elegant wife comes to my table
And once she said in French who is your girl-friend
And I said Je t'aime
And she blushed
And she said I am married to Jimmy
And Jimmy Ming and his wife are industrious
And they worked 18-hour days
To create
The Yangtze
And several weeks ago
I was reading the business section
Of The Globe and Mail
And glanced at the front page
And apparently Vietnamese youth gangs
Viet Ching
Red Eagles
Lotus
Et al
Are terrorizing Vancouver
With special emphasis
On the East Side
And the Chinese
And Vietnamese
Communities
And sometimes 80 members per gang
And knives
And baseball bats
And iron bars

And machetes
And cleavers
And guns
And that USA
Invaded
And contaminated
And Canada sold
And made money
And Jimmy was kidnapped
And his strangled and butchered
Remains
And those of his wife
Were beside an embankment
In sacks
And for more than a week
I have stayed in my room
At the Sylvia
Drinking tap water
And writing this poem
And I am apprehensive
Because the Yangtze is closed
And may not open
Under new management
Because Jimmy's father is the owner
And I am worried
I'm very worried
That my hot cashew chicken
Will not be extant

HECTOR CRÈVECOEUR

I travelled throughout America
And was treated hospitably
And in Carolina
I was invited
To dine
With a planter
And on my way to the large white house
I walked through a pleasant wood
And heard sounds
And saw a cage
In a tree
And branches covered with birds
And I perceived a negro
Suspended therein
And his eyes were holes
And his body was covered with wounds
And swarms
Of insects
Ingested
And imbibed
And he kept repeating O dem birds O dem birds
And I heard the word water
And he had of course to function in the cage
And there was a distinct odour
And when I diplomatically mentioned the aforementioned
To my host
He said they have to be disciplined
And occasionally taught a lesson
And in this particular instance
An overseer had been insulted
And afterwards I thanked my host for his hospitality
And I said adieu

And one or two centuries later
I travelled throughout Central and South
America
And saw poverty
And people were endeavouring to subsist
And I visited Guatemala
And I visited Peru
And I visited Brazil
And I visited Chile
And I visited Argentina
And I visited Honduras
And I travelled and I travelled and I travelled and I travelled and
And, finally, I visited
El Salvador
And Alejandro took me to a private athletic club
Which was inundated with soldiers
And secret police
As were all the private athletic clubs
And there were all sorts of implements
And many rooms
Some of which contained 'prisoners'
And in my particular athletic club
Alejandro bought me a Coke
And said hold this to your nose
And he pointed to a door
And I opened same
And went in with the Coke next to my nose
And there was a reminiscent odour
But more pungent
And even with the Coke
Overwhelming
And my eyes became accustomed to the light

And I, finally, saw
And on each side of the room
Were barbed wire cages
One metre high
And perhaps one-half metre wide
Altogether at least two hundred cages
Cage piled upon cage
And the sight was worse than the smell
And
And I left the room with the Coke next to my nose
And Alejandro said hold the Coke
And don't look right or left
And don't say anything
And we walked to his jeep
And I held the Coke next to my nose
And soldiers
Surrounded
And I believed this was finito
And that I had come full circle to the end of my centuries
But apparently money had changed hands
And we drove away
But after a few kilometres
I put down the Coke
And Alejandro stopped the car
And I barfed
On my clothes
And my body
And Alejandro said
You have seen how my people are suffering

BOBBY ORR

When gods cease
Scavengers congregate
And one such was Earl
And Earl wrote an article
For Quest
Re the greatest defenceman
In hockey
Robert Gordon Orr
More precisely
Bobby Orr

And Earl entitled his article
POOR BOBBY

What is the sound of no fans clapping
And the god was no longer a vision of beauty
To be worshipped
But was now fair game

And Earl said Bobby I want to go to Boston
And I want to go to your house
And I want to travel with you
And Bobby Orr said you can't come to my home
And you can't travel with me
And Earl said Bobby Orr's face reddened
And his voice seethed
And loaded verbiage is part of a journalist's arsenal
And seethed and reddened characterize a voice and a face
And not a journalist's intelligence and sensibility
And Bobby Orr said what is it you're after
What is this
There's no story
I'm working for Nabisco
I'm a businessman

And the god
Who excelled
But whose forte was not language
Endeavoured to convey
To the journalist
That the story was finished
That he wanted to live
Without a story

And Earl initiated his quest
With Bobby Orr's lawyer
And the lawyer said no shots Earl
Shots?
Nothing negative Earl
And Earl
Who had lived on the periphery
For 22 years
And wrote articles
For magazines
And newspapers
And was a man of the media
Did not know what shots were

And Earl talked about Bobby Orr's new job
For Nabisco
And Bobby Orr's film
About violence
That was funded
By Nabisco
And Earl says the film shows Bobby Orr talking
To children
And the children say hockey isn't fun

Because parents and coaches yell
And there is too much hurting
And the god says hockey should be fun
For children
And that violence is foolishness
The goon stuff
We have to get rid of it
I call it foolishness
And the god says hockey is a game
And should be fun
But for kids
It is not fun
And that's a mistake
And Bobby Orr talks about the rot
In minor hockey
The penchant
For violence
And the all-inclusive emphasis
On winning
And parents
Pushing children
And Earl points out that Bobby Orr was a natural star
And never had to be pushed
And Earl italicizes had
And Earl says that Bobby Orr fails to mention
That his own team
In the National Hockey League
The Boston Bruins
Were known for bully tactics and fistic prowess
Hence their sobriquet
The Big Bad Bruins

And Earl is not preoccupied
With the god's idiosyncratic obsession
With violence
Though Bobby Orr's equivalent at left wing
The post-lapsarian Bobby Hull
Alluded to same
Re his Swedish team-mate
Bent Nielsen
And Bobby Hull said the destruction of Nielsen
Was purposeful
Because owners permitted
And coaches instructed
And players acquiesced
And referees turned the other cheek
And once Bobby Hull refused to play hockey
For three days
And everyone said he was a jerk
And Bobby Hull said Nielsen played with such joy
He had never met a comparable player
No one else had his joy
And he was exalted
And there was grace
And artistry
And Bobby Hull said he was ashamed to be a Canadian
And Bobby Hull said
He was ashamed
To be human
And Bobby Hull's article
About violence
Was not taken up
By the media

And the goaltender
Ken Dryden
Wrote a book
About hockey
That he entitled
The Game
And the long chapter in which he discussed
The media
Was deleted
Because Ken Dryden and his publisher
Are not fools
And they know that you do not criticize
The media
If you want to be praised
I.e., if you want your book to be commercially viable
I.e., a best seller

And Bobby Orr's equivalent at centre
The pre-lapsarian Wayne Gretzky
Cries on aeroplanes
And on Canadian flights stays in the cockpit
To simulate control
But this is not talked about
In the media
Because superstars
Are flawless
And Wayne Gretzky says he'll retire at thirty
And he has a special bodyguard
The enforcer Semenko
The doyen
Of goons

But Earl knows that there are no bodyguards
When the clapping stops
And Earl knows that gods can be talked about
In the media
When the clapping stops
And Earl says the qualities
That made Bobby Orr
The world's finest
In the arena
Hurt Bobby Orr
In business
And Earl says the state of the art
In business
Is procrastination
And compromise
Is adjustment
And compromise
And Earl does not mince words
And Earl says that unlike the other denizens
Of our society
Bobby Orr has problems
And is maladjusted
And Earl speculates that Bobby Orr is having problems with his wife
And Earl suggests that Bobby Orr's wife is probably having a hard time
And Earl talks about an occurrence
In Chicago
That purportedly illustrates
Bobby Orr's surliness
And spoiled brattishness
And deepening trauma
And the holes in his character
And the extent to which the god had deteriorated

When the clapping stopped
And Bobby Orr baited a journeyman hockey player
Hilliard Graves
In the Rusty Scupper bar
And Hilliard Graves said I'm not Bobby Orr
I have to play this way to make it in the National Hockey League
And Bobby Orr said if you hip-check guys it damages their knees
And Bobby Orr told Hilliard Graves what he would like to do to him
And Hilliard Graves said I'll take your other knee off
And there was a brawl
And afterwards Bobby Orr went to the Men's
And the god said I'm frustrated
And apologized
Because Hilliard Graves per se was not the issue
But there had been so many Hilliard Graves
And all the residual Hilliard Graves
And hip-checks etc
And thuggery etc
Had sullied the vision
And stopped all the beauty
And the god apologized
And shook hands with the journeyman
Who knew without knowing
But Earl is oblivious
And continues to dish it out
And to Bobby Orr Earl McRae is a yahoo
And a pain in the bum
Because of the greater pain

LORRAINE CARTER

You put up with my moods

my temperament

my manners

my craziness

my irascibility

my mind

But in the interim

You met someone else

And you said you loved me but you could not go on like this indefinitely

And if you had to leave me you needed someone to go to

And he was there

And I had never been there

And he was overwhelmed by you

And devoted to you

And you needed his emotional largesse

All the feelings you said you were not getting from me

And hikes

And movies

And dinners

And love letters

And a lot of pseudo sex

And I encouraged you

Because for more than a year I resented your love

And I thought this was a way of jettisoning you altogether

Because on my own I didn't have the strength

And I was grateful to the guy for helping me out

And I was glad when you gave me your ultimatum

And I said let me have two weeks

And you said until then you would put everything on hold

And a few days afterwards I felt like calling you and wishing you good luck

But didn't

And eventually we met

And I told you of the dangers I had passed
And you said I know
And we talked
And I knew there would be you
But you said you had grown to care about
And had become attached to
And would continue to see
So when you finally slept with him
I lay awake
And when you came to the flat and told me you loved me
I cried

ARTHUR BELL

After I wrote Thy Harry's Company
I was drained
And eviscerated
But finished
But I thought about you
(Dad)
And the poem I never wanted to write
All my life . . .

PUPPET POEMS

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FR. LEONARD BOYLE

You drink too much
And smoke too much
And at The Book In The Middle Ages conference
At the University of Victoria
Seemed distinctly unhappy
And insofar as one could delineate the curvatures of your very red face
Looked as though you wished you were in the Vatican library
And had never ventured forth from Rome
And encountered the Canadian city Victoria
And you did not seem at ease with esoteric academics
And their worldly preoccupations
Some of which obtruded on your conception of scholarship
And you found personal interaction very trying
And would take off your glasses and rub your left eye
And when you talked stood very rigid
And did not look at the person to whom you were speaking
And would often put on your coat
And go outside the building
And stand alone
And smoke
But during your formal presentation
Having been introduced as the world's foremost authority on Latin manuscripts
You became animated
And waved your hands
And sometimes shouted
And I was worried you would mention you had been a poor Irish priest
Who by dint of monumental erudition
Now occupied a pre-eminent niche
In the Vatican Library

AMETHYSTE

Deep deep in Canada's waters waters
Floats a French designed
Canadian Amethyste
The right option
For Canada
The guarantor
Of defense-security
In Canada's Atlantic Pacific Arctic
Waters waters

A French designed Canadian Amethyste
Is powerful manoeuvrable extremely silent
A French designed Canadian Amethyste
Is technologically impeccable
Its integrated nuclear system is inherently safe
A French designed Canadian Amethyste
Does not even use weapons grade fuel
And is extremely safe

France will transfer
To Canada
100% technology
Without third country consent

And the economic/technological benefit
To Canada
Is 70% Canadian input
And 75000 person-year jobs
Over 25 years

So take a deep deep objective look
At these facts

And you will want to buy
An ultra-modern state-of-the-art French Amethyste
For Canada

SNA
SNA Canada Inc

THE SAME SENTIENT BEING

Your long young legs
Immortally erotic
Your statuesque body
Soft marble
During that one afternoon
When after long conversation
Mostly about Sam
You deigned to condescend
And though only a vicarious substitute
Your wit soothed me
And I was randy and kinky as in the old days
And my polymorphous bravado was such
That you quoted Sunny
And said no one ever fucked me like that
And I still remember
Your unique and plagiarized cliché
And Sam said there was no student like you
And in all the years I had never seen him as troubled
And was jealous
Because my sundry surgeries
And nerve grafts
And neurofibromas
And general bodily desuetude
Would fall far short of eliciting
A comparable response
And he said your Ph.D. was the best in the history of the Department
And you were already teaching in the Department
And you would certainly have been offered a full-time appointment
And he said he missed you so much he couldn't go to the hospital
And I knew he couldn't see you in the context of what you had been
Because multiple sclerosis
A cruel variant thereof

Has eroded your limbs
And lesioned your mind
And you smile occasionally
And as long as you breathe
You will stay
In a bed
At a hospital
But I remember your final philosophical conversation
When my other friend in that Department
The other full-time professor Dick Sikora
Spoke to you and your husband
Warren Bourgeois
About future generations
And about his paper thereon
And for some reason I was in the vicinity
Albeit in my invariable supine spectator capacity
And Dick said there are no exact temporal divisions
Suppose you are conscious continuously
And can feel acute pain
But gradually lose all your attributes
And can't talk anymore
And can't think worth a damn
And have the mental level
Of an infant
And lose all the rudiments
Of rationality
Then there is no reasonable basis for saying
That creature is so different from you (me)
It wouldn't in any meaningful sense be you (me)
Nor can you reasonably say
That isn't me anymore
That's just an infant

But Dick said I've been groping for
But haven't been able to come up with
The useful term
Or expression
For that sort of thing
And for some reason I proffered a non sequitur
And said it's so hard now to be young
Kids are impressionable and intuitive
And they know America is out of control
And archetypally askew
But all the institutions are against them
And the small elite
Will not relinquish
Their status quo
And then I mentioned the decaying global environment
And the ensuing repercussions re present and future generations
And Dick said that's not what I'm talking about
And you smiled and said
Even if I wasn't the same person
I would still be the same sentient being

GEORGE BUSH, AMERICAN

The broken vase is not the only way
For that which is can only say
For blight has cast its light
And shadows burn the oil fields far away
And day or night is always darkest bright

GOOKS

We won't give money to gooks
We want to destabilize gooks
They want us to help build the country we broke
But they are not contras
They're not Pinochets
They're not our sons of bitches
So we won't give money to gooks
We won't give money
To gooks
We can't do business
With gooks

HAMBURGER HILL

There have been other movies
About Vietnam
But not like this
Because this
Is true
They had names like: Languilli Motown Murphy
They came from places like: Albuquerque Atlanta New York
Young kids
Hard-nosed veterans
Had never been away from home before
Had lived through the unimaginable
An American movie
About Vietnam
War at its worst
Men at their best

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE

In New York
At Madison Square Garden
Art the Hammer Jones
Knocked out
Billy Striped Pants Robinson
In the first few seconds
Of the first round
The two black fighters gave their all
But whereas the Hammer was still a temporary sensation
And received the crowd's noise
And white accolades
From media marionettes
And had upcoming value
Striped pants simply receded
Into more red urine
As well as Parkinson's impending manifestations
And upcoming oblivion
And though hardly Vietnam or Nicaragua etc
Or Chile El Salvador Guatemala etc
Or even Grenada or Panama
And though neither is affiliated with the Fed Reserve
Nor attuned to the Dow Jones Industrial Average
Art the Hammer Jones and Billy Striped Pants Robinson
Are, to some extent, expanding American symbols
And microcosmically appropriate
Because each fresh dose of violence
Each circumstantial punch
Each exploitative jab and vitiating overhand right
Exemplifies the general principle

MOTIF & COUNTERPOINT

Look: they pray to their flag
Listen: they chant the word freedom
We'll all be converted some day
The world will go away

I got hold of some pulchritude
We lay down in the street
I said you are a darling
She said you are so sweet

Blake spoke about palace walls
The blood that from them falls
The house that is white is red
The man still alive is dead

Give me a piece of butter
Give me a piece of bread
I'll butter your arse
I'll feed your pudendum

The blood from that house of white
Will fall on the streets of spite
Will fall on us all some day
The world will go away

I got hold of some pulchritude
We lay down in the store
I said you are a femme fatale
She said you are a whore

I'M SURPRISED THEY STILL HAVEN'T KILLED ME

Doing what they could
They did not break you
Their media
Their police
Their courts
Their lobotomized populace
The depraved and corrupt times in which they flourish
Could not transcend your joie de vivre
Nor vitiate that casual nobility
Because, as Shakespeare pointed out,
'Tis the plague of great ones
Prerogativ'd are they less than the base
'Tis destiny, unshunnable, like death
Hence the spotless room
The clothed body
Under washed sheets
The immaculately made bed
The autopsy that found no trace of drugs
Or foul play
Or suspicious circumstances
Then the other autopsy
That found 150 phenobarbital
And alcohol
And suicide
The same doctor
Not naming
And mentioning only en passant
Two other drugs
Nor attributing significance
To the barely noticeable blood
From the left nostril's
Almost invisible puncture

Then the snow job in People magazine
Worthy of Genoroso Pope Jr.
And the media bandwagon
Re suicide
And the ultimate cop-out and sell-out
One J. Rubin
And your friends
All of whom would prefer to not commit suicide
Collectively surprised
But afraid
And prudential
And your books
Begrudgingly published
But not extant
And your credible adversaries
And things standing thus unknown
The wounded name you left behind you

CEAUSESCU

The billions of dollars
America gave Ceausescu
To build his palace
And fund his secret police
And open Swiss bank accounts
And enslave the populace
Was part of a pattern
Of state sponsored terrorism
Because one finds favour with the Superpower
And receives ample largesse from same
Only insofar as one approximates Hitler
And many countries discover
How exceedingly dangerous
Is any deviation
From that norm
But in Romania
The populace hopes that all will be well
I.e., freedom and democracy
And there is a general hope
That the country can eventually emulate
And be like
The country that gave billions of dollars
To Ceausescu

‘Hitler has only got one ball
Goering has two but both are small
Himmler is somewhat similar
But Goebbels has no balls at all’

George Bush has only got one ball
Dan Quayle has two but both are small
Baker is just a faker
But that US has our balls et al

'My eye has seen the orgy of the launching of the sword
He is searching out the hoardings where the strangers' wealth is stored
He hath loosed his fateful lightnings and with death and woe has scored
His lust is marching on'

The billions of dollars
America gave Ceausescu
To build his palace
And fund his secret police
And open Swiss bank accounts
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Is part of a pattern
Of state sponsored terrorism
Because one finds favour with the Superpower
And receives ample largesse from same
Only insofar as one approximates Hitler
And many countries discover
How exceedingly dangerous
Is any deviation
From that norm
But in Romania
But in Romania
But in Romania
And Bulgaria
And East Germany
And Hungary
And Czechoslovakia
And Poland
The populace hopes that all will be well
I.e., freedom and democracy
And there is a general hope
That the countries can eventually emulate
And be like

The country that gave billions of dollars
To Ceausescu

THE TEXAS/OKLAHOMA CASH PRICE

Live cattle
Moved smartly ahead
But there is still more
Look for December cattle
To trade at least two hundred points above
The Texas/Oklahoma cash price

Resistance for December corn
At 295
Was every bit as potent
As we thought
July came right on cue
And punctured the previous uptrend
Without hesitation

Nearby wheat
Is reluctant
To trade for very long
Below \$3.00
We should be looking for reasons
To buy
Because December wheat is deeply oversold
And is entering
A third week
Of decline
But as of the end
Of July
There are no reasons

November beans
Followed the script
Moving above 630

And then very quickly double topping
At 680
With a subsequent full retracement
Of that advance

During July
September Swiss Francs
Strategically maneuvered
Through minefields
Of technical problems
The overbought nature
Of this market
Foreshadows significant topping action
And assuming follow through performance
The logical target
Is 70

For September Deutschemarks
Performance and attitude
Are similar
Negative divergence on weekly charts
As well as a drop
In average volume
Now signals a spike top
In the making

September Japanese Yen
Were very responsive
In the context of a friendly monthly cycle
A distinct uptrend
Is definitely
In the driver's seat

September British Pound
Easily overcame long standing resistance
At 170
Thereby opening the way
At 190.45
Weekly and monthly charts
Look quite bullish
In their overall pattern
So any near term correction
Will simply precede
The next leg up

The Canadian Dollar
Continues
To vacillate
Numerous excursions
To prices
Below 86
In an effort to generate
A new downtrend
Have met the same fate
As the CD bobs up very quickly
Very easily

After many months
Of 'cat and mouse'
The dollar index
Has finally declined
Below long standing support
At 90
At this point
No favourable weekly or monthly cycles

Are in the offing
So we should let this index seek its level
And respond accordingly
As we go

December gold
Is sneaking up
A third week of recovery
Without radical movement
Has taken gold
Above the ten week moving average

The long term pattern
In silver
Continues to look delectable
Hence the continuing frustration
As pent up energies
For higher prices
Are not released
Where are the bullish divergence buying signals
On underlying monthly stochastics
And moreover
Why are the customary seasonal tendencies
For higher prices
Not on cue

September T-Bonds
Are marking time
Looking for new input
The price action would suggest
A quick jab up
To 96

But the market is already overbought
And 96 cannot objectively be held
If touched

A puzzling, befuddling fly in the ointment
Is Muni-Bonds
Because the close
Above the ten month moving average
And the rally top
Prior to the final low
All beg for higher prices

T-Notes
On the other hand
Are wrestling
With the ten month average
So the entire complex
Is suspect
And needs a little room
I.e., take action
On unmistakable bonafide sell signals

Crude oil
Has surged
Beyond all price barriers
Of consequence
And implications are bullish
Not only re the near term
But also the big picture

Heating oil
Has also come to life

With a vengeance
And now there is incentive
To try the long side
In anticipation
Of even higher prices

Negative divergence sell signals abound
As the Dow falls away
From 3000
And nearby S&P futures
Have no support
Below 350
If September S&P futures
Close August 3
Below the ten week moving average
And confirm an intermediate degree downtrend
Then an already ominous pattern
Encompasses the final days
Of July
And accentuates the image
Of a market
About to tumble

October sugar
Is passé
The support offered
At 12
And the recovery
From same
Was sub par
And did not even approach
The 14 resistance area

Subsequent new lows
Revalidate
The general bearish attitude
Beyond short term horizons
Sugar will not again be receptive to
A sustained investment long position

Pork bellies
Jabbed below the main halfway support
At 4800
As well as the last important reaction low
At 4700
While this is not good news
There is a positive side
To the observation
I.e., they could not stay there
Hence the market's undervalued pronouncement

Lack of significant price movement
During July
Affected live December hogs
But though live hogs
In August
Face a mostly down situation
On the monthly degree
Seasonal pressures are essentially favourable
And in any event
Nearby hogs are still above the ten month moving average

Live man
Almost succumbed
This past September

As a tremendously negative outside month reversal
Penetrated
The thousand year old moving average
Selling pressure is now intense
And there can be little doubt
That another full blown attack
On the extreme lows
Is underway

Live cattle
Moved smartly ahead
But there is still more
Look for December cattle
To trade at least two hundred points above
The Texas/Oklahoma cash price

I HAVE A TUMOUR IN MY BRAIN

I have a tumour in my brain
In my brain
A tiny minute tumour in my brain
In my brain
Sometimes there is a smidgin of a pain
From the tumour in my brain

I have a tumour in my brain
In my brain
A tiny minute tumour in my brain
In my brain
I thought you were a silly rumour
But you really are a tumour
In my brain

The world is a tumour
In the rain
And life is just a rumour
In the small minute tumour
In my brain

When tumours are just rumours
In my brain
And only fall like droplets
On my pain
Then life is just the pain in my brain
The world is only water that will wane

And when that water flows out of my life
And takes that painful smidgin from my brain
Then what was once a tumour
Will only be a rumour
Re a world that falls like droplets on my pain
And is really only water that will wane

*

Goodbye Jordan
How are you
Goodbye Duck and Pig Doll too
It is all goodbye for me
For a few years you will be

Goodbye Lorraine
How are you
Goodbye Dorothy
Connie too
Goodbye Bonnie in your bed
You and I are almost dead

Goodbye Reagan
How are you
Goodbye Nixon
Carter too
Goodbye Bush and Ford and Quayle
Goodbye all that U.S.A.
Goodbye money
Goodbye money
Goodbye Fed Reserve
Goodbye ruling elite
It is all goodbye for me
For a few years you will be

Goodbye earth
Goodbye world
I hope that U.S. lets you be
But it's all goodbye for me

Goodbye tumour in my brain
Goodbye all that funny pain
Goodbye sunshine, also rain
Goodbye tears and jokes and fame
Goodbye friendship
How are you
Goodbye Lorraine
I love you
Goodbye tumour
How are you
Goodbye tumour-rumour
In my brain

SALLY

My mother said he went up one side of her and down the other
But his wife knew he philandered
And always got him back

Well, why would she want him back
If I went up one side of you
And down the other
Then even if my wife knew
She wouldn't get me back

My mother said he was a very elaborate womanizer
His sine qua non was the old goat

Well, *pace* his personal pyrotechnics
Or philoprogenitive prowess
He's not a significant artist
Though he had an academic sinecure
And fed from the Canada Council trough
And was liked by the Canadian Literary Establishment
Possibly because he's not much of a poet
And, also, he was so mean to Lowry
They had adjacent cottages at Galiano
Proximity to the drunk artist
Put his talent in perspective
And externalized the bullying anger
Especially when Malcom Lowry
Was incapacitated
Which is his own situation now
Now that he's 85
And living at a nursing home in a partial coma

It's strange to think that he's lying there
Hoping someone will visit him

I remember them sitting together in the little red sports car
He used to have
My sister and I were jammed in the back seat
They were always tooling around
(Going places)
And he seemed to be always tooting the horn
My mother said he was so intense and emotional
When he read poetry
He would walk around the room
And sometimes stand on a chair
And shout

THE GUY BY THE DOOR

The guy by the door looked, well, seedy. I thought he had wandered in off the street and wasn't quite sure where he was. He was kind of half inside the long, white room, looking disdainfully at the crowd milling around the bar. But a few minutes later, he was behind the podium, reading excerpts of his poetry from long folded sheets pulled out from under his jacket. His name was Alan Bell.

*

I am compelled to reply to your editorial in the March 9-15 issue of *Monday* in which your first two paragraphs are a description of Allen Bell. Why "seedy"? Was he unkempt? unshaven? unwashed? wearing dirty clothes? Speaking as a person who lives with him, I can assure you that the answer to those questions is no.

So what caused you to think him seedy? Perhaps it was the occluder he wears on his glasses to cover the now-surgically-closed right eye, and the fact that the right side of his face is paralyzed. Or the scar on his neck, the result of a recent nerve graft. Or the longer scar along the back of his head and neck, caused by the original 11 1/2-hour surgery to remove a brain tumour. Perhaps you spoke to him and he didn't hear you properly because he is now completely deaf in his right ear.

The true miracle, appreciated by some of those present, was that Allen Bell was able to be there at all. To be able, for the first time since his hospitalization, to read his poems again was a personal triumph.

And then, after doing him such an injustice in your description, not one word about his wonderful poems. Amazing.

P. S. You might at least have spelled his name correctly.

*

He said I was the guy by the door
He said I looked seedy
And had wandered in off the street
And wasn't quite sure where I was
But the journalist knew where I was
He said 'kind of' inside the long white room
Looking disdainfully
But a few minutes later
Behind the podium
Reading poetry
From long folded sheets
From under my jacket
He said my name was Alan Bell

He said the guy by the door
He said seedy
I wandered in
I wasn't quite sure
But he knew
He said the long room
He said looking disdainfully
But later
Long folded sheets
He said Alan Bell

He said the guy
Looked, well, seedy
And wandered in
And wasn't sure
Inside the long and white room
But behind

Reading
From folded sheets
Poetry
My name was Alan Bell

Guy
Wandered
Room
Poetry
Alan

JORDAN

Dad would you like to do a baseball game

No

Only one game Dad

Only one

Only one game

Dad would you like to play one baseball game just for a minute

Okay

* * *

I want to get something soft

I want to get Ernie or Duck

And then you can get me

* * *

“Jordan here’s a Loony for you.”

No thank you Grandpa

Maybe some other day

“Some other day?”

I’m going to have to teach you about money.

You’ll have to learn.

Because money is in your blood.”

ARTHUR BELL (1907 – 1993)

All the years are over
They are gone

BUM

Lorraine says I still have the bum of a young man
She says it's not droopy and saggy and awful
And I vigorously acknowledge the compliment
Though her affectionately intimate corporeal allusion
Induces penial trepidation
Stains my mortality
And accentuates all that droopiness sagginess awfulness
The forthcoming
Regardless of still

THE QUEEN

What do you think the queen does
What do you think the queen does when she gets up for breakfast
Well she makes grapefruit
She does so many things
I have this vision
Well I'm going over to Thriftys to get that coffee while it's still on sale
Then I have to watch my Coronation Street
Was that a nice treat
I won't have anything sweet now for a long long time
So it served its purpose

QUERY

Why did Aaronshen go back to England?

It wouldn't have mattered.

They would have got him in France, you think?

Oh sure. Anywhere.

If he talked at the conference he could have persuaded.

Oh no. It wouldn't have mattered.

Maybe a cosmetic difference.

Oh no. But nothing was left to chance.

Certainly not a life. Not even that life.

Especially not that life.

So they murdered Aaronshen and went in the direction of Ben Gurion
Meir Rabin Perez Sharon etc.

Oh sure.

FR. LEONARD BOYLE

You drink too much
And smoke too much
And at The Book In The Middle Ages conference
At the University of Victoria
Seemed distinctly unhappy
And insofar as one could delineate the curvatures of your very red face
Looked as though you wished you were in the Vatican library
And had never ventured forth from Rome
And encountered the Canadian city Victoria
And you did not seem at ease with esoteric academics
And their worldly preoccupations
Some of which obtruded on your conception of scholarship
And you found personal interaction very trying
And would take off your glasses and rub your left eye
And when you talked stood very rigid
And did not look at the person to whom you were speaking
And would often put on your coat
And go outside the building
And stand alone
And smoke
But during your formal presentation
Having been introduced as the world's foremost authority on Latin manuscripts
You became animated
And waved your hands
And sometimes shouted
And I was worried you would mention you had been a poor Irish priest
Who by dint of monumental erudition
Now occupied a pre-eminent niche
In the Vatican Library
And you said Maas and West
Don't understand what a text is
And academics per se

Don't understand what a text is
The system compels one to publish
And rush into print
And keep one's job
And get perks
So modern academics lose their sense of personal proportion
Because they are just scribe-scholars
And are no more than that
And if they think otherwise
And are eager to rewrite
And tamper
Then modern scribe-scholars fall into traps more horrendous
Than those for which they temerarily crucify
Medieval scribe-scholars
And you took off your glasses
And there was a miniscule pause
The codices carry the text you said
The codices are the tradition of the text
One has to start with the codices
And respect the codices
But the modern scribe-scholar wants to be an editor
And establish an authoritative text
And experience the heady, rapturous moments
Of coniecti
And scripsi
And again you took off your glasses
And rubbed your eye
These, indeed, are moments to be savoured
But one reaches them from so many miles away
From bindings and flyleaves and pastedowns
And foliations and gatherings
And marginal or interlinear notes

And rubrics and decorations and gibbets and doodles
The second or third folio incipits
The size of the frame of writing
The presence of such details as fillers
The make-up of quires and the layout of pages
Then transcribing one of the codices
Faithfully completely slavishly
Every cancellation annotation gap erasure correction inversion misspelling homoioteleuton
So that one has a first witness
A scrupulously transcribed
But utterly unedited text
Of the chosen first witness
And this is a Recension text
Because the codices can now be opened up
And laid on the Recensio sheets
And all the myriad variations
Whether textual or physical
From codex to codex
Can be examined
Every smudge can be touched and handled
I am not talking about what is right or what is wrong
I am talking about the simple physical fact
That two or more codices may have some feature or features in common
That others do not have
And what is shared by all the witnesses
From pressmark to doodle
To change of ink to change of hand to word separation
To glosses to alternative readings
Can be a variation
So codicology is not ueberlieferungsgeschichte
Which Housman called a longer and nobler name than fudge
Call codicology Handschriftenkunde

Or L'Archeologie du livre
Or what you will --
The text established from the codices
Is the text common to all the codices
And with the help of common variations
The likely vulgar text
And now
Only now
After so laborious a prolegomenon
Can we even begin to contemplate textual criticism
And now there is such intense loneliness
You are alone as no one in the world has ever been alone
With your own unique codicological text
That you have carried
And conceived
And must now nourish
And bring to fruition
And so one painstakingly encounters the authoritative text
Which is simply the text carried by the codices
And reported faithfully
By the modern scribe-scholar
But you said modern scribe-scholars are seldom faithful
But are often promiscuous
And the audience laughed
And you waved your hands
And shouted
If you are a medieval scribe-scholar then what you do is dubbed 'contamination' you said
But the modern scribe-scholar's modus operandi is termed 'scholarship'
But if 'contamination' is the unwarranted influence
Of one textual tradition
On another
Then the most pernicious form of 'contamination' is the printed text

A case in point is an autobiographical passage in Rashdall's edition of Bacon
Fratris Rogerii Bacon Compendium Studii Theologiae
Which is in print
And therefore sacrosanct
Ergo accepted by scholars
But which is a source of confusion
Because of the punctuation
Which is at variance with the syntax of the passage
And is the editor's not Bacon's
Hence the modern equivalent of what is decried as 'contamination'
In a medieval setting
Another editor
An apostle of computerized editions
Dismisses as inadequate a previous edition
But in a twinkle
Informs us that *his* edition
Will be a recording
Of the earlier edition
On magnetic tape
So as to facilitate
The cleansing of errors
My friends this is the cart in front of the horse
Do not presume we live in a magical century
Where there is no moral time
And everything is nicely parcelled
And we have a ready-made text
We have to deal with texts that are in no way fixed or static
But vary
From manuscript to manuscript
And however many umpteen editions
There is still the inescapable fact of the codices
One should not say

As a recent editor so ungraciously said
 That the one extant codex of a text
 Was “slovenly”
 The precise words were “slovenly copy”
 This is rather ungracious
 For without that unique slovenly copy
 There can only be textual oblivion
 And then you gave examples of mistake after mistake
 (All of which you rectified)
 In text after text
 And you talked about Lucilius being off his food
 And Seneca writing to him in his usual moralistic way
 And chiding him for being miserable and out of sorts
 Vesicae te dolor inquietavit
 Epistulae venerunt parum dulces
 Detrimenta continua – propius accedam
 De capite timuisti
 The meaning you said is this:
 A pain in your bladder bothered you
 Letters came from you that were hardly pleasant
 Everything went wrong
 Let me put it bluntly
 You began to fear for your life
 Or as translated by R.M. Grummere in the Loeb Classics
 -- Seneca. Ad Lucilium Epistulae morales --
 “It was disease of the bladder that made you apprehensive;
 downcast letters came from you;
 you were continually getting worse;
 I will touch the truth more closely and say that you feared for your life.”
 But you pointed out that Erasmus
 And others after him
 Preferred epulae to epistulae

And you said downcast letters does seem out of place
And Erasmus' reading is borne out
By an erasure and a correction
In the 12th century codex
Ms. Pal. 869 fol. 44
Part of epistulae is smudged
To make way for epulae
And moreover epulae is written clearly in the margin
The text now reads:
Vesicae te dolor inquietavit
Epulae venerunt parum dulces
Detrimenta continua – propius accedam
De capite timuisti
Seneca in the corrected text
Is listing the complaints of Lucilius
And goes from bad to worse in ascending order:
A pain in your bladder bothered you
Eating became less of a pleasure
Everything went wrong –
To put it bluntly
You began to feel you were going off your head
Because of the pain in his bladder
Lucilius has gone off his head
Not to speak of his food
This physical fact by itself
Inclines me to epulae rather than epistulae
To insist on the epistulae reading in the Bamberg Ms.
And other Mss.
Is to disrupt the train of disaster
And ignore Seneca's continuation:
A long life includes all these troubles
Did you not know

When you prayed for a long life
That this is what you prayed for
And you looked at the audience
And your stentorian voice softened
And your final words were pianissimo
But I know you have to make your living
Just like me
But do not be ungracious
And despise and discard
The flawed, ugly codices
Because you are in awe of
The stark, imperative text

A TEENY TINY BALL

Mom I've been thinking about something that is amazing and really incredible Mom
What if everything there was
All the planets and space
Everything
Was rolled up into a teeny tiny ball
Then the teeny tiny ball would still have to be somewhere
But where would it be
It couldn't be in space
Because space was rolled up into a teeny tiny ball
So where would everything be
Isn't that amazing Mom
I've been thinking about it
And it's really hard to think about it
And Mom there's one more thing I've been thinking about
Space goes on forever
That is amazing
Because how can it go on forever
Mom there has to be a word for it
What is the word for it when space goes on forever
Infinite.
Infinite
Yes.
Does that mean when it has no end and no walls and no edges
Yes.
So space is a long line that goes on forever
So it is an infinite line
The thing is Mom our house has walls and I can see where the walls end
And the city has an end too because there aren't any houses
And planets have an end because they are only as big as they are
We can't see all of it because it is too big for us to see
So planets have an end
Planets are not infinite

But space is infinite and that's amazing Mom
But space isn't alive
But we are Mom

THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER

The National Enquirer
Is just a joke
That everyone reads
But no one takes seriously

The National Enquirer
Is just a tabloid
That appears in all supermarkets
And grocery stores

The publisher
Generoso Pope Jr.
Is just a legendary CIA expert
Re psychological warfare

And everyone is so amused at the antics of the National Enquirer
That no one asks who owns the National Enquirer
And who funds the National Enquirer
More precisely, why does the National Enquirer have an unlimited bankroll
I.e., so much money

And throughout North America
And beyond North America
The National Enquirer's money
Buys news

And Lynne Amont was paid money for photographs
And a politician
Who may have been a presidential shoo-in
Was got
And several newspapers said he was six inches away from the White House
Then People magazine paid her an additional one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars

And finished the job
And the National Enquirer packs a lot of devastating political clout
Because everyone can be got
But this is not talked about
Because the National Enquirer is just a tabloid
Committed to gossip
I.e., not a serious newspaper
And all the other tabloids and magazines combined
Do not have the National Enquirer's budget
For 'seed money'

And when a celebrated Hollywood actress
And subsequent princess
Was killed in Monaco
The National Enquirer chartered a Concorde
So that employees
Could fly
To Monaco
Because the National Enquirer
And to a less elaborate extent other newspapers and magazines
Fly employees
To sites

And one employee
Donald McLachlan
Now associate editor of a so-called competitor
Said he had been a man of the media for twenty-five years
And had foreign corresponded for the London Daily Mail
From Europe
And the Middle East
And the USA
And had survived combat zones

Including Lebanon

And Donald McLachlan said the ten years he was employed by the National Enquirer were the most satisfying

And Donald McLachlan said his favourite war stories are not from Beirut

But from Hollywood

And his biggest scoop involved a television celebrity

Suzanne Somers

One of whose pre-fame boyfriends knew something that had to be good for a few dollars

And Donald McLachlan wrote the National Enquirer's story

And in every crevice of every bedroom and bathroom

And in every cupboard of every kitchen

The voice of the National Enquirer

Is audible

And the National Enquirer self-promotes copiously

And the National Enquirer pays for lavish television advertisements

And many people in North America who watch television

Know about the National Enquirer

And the other tabloids

Position themselves in the National Enquirer's gargantuan slipstream

And think they're competitors

And the National Enquirer foots the bill

And the National Enquirer's pioneering move into supermarkets

Forever changed the game

And exposed the Weltanschauung of the National Enquirer

To a continent of shoppers

And Generoso Pope Jr. showed the other publications

How to redesign

So as to appeal to food corporations

And their female customers

And even the so-called competitors speak well of him

And one owner of several tabloids
That are not in the same ball park with the National Enquirer
“In terms of sales”
Says his papers earn revenue in excess of \$100 million per year
And reach 12 million people per week
“Which is a fairly large percentage of the American population”

And Generoso Pope Jr. said
We want to maximize sales
And Generoso Pope Jr. said
The amount sold
Doesn't necessarily reflect on one's profit
And whether other tabloids or newspapers or magazines are more profitable
Is ultimately immaterial
So long as the National Enquirer
Is bigger
And better known
And the emulated model
And Generoso Pope Jr.'s employer
Wants to sell substantial numbers of copies
And Generoso Pope Jr. said
That's been the main thrust
In our organization

And the National Enquirer
Adorns the propaganda system
And profit or loss
Is n'importe

And the National Enquirer ran a six page spread
Re Colonel Oliver North

And when America invaded and decimated the Southeast Asian country
Vietnam
And committed 500,000 soldiers
Oliver North was there
And during the Superpower's invasion and conquest of the little Caribbean island
Grenada
Oliver North was there
And Oliver North did yeoman work
Re the Central American country
Nicaragua
And orchestrated logistical support
I.e., money and weapons
For Somoza's National Guard
Who are now called contras
I.e., freedom fighters and revolutionaries
So as to enable them to murder torture sabotage et cetera
I.e., destabilize that country
And Oliver North was complimented by the Secretary of State
George Schultz
And the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency
William Casey
And the National-Security Advisor
John Poindexter
And the President of the United States of America
Ronald Reagan
And the National Enquirer told Americans
That all America loved Colonel Oliver North
Because he exemplified guts, grit, and patriotism
And was a genuine American cowboy and hero
And Oliver North said if the President of the United States tells this soldier to go
into a corner and stand on his head
Then this soldier will unhesitatingly endeavour to do so

And the corporate elite
In papers throughout North America
From Wall Street Journal
To Washington Post
Praised their American hero
And presidents of powerful companies
Said they would be proud to make Oliver North an executive
And Oliver North said whatever the President of the United States tells this soldier to do he will do
And in every grocery store
And supermarket
The values of the National Enquirer
Are inculcated

And Generoso Pope Jr. said
The National Enquirer is not the New York Times
And Generoso Pope Jr. said
The National Enquirer is more massively read than the New York Times
Because we are a more common denominator publication
And Generoso Pope Jr. said
Each publication targets a different area of the population

And Generoso Pope Jr. is a hands-on publisher
And rewrites headlines
And directs investigative projects
And inserts exclamation marks
And like all servants of the propaganda system who profit from same
Generoso Pope Jr. thinks he is a legendary et cetera
But in actuality
He is the same as a cub reporter
Or the editor
Of the New York Times

And there in the supermarket
Surrounded by groceries
And near magazines such as Newsweek and Time
And the clones and the copycats
Who think they're competitors
And a variant thereof
The magazine People
The National Enquirer
From its rack by the cash register
Is picked up by customers
Who will devour at leisure

But who owns the National Enquirer
Or what is the raison d'être of the National Enquirer
I.e., who does it serve
Not my fellow North Americans
Most emphatically not
You and I

But who is submissive
Or who does it help keep submissive
I.e., who does it service
You and I my fellow North Americans
You and I

CONVERSATION

Is it true that you will die, Sir
Is it really not a lie, Sir
Is it true that you will die, Sir
It must surely be a lie, Sir
What a world you are imbibing
What a life you are conniving

All the money
All the power
All the honey
All the flour

Is it really not a lie, Sir
That the world you will survive, Sir
It must surely be a lie, Sir
That this world will one day die, Sir

I deplore what you do mean, Sir
Is it true that you are green, Sir
Do you think that I will die, Sir
Do you know I will survive, Sir

All the money
All the power
All the honey
All the flour

It is calumny compounded
It is anthromorphic libel
That the rabble gabble babble
So unseemly per survival
That the world is O so hounded
By duress so much too sounded

Does your iterance now pall, Sir
Have you lost that mode of thought, Sir
Are the words no longer there, Sir
Do the sentences not bear, Sir

All the money
All the power
All the honey
All the flour

Does the grammar not control, Sir
Does the syntax not suffice, Sir
Anacoluthon will not die, Sir
And this world you will survive, Sir

I deplore what you do mean, Sir
Do you think I swim in beer, Sir
And am not worth Chaucer's bene, Sir
I have only three young girls, Sir
And seldom pee in porridge
And am not averse to marriage
And always do my utmost
To worship every compost
And with good help and gods braces
I will never win the races

And the money
And the power
And the honey
And the flour

I will gamble far asunder
So that left is nothing there, Sir
And the world will I survive, Sir
And never ever die, Sir

PUPPET POEM

i

My puppet
flowing yellow
hangs in
the window
and laughs
and dances
when he sees
my strings.

My puppet
flowing yellow
hangs in
the window
and laughs
when he sees
my strings.

Dancing yellow
puppet hangs
from red
strings.

Dignified he
waits among
plants & pictures
for someone
to give him
life.

Pretty puppet
knows you
intimately.

Puppet wants my strings
He tries to bribe
Your blood is red
It makes you dead
It keeps you cold
Give me red strings
And breathe
Here is my flowing yellow
Your blood will ebb
Here are sticks and bones
Give me red strings
Puppet my strings my strings
Puppet would dangle
Bleed without blood
Sing without song
Move without motion
Feet wave
Move
Dangle
Puppet breathe
Yellow flowing warm
In the window

iii

Puppet plays
With knives
Sometimes he stabs
He thinks
My blood
Is real

Puppet gave me tea
He bruised
My lips
He thought
My flesh
Was red

Puppet knows me
Intimately
Puppet saw sartorial snowflakes
Puppet saw frenetic armoured suits
Puppet saw my suit of armoured truck
Under earth
Pastel lights
Blinking
Puppet saw my intimate missiles
Thrust
They malfunctioned I said
It will he said
You do he said
You are he said
Intimately
He knows me
Intimately

MA VIE VA S'ACHEVER.'

Ma Vie Va S'achever.' [1999 - 2003]

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A PHOTOGRAPH

At the Nellie McClung library
In Victoria
A photograph fell out of my son's Star Trek book
An archetypal Kodak moment
A man and woman
The man looking down
His arm around her waist
The woman apparently oblivious
Displaying herself
Dressed for different weather
Seeing the staring camera
Then later at the Rijks
In Amsterdam
I saw the same photograph
The same bent head
The great golden arm encircling a woman's waist
Her staring out
And the adjacent self-portrait
The light shining on his painted turban
The all-encompassing quizzical expression

WHITEHORSE

During the press launch
For the new BMW F650GS
My fellow journalists and I were ensconced at a dude ranch
Near Tucson, Arizona
BMW, of course, footing the bill
And providing the largesse
But after checking into my tastefully appointed room
I was more than a little nonplussed
When I discovered to my incredulity and even horror
That there was a black hole so to speak
An overwhelming void
I.e., the sacrosanct television set was not extant
Nothing to while away the evening hours
But fortunately one of the journalists lent me a book
Che Guevara's Motorcycle Diaries
(Whitehorse Press, \$22.95)
That's right
The Latin American revolutionary
Fidel Castro's friend
Owned a motorcycle [1950 - 1951]
A Norton 500 single called Il Poderosa
("The powerful one")
And in companionship with one of his buddies
Rode same on a booze-soaked trip through South America

Guevara and his besotted pal
Fell off Il Poderosa on a regular basis
Which makes for entertaining reading
Because though most of us think that Che Guevara was the ultimate leftist type
A humourless wild-eyed fanatic
Bent on destroying everyone who made more money than him
The fact is

He came from a very wealthy family
And he also put himself through medical school
And throughout the book he refers to matei
A strong alcoholic beverage that appears to be the Latin American equivalent of Labatt Blue
So he was probably a party guy as well

My favourite episode
Involves Guevara waking up in the middle of the night with diarrhea
And as there is no time re the bathroom
He does his business out the window
And discovers
In the cold light of dawn
That he has soiled his host's apricot crop
Which was drying on the roof below
Interestingly, during the entire trip, Guevara does not stay at a single fancy hotel
But relies entirely on the compassion and hospitality of complete strangers

Like his goofy revolution so to speak
Il Poderosa broke down fairly regularly
And eventually had to be abandoned
Because Guevara loaded everything on Il Poderosa but the kitchen sink
So the bike cracked its engine case every hundred miles or so
And because of all the weight on its back end
Was often unmanageable

In any event
Given the aforementioned television situation
I.e., the paucity of same
I suppose I should be grateful that Guevara wrote about his adventures
Before the Bolivian army finally dealt with him
Would that the Americans had done likewise with his friend and fellow-crackpot revolutionary
Fidel Castro

Because even though he does rave and rant
And foam at the mouth to some extent
About land distribution
The oppressed masses
Capitalism
He doesn't overdo it
And except for these lapses
Which only occur towards the end
The book really passes the time
And actually
Is a good read
But more importantly
I got in touch with Whitehorse
And they sent me one heck of a catalogue
Chock full of accessories
Including neckties
And mapping software for GPS systems
And goggles
And waterproof luggage
And chocolate motorcycles and biker teddy bears
And, of course, tools
Of which my favourite is the Boa-Constrictor
A clamping tool for turning fork tubes
And/or removing recalcitrant oil filters
And the catalogue is chock-a-block with books
— Every conceivable aspect of two-wheeled adventure —
Including legendary legless Harley rider Dave Barr's *Riding The Edge* and *Riding The Ice*
And Ted Simon's *Jupiter's Travels*
And marathon rider Ron Ayre's books about long-distance riding
And Robert E. Fulton's *One Man Caravan*
Which was written in 1937
And details his around-the-globe tour

On a Douglas twin
And Rider magazine contributor Clement Salvatori's various touring books
And numerous tomes about keeping your bike in tune
And repair manuals
And specialty books on rebuilding Indians and other out of production models
And cartoon character Ogr's adventures
And Biker Billy's biker cookbook
And the New York Guggenheim Museum's The Art Of The Motorcycle
And even a book called Motorcycle Sex
And a book by Clarissa Wright and Jennifer Paterson
The two fat ladies of Triumph sidecar and cooking fame
One of whom, the chain-smoking Jennifer, died recently
And, needless to say, an impressive selection of videos:
The Wild One, Easy Rider, Barb Wire, On Any Sunday, Mask, etc
As well as the laughingly bad bikesploitation flicks of the 60's and 70's
(Which deliver memorable guffaws):
Angels From Hell, Dragstrip Riot, Chrome And Hot Leather, Run Angel Run, etc
Full of loopy beatniks and pathological one-percenters
And biker chick flicks like Hell's Belles
And my personal favourite Chopper Chicks In Zombie Town:
'You women are sluts; try and act like it!'
Arguably the best line in a movie
Biker or otherwise
So for more information
Call Whitehorse toll free
1-800-5311133

GRANDFATHER WAS A NICE PIOUS PERSON

Grandfather was a nice pious person
He was satisfied with his lot
He always thanked God in his prayers
Grandma was of a different nature
She made up her mind
She persuaded
She said sell
There is no future
Move to the city
Elisavetgrad
A large industrial city
More opportunities than the little village
They lived before

Grandfather besides business liked Cantors
And being a religious person
Every Friday and Saturday he went to the synagogue
A large Jewish population
So a few synagogues
So he spent his time in different synagogues
Listening to Cantors
Sometimes he would come home from the synagogue later than 2 o'clock
Grandma did not like
But Grandpa liked to hear different Cantors
And so they were happy
And always got along

By the way
Grandpa was in the Leather Business here too
Only on a larger scale

When my Grandparents moved
From Smilo to Elisavetgrad
Her brother also moved
So after settling in the city
Her brother
His name was Warshawski
Looked for a job
Later I will talk about Uncle Warshawski

Now I will tell about
The life of my Parents
Besides a good Son-in-Law
He was an outstanding Husband
There was nothing too good for her
Dad used to bring her the best clothes
From Warsaw
And Lodz
At that time
Poland was the centre
Of good clothes
Mother never knew hardships
Dad glorified Mother
Grandma told my Mother
Your husband Viktor is a big spender
He spends mostly on you
Also a kind man
Also an intelligent man
And well liked
In our city

Dad's Clientele consisted
Of well to do people
Among his customers
Officers business people farmers etc
Dad sure had a nice established Ladies Wear
Customers had confidence in him

From school I used to come
To Dad's Business
I used to have a good time
I liked ice cream candies pastry
Dad's clerks used to treat me

At night
When the business was closed
I never walked home with Dad
He would hire a Horse & Buggy

I realize now I spent Money
My Dad always gave me Money to save
But I had a weakness for Pigeons
And I spent Money
Those days to have Pigeons
Was only for well to do
But my Dad always wanted that I should have Pigeons
And I always had a nice dog

When I look at it now for desires
I am wondering how I was so free
To spend Money
At the time when poverty was so hard for people
I did not experience hardships
I always had Pigeons and a dog
And also a pony

In our city there were only 4 Jewish families
That their children had Ponies
And I was one
What a Dear father I had
God Bless his Memory
I never forget this
What a kind man, considerate man, and Gentleman

As a young boy
Dad worked in Ladies Wear
In Odessa
In that store
Only the Wealthy were buying
And to work in that store
Was a great Honour
But Dad made the Grade

After working in Odessa for 3 years
Dad decided to move
To Elisavetgrad
He decided he would start his own Business

Dad knew the city
He knew the potential
He had no doubt
An opportunity would arrive

Please note
Dad was still a single man
He was sitting one evening with friends in a Restaurant
Just kibbitzing
2 seats down from where Dad was sitting with his friends
Was an Officer
With a Lady Friend
Having a Drink

And this Lady says to her Boyfriend Officer
She enjoys listening to Dad discussing
And who wouldn't
And they get very friendly
I remember the name of the officer was Zaguta
And he rented to Dad a store in the best Part of the City

Dad's relatives did not believe
That this wealthy officer
Should rent a fancy Store
To Dad
But he did

In the meantime Dad was courting my Mother
And he was outstanding
He treated Mother royally
Grandma used to say that Dad was a great spender
He always buys something for Mother
Dad admired Mother
There was something to admire in Mother
In her younger days she was a beauty
Later on
As time went on
Mother was More beautiful

Time was going
Dad's business was good
I did not take a great interest in Business
Because I was too young
But I liked to go to Dad's Store
Because I liked ice cream

Outside of that
Besides the School
I had to have my Jewish Lesson
For which a Special Jewish teacher used to come to the House
To teach me
But even now I laugh
Because there always was a Stray Pigeon
Landed among my own
And it was important that I should have the Pigeon promenade
With my own
And gradually have the Pigeon
In the Cage
Poor Rabbi had to wait until I caught the Pigeon
He yelled
But it was of no Avail
It did not matter to me that the lesson was 2 Rubles
And the Pigeon only 50 kopecks

Pigeons were very popular
It just shows how time changes attitudes
There was a time for Pigeons, a Pony, and other forms of entertainment
And so life was going
I was getting older
And had to go to School
And from there go to a Higher School

Life was good under the Czar
For the Higher Class of Jews
One of these was Uncle Warshawski
I will say more about Uncle Warshawski
Beside being a good looking person
He was an outstanding Salesman
And the owner Mr. Dashewsky
Had so much confidence in him that he became the General Manager
And that was a big Business
Well to do people bought there
Among his Customers were sons of Wealthy Parents
And the fellows always needed Money
So Uncle used to lend them Money
And these fellows had to sign a Promissory Note
And they could not default because to go to Royal College the Parents Paid
Like a clock
For instance for a Loan of 300^{oo} Rubles
They would sign for 500^{oo}
What did they care
The Parents had to pay
He was getting wealthier and wealthier
People used to tell Grandmother that her brother was a Millionaire
He owned Blocks, real estate, and he was always getting richer
But he was not extravagant
A very Conservative person
With a lot of Investments
My Grandmother used to say given the circumstances I could have been
A Warshawski

As I mentioned Life was not bad
But then the Czar and his corrupt Govt lost the war to Germany
And different winds started to Blow
Russia was on the side of England + France
And they fought against the German Kaiser and Austria
Russia was ill-prepared
And was no Match for Germany
Russia had a lot of Manpower
But had poor ammunition
To withstand the onslaught
The Monarchy was Corrupt and Rotten
The Aristocracy said Russia would not lose the War
The Front Casualties ran into 100 of Thousands
The Army was defeated
Germany succeeded in forcing Russia to sue for Peace
It got so bad
That the officers lost control
And the Army instead of fighting the Germans
Was deserting the Front
And was anxious to go home
The King Nicholas had to abdicate the throne + the power
And so the “Duma”
Which means Parliament
Chose a Democrat
His name was “Kerensky”
With the majority of the Duma voting to carry on the war
Till the victorious finish
This was suicidal
Because the Russian army had no equipment
The Russian army capitulated
The Army or whatever was left of the Army
Was moving home

Abandoning the Front
Moving toward Petrograd
The Capital of Czarist Russia
Parties were springing up
And of course each one was trying to sway the soldiers towards their ideas
At that time the leading Revolutionary was Lenin
And since the Germans wanted to detach Russia
So they could attack the Allies
The Germans offered to make Peace
And recognize Lenin
Who considered to fight the war
On the side of the Allies
Was useless
And since the Germans offered a separate Peace
It was decided to make a separate Peace
With the Germans
Because Kerensky's slogan to carry on the war
With the Allies
"On to Victory"
Was meaningless
And an empty gesture
In this war
Russia Bled to death
So the Russian Army came home
Cold hungry defeated

Naturally the war created a lot of friction
Also a lot of demands
Such as confiscate the Land
And distribute it equally
Nationalize the Industry
Make the country Democratic

It was not easy
Because Russia had a Wealthy Class
People who were used to power
To give it up was a Calamity
For the Wealthy Class
That they could not tolerate
There were also a lot of political parties
But among the Russian parties only 2 were beginning to appear
On the horizon
With any significance
“Menshevics + Bolshevics”
These two parties had interesting leaders
To name a few:
Lenin Trotsky Zinoviev Stalin
And a few others
Of lesser importance
Lenin was a good organizer
Trotsky a good speaker
And minister of Defence
He could speak for hours
In front of a Mob
And have an effect on the masses
But it was not easy to be a famous leader
Among the leaders there was not unanimity
There was also a reactionary element
That did not want to lose power
Especially the Wealthy class to the masses
Russia is a vast country
And the reactionary element
That still believed they could put the Czar Back
On his throne
And keep their wealth

Had remnants of the Russian Army
Some of the Generals
That figured that by forming Armies
They could gain their lost power
Organized
And were putting obstacles
In the path of the masses
This is what the wealthy ruling class wanted
The Generals which were a threat to the Soviet Government
With the assistance of course of England + France
Were: General Kolchak
 Attacking towards Petrograd
 General Devikin
 Attacking towards the city of Kharkov
And many other bandits
Which called themselves Generals
And with so many large wars and little wars
It was not so pleasant to live
Especially when you remember how
Life was not bad
Not very long ago

The Fight for Power
Among different Factions
Was gradually destroying making a living
Later it was no living at all
Private business was Past
There was nothing to buy
And no money
I remember Dad
Being thrown out of his business
By Bolsheviks

I said Dad what are they doing
I remember I cried
I am sorry I remember Grandfather
When he died from hunger
A nice religious man
Had his own Property
Had four or five houses for Rent
I also remember Grandmother that died from hunger
Because you could not buy food
I remember not because I was old
But because I had a good kop
What sustained us from total famine
Was our Dad
Dad walked to Moscow
Bought a little piece Goods
Brought back on his back to Elisavetgrad
Exchanged with a farmer for flour
Besides I have to mention something about myself
I always liked to save something
Money was not Secondary to me
Though I was young
During the famine people were dying in the streets
For lack of food
For 100 lbs of flour
Farmers got the best furniture
What could a person do
When there was nothing to eat
Nobody cared for anything
Except to save oneself from famine
I had Russian Gold (saved)
And for a 10 Ruble Gold
We had enough flour

And many other things
To sustain us
For wood to keep us warm
I tore off planks
And pieces of Lumber
From the Old Building
In our yard
Which was abandoned by the people that died
And so we survived
We did not starve
Because of my Dad and my foresight
The family did not die from starvation

For 2 or 3 years
The famine lasted
And wiped out millions
And to a person like me
That was used to a good Life
This was hell
But there was no alternative
Until gradually the Govt established Soup Kitchens
And I ate in one for quite a while
And then things began to show more improvement very slow
The improvement consisted that a person could buy a pound of bread
Instead of depending on Soup Kitchens
Then the Govt gradually began to encourage private business
Which was called N.E.P. in its abbreviated form
The word Nep meant New Economic Policy
Although Dad was back in Business
In order to make a living
There were shortages
And Business had no taste

And was an ordeal

We also had a very hard forty days
Because the divisional railroad Point was "Znamenka"
And from this divisional Point
The railroads were branching out
Towards the cities of Charcov, Kremenchug, Poltara etc
And the road from Znamenka
Was also our city Elisavetgrad
Which the Germans tried to capture on the road to Odessa
Because our city was a very important strategic city on the way to Odessa
And for forty days the city was attacked
And they could not break the defenses
Because other Russian Armies attacked Znamenka
So as to relieve the pressure on our City
So the German Armies were defeated
And the Soviet Govt started to help its own population
And though there wasn't any prosperity
At least your life was saved
And also Dad tried hard
But it was not easy when most of the City was destroyed
And we also had to move out from the House we owned
And instead of owners we had to rent a House to live in

Mother always talked about her only sister
In Canada
And the way life was
They decided to emigrate
To Canada
Dad had to go to Odessa
Which was the Central Point of the Province
And had to go to Odessa 4 times

Because everytime something else had to be signed
And I will still maintain
As long as I live
That except for Dad's ability and energy
I can safely say
That nothing would have been left of us
And we would have perished with the rest of the relatives
And the other millions

So gradually we sold what we had left
And actually we left with very little
As the government of that day confiscated a lot of things
But we were finally on the way to Canada
And our first stop from our City was Riga
A nice port and a beautiful city
Also a city that was noted mostly for Men being exceptionally Good Looking
(But Mother said no one could compare with me)
And for some unforeseen reason
We had to stay in Riga for 20 days
But it was a nice city
And Dad used to bring customers from the immigrants
To some clothing stores
And was making Commission
By recommending sales

After Riga we went to London – England
On a small boat
And on our way we went by way of Germany
And stayed there for about 4 or 5 hours
On the boat
I remember we landed in London
And the day was damp and gloomy

We Landed at the London Pier
In the morning
And by about 12 o'clock noon
We were taken to the Railway Station
In London
On our way to Liverpool
And everything looked fascinating on the way
But it was an ordeal
And we were in a strange country
And tired

London to Liverpool is 320 miles by train
And believe me those small trains really travel
Those days 80 miles an hour was fast enough
Even now
And much faster than anything I had known

We stayed in Liverpool 4 days
We could see the Ocean Liner at a distance
But the water was not deep enough
So it was two miles from the Pier
And we were taken on a small boat towards the Ocean Liner
That was leaving for Halifax in about three hours

Our Ship – Regina looked majestic
And as it was leaving Liverpool
The Silhouettes of the City were gradually disappearing
And now we were on our way
To Canada

The trip on this Big Boat
I did not enjoy
I was seasick
All those five days till we landed in Halifax
When we came finally to Halifax
My sickness disappeared

In Quebec there was snow
Where we were supposed to land
So we landed in Halifax
We didn't care
What difference did this make to us

We took three days to get finally to Winnipeg
In comparison with the British Trains this was a slow train
But we were glad to get to Winnipeg
And see our relatives
For the first time

At the station to meet us was Aunty
And nobody else
Anyways the Green Ones arrived
And went to Aunty's house
And there was Ira and Elsie Caminetsky and Jack
And we talked some Jewish
But mostly Russian
And spent the first day
In Winnipeg

We spent in Winnipeg 3 days
And on the fourth day
We were ready to go to Buchanan
Our destination

We arrived in Buchanan
On the following morning
At 10 o'clock
A cold frosty morning
And we did not have to go far
To the House
Mr Ernie Ross
The Station Agent
Greeted us at the Station
He said "Good Morning"
And I replied "Good Evening"
As my vocabulary consisted of Morning and Evening

Those winters were cold
Buchanan was not Elisavetgrad
As to its size
There was one Jewish family
You might safely say that the district was divided in two
On one side were Doukhobor farmers
Very good farmers and prosperous by those standards
And the other side were mostly Ukrainian farmers
That hardly eked out a living
Perhaps you could not blame
As the land they had was sandy and not productive
Anyways we were learning the customs and ways of Canada
Which did not excite Mom + Dad
From the standpoint of friends

Because Russian cities like Elisavetgrad and Odessa
Were not to be compared from our Standpoint
To Canada's Buchanan
We had to make up our mind
And we had to adapt ourselves to everything that was foreign to us
But gradually we were getting used to our surroundings
And not reminding ourselves of the Past

Brother and I were going to school
And after school I was helping Uncle in the store
While my Brother was getting lessons in Violin
From the teacher that used to come from Dauphin once a week
And soon showed a lot of talent in Violin
And surpassed his teacher
And as time progressed had pupils of his own
And was giving lessons even outside Buchanan
In towns like Margo
And was a very talented boy
And would we have lived in a City instead of a Village
My younger Brother would have been a Famous Person
But such was not the case
And we could not expect a great deal
So we had to be satisfied

There was an understanding
That when we emigrated
To Canada
And came finally
To Buchanan
After a couple of years Dad was to take over
"Uncle's General Store"
And start to work for ourselves

And him retire and move to Winnipeg
But Uncle was delaying us taking over his business
Because somehow he was not anxious
And there was another 2 years
Mind you, bear in Mind
The business was not given as a gift
But we Paid for it
Maybe more than we should have paid
Anyways we had to start on our own

Our Dad was much more of a Businessman than Uncle
Our Dad was more knowledgeable
And in his younger days
In Russia
He was in contact with a much more intellectual class of people
But we were in Canada
And had to adapt ourselves
And learn the customs of the country
And make the Best of it
As the expression is
“We had to make a Living”

We finally were on our own
Dad was a very kind man
And gradually got customers
And everybody liked Dad
He was very popular
Especially with Doukhobors
His customers liked that he talked with them Russian and Ukranian
And they just loved Dad
And so we gradually acquired the Language
And began to take more interest in business

And as everything was new
We gradually began to lose the past
And think more of the future

To forget your past
Takes a long time
Especially of the place you were born and grew
And also the comparison that from a large city
You landed in a small village
And that was the hardest I believe
But there was no retreat
And also you had to consider all the hardships and disappointments we encountered
With Famine and sicknesses and wars and what have you
Food was hard to get
Money was valueless
Governments were changing
So the only way to be able to get food
We had to trade off furniture, clothes, etc for food
My own nature
Even to this day
Was to save to the best of my ability
And what saved us from Famine was Gold
Gold was really in demand on the Black Market
I exchanged for food
And gradually the Famine was over
But a lot of people died
The strongest with means survived
I talk a lot about Russia
Because until the Famine life was good for me
I had no hardships
But that was a thing of the past

We started business on our own
And gradually forgot the past
We had to make a living
Expenses were small
And so was the Profit
But you managed to the best of your ability
Sunday store being closed was a holiday
So I would buy a package of Turret Cigarettes
For 5 cents
And walk along the Railway Track
For a few miles
And the day would pass
And it was just fine "considering"

The town of Buchanan had too many merchants for its size
And I wanted to go in Business for myself
I was planning
I had saved up \$500
Which was a lot of money
Those days
And I bought the store in the town of Clair – Saskatchewan
For \$7000⁰⁰
And the payments were \$100
Per month

Business was bad
The country was in a recession
Farmers were unable to pay
With grain selling at 15c a bushel
Eggs at 5c a dozen
Butter at five cents a pound
You would not expect much business
At that time farmers were driving Bennett's Wagons
And were making Bennett's Coffee from Barley
But notwithstanding the tough times
Life was getting on
And Friday and Saturday were nice days in Clair
With Dances and other forms of entertainment
And so I was in Clair for four years
And sold the business
And went back to Buchanan

We stayed two more years in Buchanan
Before we sold out
And moved to Edmonton
A nice city
And friendly people
And we began to like very much

Although Edmonton was a nice city
Times were tough
And people just barely made ends meet
And sometimes not
And each person finds it not easy to carry on business in a transition period
And of course we were along with the rest
Because the country had no money so they said
And the Economy suffered
With no or little work and a lot of unemployment
You would not expect to be prosperous in business
When a pound of butter was 5 cents
Eggs 5 cents a dozen
And you could not sell even at that ridiculous price
And just to give an Example that a farmer would have
In 75 bushels of No2-Wheat
Perhaps hauling it 15 miles to an Elevator
And all he got was 7.50 cents plus another 3.75 Bennett premium
Why Bennett
Because he was the Prime Minister of Canada
At that unfortunate time
And it was pathetic
Since there was no money
And Farmers were making Coffee from Barley
And it was called Bennett's Coffee
Because you had to blame someone
And it was Bennett's fault
Even if the depression was world wide
But Canadian people found a scapegoat
In Bennett
And it was not difficult to foresee
That Bennett's government would fall in the next election
And the funniest part was

That as soon as war was declared
Money began to appear
In large quantities
And people began to forget
Their hardships

The war was raging for over 4 years
And the sufferings of people and nations in the holocaust
Was hard to describe
But in the war of Liberations
Russia was the biggest loser
Of over 20 Million people
And other nations lost millions of people
But not so much as Russia

During the war the Govt was watching
That prices should stay more or less within its limits
But gradually after the war Inflation started to advance
And it was easier to do business
And make an easier dollar

Personally I would say that after the war ended
Some people were making a lot of money
Anyways everybody was making a dollar

I remind myself of the tough times
We were in the Wholesale Jobbing Business
And I used to travel
And try to sell Merchandise to Merchants in the small towns
By the way Gasoline was only 15 cents a gallon
I will give an example how hard times were:
From Edmonton to Athabasca was 100 miles
And of course along that mileage were a lot of small towns
And the buying power was so poor
And of course farmers were getting nothing for their produce
So how would merchants be able to buy Merchandise
So I would sell a few dollars to the odd merchant
And one would be able to give \$2.00 on account
3 to 5 dollars on account
And so on
During the hard days work
I would stop for the night
In Athabasca
At a nice Hotel
And always stayed there when I was on that line
Because after the hardships on the road
The roads were not paved
It was good to come to a stop
And go to the Bar to have a few beers at 5 cents a glass
And wash the dust off your throat
And forget for a while your Business

Times were good
We called it Prosperity
Though in reality it was inflation
What is the difference
You had more Paper
A lot of people made Money
A lot of people made Money and spent it
A lot of people made Money and lost it
A lot of people made Money and saved it
I belong to the last category
Dad and I never did huge business
But we did to the Best of our ability
We persevered
Dad – Bless his Memory – was a contented person
Never envied other people
Never aggravated himself
Never cared if somebody had a Billion
He always knew the net Results in human Life
“Dear Dad”
To this day I miss him

Edmonton was a nice city
And the people were friendly
Especially the country people
And I really enjoyed my travelling in the country
And though roads were tough
As long as you were able to make Sales road hardships were forgotten

If I had known then what I know now
Perhaps I would have been richer
But when a person gets older
He realizes that as long as you have enough for all your needs
And still have a nice reserve
A person must be satisfied
It is an illusion
Personally I am not using up my Money
And probably other people are the same
I was married
And had 2 sons
And it was different when you are married
A person had to work harder
And times were still tough
I don't know what is in me that I am not a Speculator
On a large scale
It's funny that on smaller Investments
I did good
But the other fault I have is to draw Money from my Savings Accts
Each person has faults
And of course I am not excluded
And considering my faults
I am very comfortable
And I did not lose my Money
Which is better to have less than none at all

The business I was
In Winnipeg
Was not profitable
Due to the fact that times were hard
Work was scarce
And I was lucky I did not go broke

But this was mostly due to the fact that I was careful in business
And watched my steps
Anyways I survived

Now that I'm old my mind wanders back
I'm enjoying life now because I have no responsibilities
But I think of everything and wonder about life
What was the point
If it was worth it
Maybe it wasn't worth it
But I like to remember my Dad
And my pigeons and pony when I was young
And sometimes I remember about Grandfather
He was such a nice pious person

A MOON

Again the clandestine meeting
The familiar place
The long conversation
Your cigar and rum
I told him not to go I said
You'll be lucky if you're only murdered I said
You're committing suicide
Don't go I said
What else is there to do he said
I come across that photograph sometimes
The proud, smiling soldiers
The casual wounds
The wounds that never heal
You always talk about him you said
It helps me not to remember you said
In any event, the gist is this
Your speculations have helped us
You've sent us millions and millions of dollars
The currency of the country that's destroying us
And your advice was worth more
It's always the same I said
It always amounts to the same thing
The monster is militarily omnipotent
The monster has no scruples re violence
Always give in
Every cosmetic gesture
But keep the substantive aspects of the revolution intact
That blockade you said
I'm not sanguine
It's always been a rearguard action I said
All you can do is temporize
And all you can do is desist you said

You're known
If you continue
You'll be targeted
I don't want the burden of your blood
I'm a wounded soldier I said
Arrayed against ignorant armies
Wounded and bleeding and suffering and dying
And hoping the death
Is a single doom
And not a moiety
Of the world
You're a romantic you said
We're both romantics
As such we're part of a species doomed to extinction
Better buffaloes than Babbitts
We sat grown quiet as the day grew dark
We saw the last embers of daylight die
And in the trembling blue-green of the sky
A moon
Worn as if a shell
Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell
I thought of you
And thought of you again
The you I've carried with me all the years
Through changes and through time
Students in Winnipeg
The University of Manitoba
Don't go Sunny I said
What else is there to do she said

ARCADES

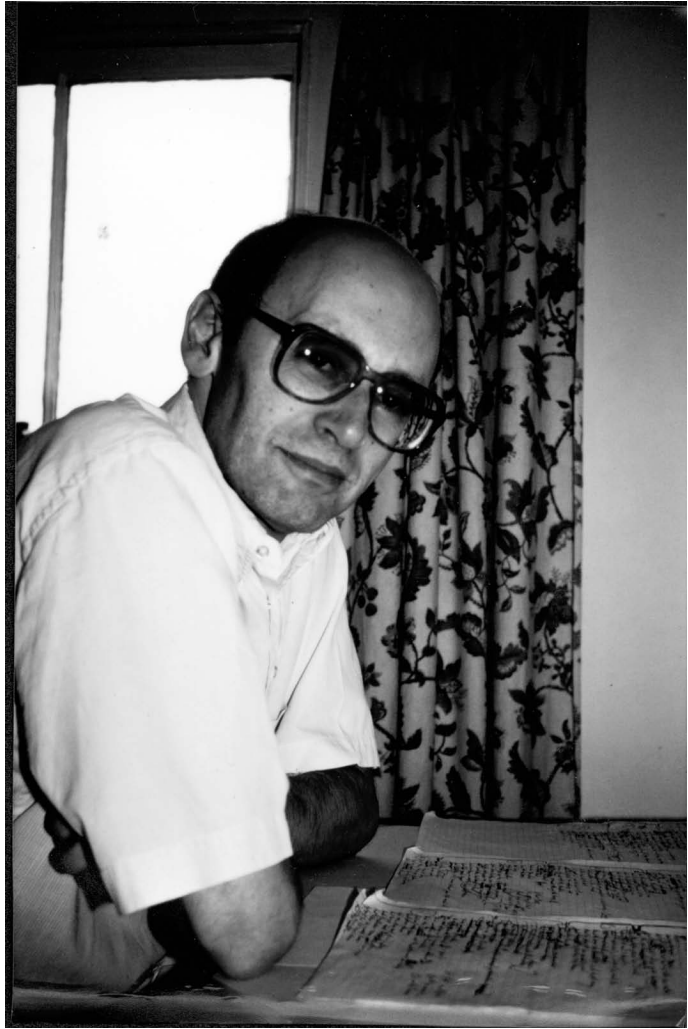
'Dans une situation sans issue, je n'ai d'autre choix que d'en finir.
C'est dans un petit village dans les Pyrénées où personne
ne me connaît

ARIEL SHARON AKA DR. STRANGELOVE

Hyperactive atrocity
But nevertheless
After Sabra and Shatila
Inadvertent paralysis
But Now
Mein Führer! I can walk!!

BACH

A man of prodigious corporeal energy
And vast cerebral prowess
J. S. Bach walked 300 kilometres
To hear Buxtehude
Play the organ



5 And didn't answer
And Pininichky said you are so lucky
~~And Pininichky Pininichky~~
~~And when had cancer~~

8 And wanted to go to Houston
And Pininichky said give her money
She's fat
But we still have to spend
Pininichky Pininichky
And Pininichky did not like Leon's (wife) Rose

And was often mad
And ~~once~~ ~~Pininichky~~ said you're just like your mother
And ~~Pininichky~~ said I'm glad your mother ~~has cancer~~ is dead
And ~~Rose~~ ~~Pininichky~~ ~~love~~ my grandmother's face
And Grandfather phoned Leon at work (Pininichky Pininichky)

7 And ~~Pininichky~~ all went to the police
And the police said go to a lawyer if you want to
And they all went to a lawyer
And the lawyer told Pininichky you could be put away
And the lawyer told Leon you could be freed
And Pininichky sent Leon back to his house
Pininichky Pininichky

And in Texas ~~for~~ Father was an operator
(And Grandfather went to Leon's house
And talked for several hours
And Rose did not socialize with Pininichky)
But there were distant phone calls

And carnivals gatherings of
And Pininichky would (occasionally) (sometimes) get here for support
Pininichky Pininichky

And there was always Pininichky
And when ~~Pininichky~~ Dad went to a party
The hostess ~~Pininichky~~
There would be Pininichky to a party
And ~~Pininichky~~ from and Dad went out
For not drive or to movie or whatever
There would have to be Pininichky

Or for a drive
Or to a movie
Or whatever

6? And when ~~Pininichky~~ and Grandfather went on a holiday
Dad went with them
And drove them
And once Mom went to a reception
And forgot about Pininichky for
And Grandfather came over to our house
And talked for several hours
And ~~Pininichky~~ Dad bit Mom's face
Pininichky Pininichky

And when ~~my~~ Mom died
 Dad cried
 And Dad said ^{she} Pininichka will never be the same
 without your mother
 (9) [Pininichka Pininichka]
 And when I left Winnipeg ^{Dad}
~~and Grandfather~~ and Pininichka sat on the sofa
 and looked at me
 And ~~she~~ said why are they giving you so much money
 And I said goodbye
 And you one spoke ~~was~~
 Pininichka Pininichka
 And Pininichka yelled at me
 And Pininichka laughed at me
 And Pininichka talked about me
 And Pininichka made ~~my~~ Mom miscarry
 And Pininichka ~~she~~ killed my ^{own} sister
 And once I ^{said} Pininichka a witch
 And ^{she} said ^{you} like the pawnbroker in Dostoevsky's Crime And Punish
 And Grandfather said be a man
 And Dad took off his belt
 And I ~~got~~ got under the bed in time
 And Dad pulled the mattress off
 And used to end with the buckle
 And ~~she~~ screamed through the house
 Pininichka Mom died
 Grandfather died
 And when Mom died
 Dad left the house
 And lived
 With Pininichka
 And Dad said you have to ~~take~~ take care of ~~yourself~~ yourself
 And I have to take care of ~~Pininichka~~ her
 And the refrigerator was ~~sometimes~~ sometimes empty
 And sometimes Dad brought us food
 And sometimes we went to Pininichka's house
 And Dad made supper
 And Pininichka said I never believed your father would do so much
 for you
 Pininichka Pininichka
 And when she was ninety
 Pininichka began to die
 And there was an air strike
 And my brother lived in California
 But he ~~was~~ was at the funeral

[Was everyone upset
 It was a celebration
 Everyone was happy]
 And I said Was Dad upset
 I've never seen him happier
 And I said why did you go
 (12) And he said I don't know
 Pininichka Pininichka
 In Russia, Pininichka ~~she~~ loved a revolutionary
 And he wanted her to go with him
 And she smiled and said he wanted me to leave my family
 And then I met Isaac
 (2) And Pininichka said he changed his shirt three times a day
 And they were together for sixty years
 And ~~she~~ always in love
 Pininichka Pininichka
 And when Pininichka was in the hospital I ~~she~~ was in the hospital
 She ~~phoned~~ phoned Rose Roth And ~~she~~ phoned Rose
 And Rose rushed to the hospital
 (13) And Pininichka said I'm sorry
 And Pininichka said I'll see your mother in heaven
 And ~~Pininichka~~ said forgive me
 And both women cried
 And Pininichka died