

FUN poems from Agenda

Andrew McNeillie

BOSSA NOVA

None of this is in my name
eavesdropping at a café table
on moneyed Mayfair people,
not May but June between showers.
The scraps I hear might just as well be Greek,
might be from any ancient city
anywhere, even Rio de Janeiro
now with Bossa Nova on the air
somewhere from a passing car
like longing, fleeting.

We cannot have all we desire,
desire being incommensurable,
coterminous with being here
or falling short in living death.
The girls are walking from their hips
their mobiles at their ears and lips.
My eyes follow them, my ears pricked.
Invisibly, I remember their tragedy
their walk to the end of the street
down to the anonymous sea.

Brendan Kennelly

Waking up

Yes, there's Pessoa, Yeats, Kavanagh,
Paradise Lost and Found, Blake's London,
and then there's waking up in hospital
thanking God you're on your own

apart from the pain in every bone.

Question

Is the earth facing the sky
or turning its back on it?
The same question might be asked
of lovers on Saint Stephen's Green.

But who is the earth and who is the sky
when they swap positions as the hours drift by

Caroline Clark

To Tula

Last year we went to Tula
to Tula we went last year,
we walked the streets of Tula
to see what we could see:
the Kremlin, armoury chamber,
the crafted horseshoed flea,
gingerbread presses, sugar tongs,
all manner of pots for tea.
For we had gone to Tula
to note for what she was known,
yet I remember Tula
for two lilac trees alone,
one white, one lilac like the name,
above a sky-starred cupola
and a mist of scented rain.
We took the train from Tula
from Tula we took the train,
for we had been to Tula
and we hope she was glad we came.

Donald Avery

FUN

The law, without the laughter, soon becomes
solemn, dreary, ponderous. Gaiety,
lightness of touch and spontaneity –
yes, and abandon – should be in the sums.
The universe appears the work of one
who's well aware of nonsense-value, play
and of imagination. Yet, today –
unlike the world – we do not find life fun.

But, I believe not Death himself disdains
deep-bellied merriment. Divinities
roll in the aisles. The blessed galaxies
are – even now – shaking their fiery manes
with laughter. While the sober are in shock
at lack of gravity. And lack of clock.

Don Bloch

Chocolate

When greed prevailed
and the last pretence
of civilization
had been abandoned,
what remained was a dying man's
love of chocolate.

.More than half brain-dead,
too weak to lift a finger,
my brother craved chocolate
night and day

The evidence suggests
he was a chocolate freak
his whole life, and used to sneak
hits from a secret stash.
Shame failed
to sate his appetite.
How he loved the sound
of chocolate breaking
in the night!

Hollow Easter bunnies, long
ears devoured in a single bite,
x-mas coins in thin gold foil,
Hershey's silver kisses-
trick or treat Mars bars, and Milky Ways,
Nestles, Mounds and Almond Joy.
M 'n M's, chocolate sprinkles,
Betty Crocker's brownies mix,
Benedicts and After Eights,
Chocolate pudding, My-T-Fine,
Our tastes closely intertwined.

He was an ardent cocoa fan,
drank his fill with grand elan
What can compare to Drostjes
steaming on a snowy day,
clumps of cocoa undissolved.
The double boiler foaming over,
milk bubbling from beneath
a dancing cover.

And in summer, best of all,
ice cream in a dozen magic flavors
all chocolate in some kinky version,
from Haagen Das to Movenpik:
And Ben and Jerry's rich fudge ripple
Cold lips turning a deep purple.

What does dying mean
if not the end
of needing to keep up appearances.
No need to say, No, thank you
any longer. With Death
stalking him, he gave in
to his sweet tooth
with a vengeance, from milk
to pure and back again,
free from inhibition.

Whole boxes from Belgium
near the end, bon-bon's at a single go,
costing a king's ransom.
Empty wrappers on his bed,
and floor, he licked
his fingers, one by one,
and prayed for time
to gobble more.

His eyelids quivering
like a moth
I'd hold a spoon
up to his lips,
say, open wide,
and as soon as he complied
I'd slip it in,
one hand clamped firmly
right beneath his chin.
My taste buds tingling.
envying him.

Greg Delanty

The Creators

The owner informs us the restaurant's closed, summer's over,
but we're welcome to a few beers, sit on the deck.
We're sensible enough not take any notice
of the begging dog with a stick in his mouth.
We ignore life for the day—work, phonecalls, emails—
that annoying tail-wagging mutt. Buoys bob like planets,
each with its own biosphere of creatures and plants.
It sounds like the unseen god washes his hands
of the motor boat, the jet stream that is hurting him,
the radio reporting the all-too-human news
of the planet heating up, the awareness that the only species
who laughs is also the only one who creates gods.
He reflects, 'Ah, they've been at this deity-making for ever.
A way of making something of themselves, Homo Importanticus.
Let's cut them some slack. Where we would be without them?
Soon they'll be no one here. Let them off for now.'

Dogus

Epiphany

What I've been afraid of has come to pass
--the vague nothing egging me on
to hope, work, attempt change
diverting me from nothing.
Nothing has caught up with me.
In the beginning was the strange
nothing, and the nothing was made flesh,
and no thing dwelt amongst us.
What was all the fuss, all
the fear? I gaze out the window:
fields, glass, sky, lake, snow, hear the bell
calling us to mass, to our nothing God
of St Josephs and I feel nothing
but relief. Something has come of nothing.

Gnosticus

The Era of Busy

The drudgery of another day ticked off the list,
the palimpsest already filling up with tomorrow's chores.
We barely keep our snorkel above the relentless waves
of busy-ness in a time that according to the soothsayers
of our childhood—what with computers, mechanization—
we'd be awash with oceans of free time, lolling the weeks away.
But my first snatch of a few free moments in days
--allowing me a quick read of short poems, scribble this
on the back of tomorrow's list-- is waiting for an acquaintance
who thankfully is late, waylaid maybe by the muses
who these days fight rearguard action; the resistance, the partisans
of freedom, the foam of a few moments to myself in a bar.

Gregory of Corkus

Julie Sampson

For those who say there are no more poems

i

Look at these swallows
swooping -
the intoxication of loops -
and under
blue

headlong

dives
over butterfly-skims above
the whites of this green gold field

It's easy to miss them -
they sail close to the wind -
to misunderstand the
turn of their phrase,
the twisted spell of their
secret code

and what can you say
of the white under-belly flash
silking those exquisite plaits
of wheat?

ii

Tell them how it was
for us
not so long ago
in a world where

there were no ...
mobile phones [*phone-home home-phone*
Phone

Home]

MP3s
MP4s
Ninetendos
You-tubes
i-tunes
Face-books

Smart phones *no*
Phone-home
Home-phone
Home ...

where home was a place
not a meeting-site
in virtual space ...

Phone ...

iii

It's calm tonight
we're floating on a sea a wheat-green
gold
alchemy
each stalk waving a soul from
Underworlds where fallow deer
swim a
fox prowls
and you imagine you can see
the baiji dolphin -
even re-imagine
Persephone -

*You wonder what
she is doing
the schedule she set with
her mother and Hadeian
Underground lover
has, after all been going on
for quite a while*

(and earth is still going round)

*No she's probably having
a hedonistic time - out of it
on ecstasy -
and forgotten long ago
what she came back for
or got bored enticing
those poor souls beneath*

*She's obviously content
with her lot - lover
keeps her happy, doesn't
need her dose of sun
and sky -*

*or, she's fed up being
a tool between Mother
and lover not wanting anymore
to do their dirty work*

*She'll drowse in the home
of her deep earth-bed
heady with day-dream
sleep and idylls of night
on bedded rock
for another 2000 years -
so many poems will enter
her head only
fragments
seep up to ground as
white-wheat seeds -
they'll pick them up with flints*

*until mother and lover
resolve their differences*

iv

Today I watched the swallows
violet-black their
midday
swoop
over shadow and field

and a white belly uplift
to the perch on phone-lines and on to heaven
through broken
skies – (they're after all
above it all a hieroglyphic
sign from God)

v

... where Home was not
a place in space

and poet was
a Poet

Thomas O'Grady

Makeover

Vestis virum reddit, she likes to quote
(the Latin tongue a tickle on her lips):
“Clothes make the man.” So why not just devote
a diverting hour to her hands-on-hips
appraisal of my mock-mannequin pose,
an all-of-me sizing-up of collar,
chest, waist, inseam—hatband to wing-tipped toes:
mere time well spent, not my last half-dollar.
That I would invest, every red cent,
one aisle over in eye-catching *Lingerie*:
my pleasure to assess and nod assent—
a befitting end to a frivolous spree.
Carpe diem! Tickle me head to foot.
Take no man's measure by a pinstriped suit.

William Oxley

In this Daft and Stupid Art

(with apologies to D.T.)

In this daft and stupid art
for which I was hung
in chains from the start
because somewhere I'd read
lovers undressing for love
risk death through cold
unless they stay in bed,
leaving the rest of the night to us
poets to moon in the dark
before raging home on a late-night bus
pissed as newts and singing like larks,
spewing contents of lung and heart –
not to mention tummies at times –
and all for the sake of an art
that rhymes. Or it does sometimes.

Appealing to the proud man apart
or not as the case may be,
or the man-in-the-moon-and-bus-queue
and to every woman from nurse to tart,
not to mention our very own muse
who shares with us a leading part
in this daft and stupid art.

Necessarye Coniunction

To Ezra P. wrote T.S.E.
'Il miglior fabbro'
Said Ezra P. modestly,
'That sure is so!'

Isabel Gallego – young Broadsheet poet

Misspellings or *Lapsus Calami*

From the place between the mind
that knows and a neuron in day-dream
they crawl like sub-species onto the page
and peek out among words.

Each skeleton a framework of letters
is unfamiliar, yet not so unfamiliar
as to be alien: their bones whisper
of a parallel world

where glooves are knitted with an extra finger;
a man's sweetheart blushes more
than appropriate; where they fall to their knees
and they pray to a Good.