

Poetry Series

Sidi J. Mahtrow
- poems -

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Sidi J. Mahtrow()

Reiterative Poetry

Reiterative poetry it seems proper to say
Has seen little sunlight in present day.
Yet it represents in all regard,
The beginning as English language broached forward.

Base on Anglo Saxon and Anglo Norman tongues
Reiterative poetry sloughed reluctantly along
Combining words in ways most proper
And in some case, crudely brought to halt, a stopper.

Meanings lost or lesser known,
Words and spellings made to fit the event reported on.
Such it is that Piers Plowman was written
By William Langland and others(?) too, in 1462.

Reiterative simply means repeat sounds; words or their beginnings
To occur at least twice in each line's soundings.
Thought to be borne on the method of basic speech
Slow and deliberate as the speaker sought to teach.

Imagine if you will the illusion the teller
Wished to instill in the entranced listener,
Pausing for effect on each word of the reiterative pair,
For emphasis that would be embedded there.

The Vision that Will viewed from his slumbers,
Was perhaps a dream of dreary numbers.
Cascading before his closed eyes,
Were temptations in their disguises.

Along the way the visions, as you will
Enticed the reader to revel,
In tales of harlots and their heady stews
Where pleasure was sought (and found) in their due.

The Church of Rome was ragged about in play,
With fat priest in habits placed on display
Their custom of taking what they may
From the serfs and sundry workers of the day.

Then there is the use of 'fables' to instruct,
As example, 'Belling the Cat' is one of such.
The moral of the story is two fold and more,
As the men are told they cannot be as independent mice of lore.
But should bear allegiance to the King (the cat)
Who protects, administers and all that,
Taking only 'a little' from each one
So that they can live their life in freedom.
As example, seen in France, the death of the cat
Only brings on horrors (and yet another cat) .

Langland never was quite pleased with his poem
And rewrote it several times and some.
Sometimes using reiterative style
To make his point, but when the method failed
Used free verse to get the story told
That's the way it was in days of old.

So it is related with this Reiterative Poem
Hoping to provide humble examples to some,
Who might wish to try their hand
Writing poetry, as the method properly demands.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Thoughts On ugam Chettiar's 'Half-Done' Poem

Rare is the word
That is used to describe
'Half-cooked'
But you decide
What's on your plate.
Is it ready for the palate
Or needs another round
In life's baptismal fire.

Rare retains the flavor
The succulence and the texture
While overdone is, well, overdone.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Special Christmas Gift

Most gifts come wrapped or maybe
Too awkward to be,
Are left standing in the corner or lying unwrapped under the tree
But this special gift was different, to be delivered on bended knee.

The giver had planned this gift for nearly a year
For the recipient always took his gifts and put them away
Until the ones he had,
Were worn out or "used-up" as they say.

So Joyce planned this gift very carefully and told Dad
That this gift he would have to help with so please don't get mad,
For it was too much for her alone with all the driving and shopping
Seems she wanted him to sit very still and let her do the? un-wrapping?

She took out the box that she had carefully packed quite full,
And the white enamel pan that was to be a part of it all.
"Sit here, in your favorite chair, the cane-bottomed one,
Get comfortable for this will take a while and I hope it's fun"

Then she put on one of Mom's aprons, tied in the back
Filled the pan with water, planning her attack.
Dishwashing detergent, mild and without smell
Was the next thing out of her box of tricks that she had planned well.

Carefully she untied the laces on the shoes that he wore
Shoes that were well polished, just as if from the store.
Next off came the white socks one after another
Until Dad's feet were there for all to see without any cover

It seemed Joyce intended to give Dad's feet a bath,
Not such a big thing but certainly on a different Christmas path.
He grinned down from his seat and went along with the play
Filled his pipe with Prince Albert and was content there to stay.

The cleaning soon over and that signaled an end
But Joyce had another trick up her sleeve as we soon learned
Shooing away the small kids that came in to see
What was happening to Grandpa and the gifts, under the tree.

The feet were clean, as clean as could be
And a good buffing made the nails sparkle like lights on the tree
Dad, said, "Thank'y, I really am surprised
That you had planned this for a old man who's grown old but not wise."

He stood to leave, and Joyce said, "I'm not through.
I've got another gift for you.
So sit and be comfortable as I am just beginning."
And she took out more tools from the box's inner lining.

A pair of clippers that would do a farrier proud
Were in her hand and she knelt before the feet
Knowing that the mission
Was going to be hard to complete.

She nipped and nipped some more
As toenails flew and fell to the floor,
Going from toe to toe removing just a bit, here and there
She slowly wore away the year's growth found there

Sometimes stopping and using a bit
Of warm water and detergent the stubborn hooves to wet
Until they were softened and yielded to her touch.
But very carefully, she didn't remove too much.

Ten toes got her blessings and the long nails, no longer there
And underneath white skin was exposed to the light's evening glare.
Then, a file that would make a machinist jealous, she took from her pack
And carefully resumed her attack.

The edges were made as smooth as a baby's back side
And only then was she finally satisfied,
She said, I guess you've been trimmed like the old gray mare
And need to put on your shoes to get a bit of fresh air.

Into her sack which she tossed in the box,
Went all the tools that she had used for the attack.
So I guess one could say, "twas the night before Christmas" and be right as rain,

For a special Christmas gift was the Daughter-in-law's Plan.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Chicken Is Not A Bird

A chkn na be a byrd
Acord'n folk lvn in flori da
Kep'n and own'n be difernt
If be a tigr or sknk kept
An' a' th hair cutn shp r paloor for trm
Word is one's pets is one's own prblm
So be it, tha list of crtues kept, grws lng by da
Cept'n when are feral, as n dog and ct stray
Thn becms nuher mat'r
For nebors blathr.

Whn pkins gd, thn no problm
But whn pks in yr flwr bd, much to be mad then.
Frm tm to tm thngs gt out of hnd `n
Complnts `n words for cert n.
So Gvrmnt coms to soln
Of problms b'for problms xst for som.

But na be a ckn a byrd?
Cuse if it be a byrd,
Thn it lv in a byrd sanctry free
An can na hunt, na hrt, na molst byrdees
So wa to du?
Mybe pas law that sy to you,
'Chkn na be byrd'
Thn ok to hv fer Sundy Dnr n vite Prechr for Holy wrd.
N hisn wfe cuse good Chrstn man and wom'
Enjy, chkn in fryn pan.

So law pasd that say chkn not a bryd so
They mst sty a' home an' na go.
Howsome evr, bryds (an chkns also) cnt rde
An thy kpt do n wh' brds an chkns do bst to feed.
Which be to go whr God low such,
Which fr mst prt is nxt dr's grdn and frnt prch.

So Bartow Flor da hird a chkn ktchr
To gathr up dose brds and tk to the cntry sid, u betchr.
Tha's nic but brds (scuse me – ckns) got oth id

An flew coup, so to say, or fle.
An those toke out side cit lmts make it home just
Lk homn pgns and r thr for supr like norml ckns cum to rost.

Yu ake how solve mstry of chkns?
Smpl. Persons who compln'd aked to lv town
Now Bartow got pln't chkns an gud ppl all rnd.

Well, maybe Robert Burns writing in his Scottish dialect, might have considering the plight of the good folk of Bartow, Florida. Maybe not, but Benjamin Franklin thought we had too many ltrs in the alphabet and suggested the number could be reduced to seventeen or so.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Cowboy's Tale

When you're riding the range for hours without end
It's time to reflect of how life does begin
And how it will end, nobody knows
But you live each day bringing it to a close.

Such was a time on the South Dakota lands
Where pickings are lean and finding the cows takes careful plans
In winter it's mostly easy for the cows don't stray
But in the summer they range far in search of what may.

So you saddle up early before break of day
And head out toward the mesa, picking your way
For the grounds rugged, rocky and rough
Not forgiving a misstep of the poor horse's hoof.

Sky's all clear and not a cloud to be seen
Today's going to be a hot one. Just down right mean.
The horse's a good one, but sometimes known to buck
And if you get thrown, you'll be down on your luck.

Sp you cinch him up tight then give him chance to blow
Taking up more slack from the band down below.
Walk him around and see how he moves and how the saddle stays
Making sure he's good for a long ride this day

Then out of the pens and head straight into the sun
Your long vigil of checking the cows has now begun
A steady walk, is all you demand
From your partner who seems to understand.

Out of sight of civilization's calling
There's only the 'yotes' howling,
As they try to scare up a rabbit or so
Or anything else that's hidden below.

You slope in the saddle trying to be small
As the sun bears down on rider and all
Your mouth's dry and how good a cig would taste
But any wasted motion is sure a disgrace.

By mid morning the sun's boiling down
And yet still no cows have been found
The horse is all lathered and covered with dust
He walks with head down as if in disgust.
Time to give him a blow
So into a break you and horse go.
A bit of shade from a scraggle bush
But shade for the horse is a bust.

So you remove the saddle and the wet blanket too
Letting it dry will take moments, few
You lay on your back, the saddle for a pillow
And wonder if this bush could some how be a weeping willow

A cigarette just now after a swig from the canteen
Is all that you need to begin the routine
As you dose off with not a thought of the future
This day's like all the others that horse and rider endure.

The horse's tugging on the line that you set
Means that it's time to get up and get
So you repeat the process that this morning you started
And note the blanket dried out in the brief time allotted.

A foot in the stirrup and you are aboard.
That's all you remember from this point forward.
You wake with a jolt and look around
For sure, you are lying on the ground.

Could the horse have jumped you when you weren't properly on?
Could he have bolted and left you alone?
You rise up on an elbow and look around
And there next to you, is your horse on the ground!

Dead as a doorknob and lying quite still
Some how he'd been struck dead, surely against his will.
His head's a mess and one leg missing
A bolt from the heavens through him had been passing.

You on the other hand had been given a pass
For drying the blanket was what saved your ass.

A bit of insulation to shelter the strike
And was all between you and death's lightening attack.

To finish this cowboy's tale about strikes from the blue
Meant a long walk back,
Where others were worried about him for he was long overdue.

(This is a true story of a young boy riding the range on the family's ranch in
South Dakota.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Dream Within A Dream

In Poe's dark forbidding night
When there can be no sight
Of the dangers lurking near
Of which there is much to fear.
But in the inner peace of Poe
With the scratch of pen, his words flow
Capturing his tortured thoughts in kind
A parable, to escape the world that binds,
To set him free to dream
Of that which is not as seem.

As he awaits the judgement day.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Ghostly Air

Was that a breath of cold air
I felt as I drove about in my car,
Or was it just the end of summer heat
That soon would be in full retreat?

Maybe, just maybe, it was you
That hovers nearby in the blue
To give me a quick brush of phantom breath
That could be life, or maybe death?

Or is it just a sense that somethings wrong
That makes one write a poem or a song
To answer an unasked question, fair
Are you here or are you there?

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Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Heavenly Chorus Of One

Silence.

The Beginning
Commemorating
The passing.

The MockingBird
Begins his prelude
Joining the words
Of solace.

M-I rifles, shouldered
Three rounds ring out
Signaling the end,
The new beginning.

The MockingBird
Now loud and clear
Joins in the service
A Heavenly Chorus of One.

It is ended.
Away you walk,
Accompanied by the flight
Of the small winged one.

He alights on a small tree
Overlooking
The Myakka Prairie
An overture.

The Celebration of Life.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

'A Modern Mazeppa —

A Nebraska Cattle Owner Lashed to a Wild Broncho -

For a Week He is
Carried About the Plains,
Without Food or Water. -...
When discovered
The modern Mazeppa
Was lashed to the horse,
Entirely naked and unconscious.

The animal was about broken down,
As if from long running,
And was easily
Lassoed by the cowboys,
Who cut the thongs and
Released the strange captive....

When able to talk
He said his name was Henry Burbank,
That he was an Englishman,
And 34 years of age.

About three years ago
At Falmouth, England,
He formed a partnership
With a friend named Thomas Wilson,
Some years his senior,
And with him came to America
To embark in the cattle business...

They settled in Northwestern Nebraska...
Built a comfortable ranch
By a little stream,
Where Wilson's young wife
Reigned as housekeeper,
Attended by two or three female domestics.

Burbank who is a handsome young gallant
Found it agreeable

While Wilson was absent
Riding about the range,
To make love to the latter's wife.

This continued for some months,
Until the latter part of May
One of the cowboys
Who had a grievance against Burbank
Surprised him and Mrs. Wilson
In a compromising situation,
And reported it to the woman's husband,
Whose jealousy had already been aroused.

That night Burbank was
Captured while asleep in bed
By Wilson and three of his men
And bound before he had a chance
To make any resistance.

After mutilating him
Wilson had him stripped
Of every bit of clothing and bound
On the back of a wild broncho,
Which was started off
By a vigorous lashing....

He was rescued on the morning of June 3,
Which would make seven days
That he had been traveling
About the plains on the horse's back,
Without food or drink, and
Exposed to the sun and wind....

' Perhaps there are alternatives to capital punishment,
Sometimes more fitting to the crime? -

"This, from the wire service and picked up by the local paper." from
the July 24,1884 issue of The Dakota Republican.

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A Mullet Is Not A Fish? ?

So said the smart talk back in 1916.
For an out-of-work lawyer pickings were lean.
For clients; some local fishermen
Had their day in court, once again.

Tho th' lawyer served without recompense
He needed to prove to the judge their innocence.
Not guilty was the verdict to be won
Of fishing during the closed season.

These six young commercial fishermen
Were known to sell fish through thick and thin.
They had been caught fair and square
And summoned before the judge to appear.

It could not be disputed
That the fishermen had mullet netted.
And that the season for catching
Had closed before their going fishing.

As an aside. Many's the time they had treated
The lawyer to a fine meal of mullet they had netted.
So it was that the lawyer had paid close attention
To cleaning in the mullet's preparation.

To the casual observer, a fish is a fish.
But mullet are not like other fish.
For one, they are mostly caught in seines or nets
As they are difficult to catch on a hook to be set.

They are bottom feeders on grass and morsels
Such as small oysters, snails, and mussels.
And because of their appetite for what they find,
They have a gizzard; by nature designed to grind.

We return to the courtroom of the Judge
Where the game officers refused to budge.
So in providing his defense,
The Lawyer placed the judge on the fence.

He asked the Judge, a question hard;
'Do fish have a gizzard? '
And answered his own question;
'Don't think so.' Ask anyone.

To the Game Warden's surprise,
On this the case rested, which was most wise.
The Judge considered; Only one other species
To his mind had a gizzard and they aren't fishies.

He recessed the court and went to the grocery store,
Where in the poultry section he found galore,
Fresh chicken; whole and in parts,
Plus chicken livers, gizzards and hearts.

It was obvious that the mullet was a relative
To chickens, turkeys, duck and other avi.
The Judge so ruled that mullet are fowl
And therefore catching mullet he would allow.

'Of course another court must decide,
If mullet can be caught on th' tide,
During lent, which is the season
When only fish should be eaten.'

'Not guilty of violating Florida's fishing laws.'
It was decreed in this Court of Laws.
At the next mullet fry, you can safely bet,
The judge was there with appetite wet.

In a small community,
All are included with impunity
Even Judges; and Game Wardens
Tho, don't have that many friends.

This tale helps to keep 'Old' Florida alive and safe from the reach of those whose vision is limited by the reach of their pocketbook. The article on which this poem is based was published in the Sarasota Herald Tribune November 24,1998, about Pat Whitaker who as a trial lawyer convinced a Tampa judge that mullet was not

a fish, in 1919.

Another fish is said to have a gizzard. The gillaroo trout has evolved this feature as an adaptation to its diet: mainly invertebrates of the lake bed, including a high proportion of freshwater snails and crustaceans. The thick muscular wall is used to grind up these very tough food items. However, many other forms of trout can develop a similar thickened stomach wall when feeding for a long period on similar foods. see:

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Poem To Vidi Writes

Sometimes one writes
For their own pleasures,
Or delights
In other measures.

So it is that Vidi
Takes the time to write
Like the cicada
That fills the air at night.

With a word song
Joyfully exclaiming
(Perhaps to be hummed along)
A new beginning.

Incomplete thoughts:

The world to which we all belong
At a time in need of healing.

Poems written
To express
Feelings held within
....

A song in words
For all to hear
Picking over the shards
Of....

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Poet's Commentary On John Updike's Writing

Style has its rules, but notions change the mood.

We speak or write in prose or poetry,
Are eloquent or vulgar as we mean:
In verses or in song conveying best
The soft emotions gliding gently by.

Or images presenting of sad passions.
Taste has no rules, in vain the critics may
Endeavour to obtain them, keep in view:
The changing taste will baffle this attempt.

Of books there is no end; of readers,

Many admire the worst.
Let them indulge and wallow
In filth as nameless animals are apt;
Or Asses like on thistles feed and thrive.

Reading is metal food, the milk of souls,

Without this food we are like passive grubs
In mental sleep involv'd. The mind delights
To taste and sip of many sweets, or honey,
Gathered on all the flowers it can meet.

Constantine Samuel Rafinesque, *The World of Instability*. A Poem, pp 183, J. Dobson, Chesnut Street. Philadelphia, 1836.

Rafinesque seldom corrected his writings so that either his or his publisher's errors are to be found. The poem has been gently corrected by Sidi J. Mahtrow. The poem of 5400 lines has been republished by the University of Florida Press, as *Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints*, 1956.

Constantine Rafinesque wrote on many subjects and is now recognized as perhaps America's earliest and premier botanist. His thoughts on evolution predated Darwin. The exception to Darwin's work is Rafinesque seeing the world and its inhabitants as constantly changing. He did not see change as leading to adaptation or perfection, thus he did not see change as an evolutionary process.

Rafinesque saw that in an imperfect world there is room for the likes of John Updike.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Pome On Feathers

words in language to be heard
are like feathers on a bird
they cover the carcass
prettying it up more or less

as birds of feather
flock together
so does choice of words
bring out the worst of bards

some feathers have a lot of fluff
an hold hot air and stuff
others are kind of greasy
which makes floating easy

so it is with words that r chosen
politicians use them by the dozen
without this ploy they d be
naked as a jay bird for all to see

the jay bird s hatched not born
as some would say
blind and featherless
on opening day

altrical s the word used
by those most learned
describing the new hatched jay
or politicians entering the fray

some feathers are designed to attract attention
if the peacocks scream isn t enough
the male shows his rear end
attracting females to his intention

other feathers are designed for flying
shaping the wings for air a plying
aloft the bird can soar or sail

or on a humming bird wings go like hell

feathers have a value of their own
used in art work to be shown
others sharpened as a quill
serve man to record thoughts and other swill
still others find their way as stuffings
for pillows coverings beds or fancy cushions

but probably the worst use of feathers known
is they conceal vermin upon
the carcass of the prey
bugs and politicians feed night n day

archy2 the cockroach

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Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Rare Bit By L. Frank Baum

(from the book, by the Candelabra's Glare by Baum)

(Writ dejectedly at early dawn.)

The rarebit is an elfish imp
That wields a deadly power,
Though frequently nonchalantly
The demon we devour.

I think I've figured out the way
This weird dish is created,
And if you'd try the recipe
Below 't is plainly stated:

You take a drove of nightmares,
Of headache quite a lot,
A cord of hard dyspepsia
And of mulligrubs a jot.

And roll and mash and bake 'em
'Til browned to fit the code,
Then feed it to your dearest friends
As "rarebit, a la mode"!

'T would be palpably fictitious
Though suffering from its sting,
Should I say it's not delicious –
Unfit to feast a king.

I can only pray devoutly,
(In addition to my litany.)
From rarebit Lord deliver me,
So I never more will get any!

"My best friends have never called me a poet, and I have been forced to admire their restraint. Nevertheless, this little book has an excuse. Unaided, I have set the types and turned the press and accomplished the binding. Such as it is, the book is "my very own".

Another peculiar thing about the volume, which, I believe, renders it unique, the fact that there has not been a penny of expense attending the production. For my good friends, when they found I was going to make a book, insisted upon furnishing all the pictures and material, and I generously allowed them to do so. I have done the work evenings, when my business cares were over. It has been my recreation `` lfb

□

(The 99 books printed were for gifts to friends. The above poem comes from a copy that was offered for sale on Ebay. Buyer and seller are unknown.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Rational Anthem

My country, tis of thee,
Sweet land of felony,
Of thee I sing, -
Land where my fathers fried
Young witches and applied
Whips to the Quaker's hide
And made him spring.

My knavish country, thee,
Land where the thief is free,
Thy laws I love;
I love the thieving bills
That tap the people's tills;
I love thy mob whose wills's
All laws above.

Let Federal employees
And rings rob all they please,
The whole year long,
Let office-holders make
Their piles and judges take
Our coin. For Jesus' sake,
Let's all go wrong!

Ambrose Bierce

Bierce, was born in 1842 and died in 1913, is best known for his Devil's Dictionary, but in his life-time wrote volumes of poems and articles which were published in the California papers of the day. His sarcastic view of the world about him gained him notoriety at the time, and persist today. This poem is taken from a recently published book, 'A vision of doom, poems by Ambrose Bierce'. Donald M. Grant publisher, West Kingston Rhode Island, 1980.

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Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Reply To Wilson's Illusions

Easy to criticize
Till you realize
That those who are so smart
Have no answers for a start!
Just trust us they say
Things will be better in our day.
(And then you look back
At their efforts, alack!
A group of bumbling fools
That had Albright as one of their tools.
'Weapons of mass destruction' was her cry
As she, like 'chicken little' pointed to the sky
Then shuffled off to oblivion
With the others of similar strain.
Bring them back you say
God forbid. Domesday!)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Short Poem For Joe Fazio

'The old shoebox'

A touching reminder of when
Life had greater meaning then
For sharing pain and joy together
Meant that they would be 'one' forever.

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Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Tribute To Dr. John Fenn *

The very worst invention is
One that isn't a whiz
At balancing the books
Or even giving them second looks.

No this invention of man
Does all that it possibly can
To enslave one and all
With its beacon call.

For the worst invention
Is the one that creates disruption
As it goes about
Giving freebies out.

As one might guess
The invention is no more or less
Than the Government
That never does repent.

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There's an awful lot of luck in research on analyzing biomolecules, Fenn said 'In fact, there's a lot of luck in science. To succeed as a theorist, you have to be good. To succeed as an experimentalist, you only have to be lucky. As an experimentalist, you can go through life kicking over a lot of stones, and, if you're lucky, you'll find something.'" Fenn died 12/10/2010.

Unfortunately, the dark science, if it is a science at all, is social science with its worst bed partner, "political science." Inventing solutions to problems that don't exist. Then giving them a life of their own. Alasdair MacIntyre in "After Virtue" takes the social scientist to task. Or, as Robert Wright penned, "Virtue Can Hurt You." In Kismet.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Tribute To Edward Moore

Once was a Moore.
Some eleven score
Has passed
Since we saw the last
Of Edward
Who, some thought untoward
With his way with words
As one of the bards
Who used
Some say abused,
The family of muses
Without the usual excuses.
For he had a grander scheme
A vision of how things might have been
As he wrote what the market would allow
And with a furrowed brow
Composed lines of prose and poetry
That appealed to the female gentry.

Writing for the parlor crowd
That read poetry out-loud
To the amusement
And the betterment
Of women
(That's right women)
Who had not the right to vote
So hiding behind their petticoat
They manipulated the men of the hour
To do their bidding (while in flower)
Thus living what is said to be
The 'Life of Raleigh'*

If you want to know Moore
You'll find there isn't much in store
Other than what Sam Johnson penned
When he collected the writings of other men.

Alas, of Edward Moore
There's not more.

* Also life of Riley or life of Reilly. If it's the good life you want, this is your best choice, but if it's not so good (remember Sir Walter lost his head) , then perhaps it's something to dread.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Tribute To Loyd C. Talyor

Reclamation is the word today,
As the conservation movement
Comes into sway,
Permitting reuse of the essential elements.

So, when it comes to pass
That Loyd C. is going to his final resting place
The grave diggers will have to halt the final mass
So scavengers can have their race,

To see what's of value in the remains,
Perhaps a bit of rare earth elements
Or scraps of silver, gold and lead the body contains
That when recycled will be offered to the god of waste providence.

Then in a final gesture to all
Old Loyd C. will rise above them all
And go to his place where
There is no need for parts to replace his worn out gear.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

A Tribute To Mike Royko - The Empty Stool

It's hot in the city this time of year.
The pavement and buildings
Seem to join together
To capture each and every photon of energy
From the sun and bounce them back and forth
Like a game of handball gone awry.

Fortunately, escape or at least momentary relief
Is available by ducking into a local bar,
Of which there are many
In the working class neighborhoods.

On entering, it takes a moment for the eyes to adjust
To the friendly darkness and comfortable shadows,
As if planned to reassure, the bar is directly ahead
So even a blind man can find relief.

Having made out that the bar
Was crowded on this particular day,
I spied an open stool and made my way to it,
Only to be told in a gruff manner
By the occupant on the next post, 'It's taken'.

So I stood and while the keep
Pulled a draft of Old Milwaukee,
I looked at the messenger on the next stool.
Big guy, hands could have been wearing oversize well worn out gloves,
But they weren't, they just looked that way.
Fingers that probably couldn't pick up a matchstick,
And you had to wonder how he could
Possible manage the buttons
O the long sleeve shirt he wore.

So I stood and drank my beer.
And then as if speaking to someone on the empty stool,
He said, 'You always loved the city.
Even the lousy pols, Daley, Washington and the rest.
When they had the Demo Convention here,
You gave them your best.

Yeah, and remember when they tried
To stuff mattresses in them coal tunnels to keep
The loop's basements from flooding -
Them dumb clucks read in a book
That they used mattress' on the Mississippi to control erosion
And just assumed it was the king-sized ones sold on the corner,
Not ones made out of concrete and wire cables.

The old lady said you sometimes quoted me
And I got to tell you I caught hell
For what you said I said, but that's OK.
Long as them, green-as-gourd-guts kids
Trying to run the government got the message.

Yeah, you told em real good,
Cause you really loved this town.'

Then, he says to me,
'Watch my stool,
I got to go to the lo'.
And he was gone.

The barkeep picked up my dollar,
Dipped the glass in the basin of salt water,
Wiped the glass with his bar rag
And put it back on the shelf.

Finally he said,
'He's gone and Slat Grobnik, he's gone too'.

Then I looked, and there was no space at the bar,
No empty stools,
Just the usual crowd of crones
There to get in out of the heat.

Mike Royko (and his friend Slat), 1933 - 1997

S

A Word About Vermillion

A Word about Vermillion*

The Sioux Falls (SD) Argus Leader
Often presents our fair city
With a large and elaborate editorial bouquet,
Albeit one not altogether destitute of briars.

While not approving of Vermillion, in toto,
It is surprised that aught of good
Can come out of a 'place named Vermillion, '
Views with interest 'the beginning of culture'
In this distant community,
And is not a little curious to know
Whether the Vermin
Understand the classical and historical allusions
Occasionally employed in their paper
To point a moral or adorn a tale.

'Vermillion' the Leader reports
With a burst of confidence,
'Is in The Technology Belt'.
Whether by this remark it meant
To enable its readers to locate the great
And only home of the University of South Dakota,
Or to give them an idea
Of the generous proportions of South Dakota,
I know not; but certain
It is that 'Vermillion is in the State of South Dakota, '
And not built around it,
Howsoever incredible this statement
May appear to residents of Sioux Falls.

There has been little said
About Vermillion in the hitherto,
Taking it for granted that her name
And fame had long ago reached
The uttermost ends of the earth -
Had penetrated even the fastnesses of Sioux Falls,
That faithful rendition of the French,

Sioux meaning snake,
The home of an infamous mayor,
School board members and county sheriff,
Familiar to all readers as a winter ski resort;
But alas! even the Great Sioux River
Cascading through the falls cannot
Drown out the hubris of an educated press.

'One would not expect much
From a place named Vermillion, '
After all the post-office department
Had to tell the citizens to spell the name
Of the glorious city with two 'Is'
Rather than one usually accustomed.

Citizens of the United States
And other parts unknown
Continue to send their offspring
To the University in great numbers,
Hopefully with currency.
Despite the efforts of
The Board of Regents to stifle education.

On the matter of money,
You may apologize therefor
By saying you know not if
Vermillion has a bank or
Is a money-order post-office!
But let us not become discouraged.

Yes we have banks,
Although the Livestock Bank
Has renounced its ties to the earth
And joined hands with outsiders,
They and their brethren continue
To hold the earnings of patrons
For only modest fees,
Usually less than the sum
Of the patron's holdings.

There be people on earth
Who know not that Christ is dead,

Or that our Heroic Governor
Hath a habitation and a name,
So leaden-footed is the strumpet Fame.

While in this country, (Yankton) ,
Tom Brokaw has a street named for him
So that avenging listeners can drive
Over a 'liberal commentator'
At their pleasure.
So wags the weary world.

It is painful to reflect
That there be people in Sioux Falls,
And elsewhere,
Who wot not admit that the school board
And superintendent once had the whole community
'Leaning over the bar in disbelief
That taxes should not immediately
Be raised to fulfill the every wish
Of the Teachers Union' -
Whether of Themis or Bacchus I disremember -
Listening spellbound to the flood of
Websterian eloquence by which
Our claim to Clay County school system
Was washed away;
Who have forgotten,
If they; ever knew,
That Carrie Nation
Had her start in Women's Temperance
Here in our very own city.
And, Rand McNally
Omitting the entire state from its Atlas
Thus not even permitting the mistake
Of the seat of the University
For an incidental fly-speck on the map
Of free America.
But so it is.

The Plain Talk with its new editor
Trings forth from week to week,
Heavy-laden with sporting pages,
Reports of new enterprises,

And mantra-maker Frenchification
And other forms of higher culture;

The Rev. Ms. of Episcopal church fame
Chases a be hoofed and behorned devil
Through endless mire, bogs and briars,
While the Professors hang to her coattails
And tearfully plead with their phrenetic sister
That the elusive monster is but a pipe dream;
Youthful atheist not yet well dry behind the ears,
Whittle paynim spears from ball point pens,
Ride full tilt at any
So unwise to disagree with them,
And triumphantly bear those scalps
Away as ornaments for their mountain bikes,
Volvos and minivans;
Dames of high degree roll
Hither-and-yon on roller blades;
The Chamber of Commerce pounders
Manufacturing enterprises
Until there is an audible whirr of wheels
In its own head;
Whereas the City Manager vibrates
Between the 'new' golf course,
Recycling center and bike paths -
A Ciceronian oration in one hand
And a cracked thunder-mug in the other -
And insist on regulating us from 'A to Z',
While the University grinds out lawyers
To labor among the heathen horde of ne'er-do-wells,
Delinquents of all ages and welfare recipients.

But be not misled,
Vermillion is a progressive city!
No other city can lay claim
To having more abandoned bridges
Either on a per capita basis or
As a percent of bridges built
Since the beginning of time.
Could you believe that crossing
The scenic Vermillion river are (or were)
Eight bridges and this doesn't count the railroad!

Oh, and the future which is now.
The new bridge linking Nebraska's 'Good Live'
With South Dakota is now more than just a gleam
In a proud congressman's eye.
Yes by God, we will have this bridge
Which will bring untold wealth
To our fair city.
Imagine how the Corn Huskers
Of Nebraska will line our pockets with gold
As they (all 500 or so who live within 20 miles of the bridge)
Will rush to Vermillion for haircuts, video rentals,
Or a quick massage at the hands
Of our six chiropractors) .

And still people ask if Vermillion
Has banks and/or a money-order post-office!
If you doubt it, take out an accident policy
From our many insurance agents,
And ask the Mayor.
(As an aside, the Mayor for reasons known only to hisoner,
Supports the move of academia from Vermillion
To that great metro to the north, Sioux Falls.

He so expressed his sentiments in a meating (sic)
Before the South Dakota Legislature -
Can you believe it, maybe he has sold short
in the Vermin real estate market?)
For the information of the effete Sioux Falls residents,
We do admit that the population of Vermillion
Is a trifle less than that of Yankton,
The city has greater room in which to grow;
And as her people are chiefly of the unmarrying kind,
The natural increase must ere long place her
At the head of the procession.

Vermillion, we would have you know,
Is the religious storm-center of the Universe,
And one of the few places that gay rights
Are so prominently championed -
A fact for the consideration
Of students of cause and effect.

Well supplied with pure (but foul tasting water) ,
A saloon in every block,
A church around every corner and a
Fire or business failure every day,
Vermillion is indeed a land
Flowing with milk and honey - a place
'Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile'.

And businesses!

There is such wealth in Vermillion
That one has only to throw open the doors
Of a new enterprise to reap your fair share
Of the rewards of this land of milk and honey.
Be not disturbed that ghost of enterprises past,
Hover amidst the cobwebs
Of abandoned buildings and
Prey on the unsuspecting.
Those are not business failures,
No they are only errors in judgement.
A failed bike shop here, a restaurant there,
Clothing stores, auto parts and muffler shops,
Fast food emporiums, dance studios,
Business offices, print shops, &c; .
Why even the Chamber of Commerce
Has abandoned downtown!
And those that remain quarrel
Over the use of dumpsters?
Did not I tell you of the plentitude
That awaits you.

Her streets are so smooth
That a mountain goat can traverse them
With comparative ease,
And so clean that it is seldom that a
Mule (or car) gets lost in the mud.
The tax rate is so low
That if your property
Be well located
You can usually persuade the collector
To accept it as partial payment.

Being deeply religious,

Vermillion takes her business motto from the Bible:
'He that provideth not for his own household
Is worse than an infidel'
, i.e., do unto others.'

While Vermillion culture has not yet
Reached the 'eyther and nyther' stage,
It has more than 'made a beginning.'
The pool room has been succeeded by the spa,
The neck-tie sociable by progressive jazz
And the song of the six-shooter by the libel suit.

(Our very own Capn. Kidder
For which a prominent street is named
Would vouch for this if only he were alive
And not done in by a bunch of angry Mexicans.)

That we are making rapid progress
Is evidenced that the fact that a tree
On which no one has been hanged,
Is now regarded in awe
By the younger natives.

Of course Vermillion, like other places,
Has its drawbacks; but,
Taken by-and-large,
There is no better.
While it is true,
That you cannot secure a bath,
Shave or don a clean shirt here on Sunday,
The saloons and churches are open,
And the city owned liquor store
Maintains a quiet monopoly
On the acquiring of demon rum.

Vermin, as we are wont to call
The good citizens of Vermillion
Are not quite all in the cemetery.
It boast two or three society women
Who do not chew gum, straddle a bike
Nor drink wine coolers.
There be several men here

Who could safely be left alone
With a blind orphan girl,
Or a corpse whose eyes
Are covered with coppers.

Though the Argus Leader
Be well staffed from the Brooking's school
Of journalism and owned
And ruled by USA Today
And thus unaccustomed to independent thought,
They will be surprised to find among
Vermillion's professional men
Those capable of giving exercise
Enough in the intellectual arena.
Should its editors become weary
Of going over into Minnesota to turn around,
Or wearing icicles in their whiskers
Six months in the year and
Inhaling city soot mixed with
Clammy slaughter house fragrance
In lieu of atmosphere,
Let them come to Clay County
Where there is room for expansion,
And grind out their midwinter 'coppee'
- As the Vermin do -
By an open window
(Complements of an absentee landlord)
Through which streams
A golden shower brighter than
Desiring Zeus poured into Dante's prison
- The day- gods' benediction,
Heavy with the fragrance of
Lilac and pulsing with the hoot-owls cry.
Why 'grunt and sweat under a weary life, '
And watch hungry and hollow-eyed
For the ghost to walk,
When a multitude of real estate agents
Stand ready to prove to you
That the unearned increment
Of a suburban lot, only seven-tenths mile
From the center of the city
(And glory of all glories,

Overlooking the Missouri river
As well as a first class cemetery) ,
Would retrieve the fallen fortunes
of Wall Street and transform
The dogs of Lazarus into menials!

Of course Vermillion is the place
(Or nearby) where Gateway computers
Were spawned in an abandoned barn,
Where in the nearby town of Elk Point,
Tis rumored that a humongous oil refinery is to be built
Ignoring the fact that South Dakota has no oil
Or other natural resources for that matter.
Never let that dampen enthusiasm, for with planning
And a modicum of good luck,
A Sewage Treatment Plant may be named after you.
How sad that the Water Treatment Plant already
Bears another's claim to fame and his good name.

Come snow-birdie, come,
And live with me, in a city fairer
Than hasheesh vision,
And where you find a new enterprise
Every hour into which you have but to
Drop you patrimony
To pocket large profits.
(Words added in proof
Tf there is doubt of the veracity of my statements:
Vermillion and the environ is one climate zone
Removed from the surrounding area
Thanks to the 'greenhouse effect'
Of the Missouri river,
As noted by none other than that authority on climate,
The United States Department of Agriculture, no less.)

All trains stop at Vermillion.
When they rumble below the bluff,
The whole village shakes in appreciation.
You will recognize the station
By a structure which resembles
A Kansas packing plant
That has been held by the vandal Time

While criminally assaulted by a cyclone.
You will see mid-aged simpering youth
Wearing large Clinton smiles
(Grinning like a mule eating briars,
Or a possum eating –,
For that matter)
Standing in the foreground
Suggestive of Life
Sporting at the gates of Death
As they jog up
University, Dakota and Bloomingdale streets.
They are Uppies and politically correct,
I might add.
Quick to tell you that you are
In Vermillion, home of THE university,
The envy of Olympian Gods.
If you doubt it ask the joggers
That hover on the leeward side
Of the majestic pond
(Otherwise known as the settling basin,
Nested along the bank
Of the scenic Vermillion River,
Which was misnamed by Lewis and Clark
As the White river on their first visit
To our beautius village,
Which only proves that man
Is not held responsible for trifling mistakes) ,
If you there see a long array of pickup trucks
in the last stages of senescence,
At once you will know that you
Have arrived in Vermillion!

As all roads lead to Vermillion,
You may choose from our ample accommodations.
Perhaps you will choose the Vermillion high-rise.
This is not a building of medieval times
It is under the capable management of
A 'Republican', whose sad sweet smile
Reconciles heady youths
To the thought that we all must die.
You will probably expect to see inscribed
Over the portals,

'Abandon hope all ye who enter here,
We have non-smoking rooms, '
But the legend of despair
Has been erased by the gnawing tooth
Of Time and only 'non-smoking rooms' remains.

Sight of the 'dome',
A ride over the corduroy roads,
And the Dantean face of your host
Will probably breed a frantic desire
To take the next train to the Badlands,
Or flee to a second-hand cemetery,
Where more cheerful surroundings
Will purge you of *maladie du pays*;
But the feeling will gradually
Wear away as the beauties
Of city unfold themselves,
The glorious climate
Begins to get next to you,
Our passionate no-see-ums
Drink their fill,
You find that both the religious
And liquor are orthodox,
And the lordly strut of the University
Professors brings to mind
Aesop's fable of the frog.
Some day the State will add buildings
To harmonize with the 'dome'
Which looks not unlike
a mid-size Texas toadstool.
And, the town will have student lodging
Not mistaken for out-houses.
Some day we'll have streets
That wouldn't wreck
The Deacon's One Hoss Shay in a week.
Some day we'll bury
The hypocritical mossbacks
Who have long sniveled
About Town Pride while cutting
The throat of the town
With a cold-blooded villainy
That makes every man possessing a dollar

Afraid to pass through the place
With the car windows open.

Some day.

- With apologies to W.C. Brann and his survivors. This was paraphrased from 'A Word About Waco'. Written in the late 1890s and published by his widow in 1919.

As a footnote to history, Brann's humor was little understood in Waco, Texas (deep in the bible belt of the South) where he published the Iconoclast. His caustic views on a variety of social, political, religious and economic issues stuck in the craw of the locals but he had a world-wide readership of some 90,000 subscribers. On April 1, 1898 he was shot in a street duel. (Hardly a duel, as Brann was shot in the back and yet was able to fire in return.) Captain Tom E. Davis of Sloan's Texas Rangers and Brann both died the following day of their wounds.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Advice To A Daughter

I married a wife of late,
The more's my joyful fate;
I married her for love as my fancy did me move,
And not for a worldly estate as others have.

But oh! The birthing sickness
Soon changed her likeness,
And all her beauty did fail.
Work bent her back and she became stout not frail.

So hasten daughter and young swain,
Begin songs together and sing refrain.
Enjoy youth and pleasures best,
Avoid pursuits of other's quest.

For those that on imagination go
To island kingdoms, knights bestow,
A fools mission, now it's clear,
Life is cruel to those most dear.

Sancho Panza remembered his own lost youth and the finding of true love.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Aesop Revised By Archy

Archy points out the fallacy of letting the Government take care of everyone in a fable which he called, aesop revised by archy.

aesop revised by archy

a wolf met a spring
lamb drinking
at a stream
and said to her
you are the lamb
that muddied this stream
all last year
so that I could not get
a clean fresh drink
i am resolved that
this outrage
shall not be enacted again
this season
i am going to kill you
just a moment
said the lamb
i was not born last
year so it could not
have been i
the wolf then pulled
a number of other
arguments as to why the lamb
should die
but in each case the lamb
pretty innocent that she was
easily proved
herself guiltless
well well said the wolf
enough of argument
you are right and i am wrong
but i am going to eat
you anyhow
because i am hungry

stop exclamation point
cried a human voice
and a man came over
the slope of the ravine
vile lupine marauder
you shall not kill that
beautiful and innocent
lamb for i shall save her
exit the wolf
left upper entrance
snarling
poor little lamb
continued our human hero
sweet tender little thing
it is well that i appeared
just when i did
it makes my blood boil
to think of the fright
to which you have been
subjected in another
moment I would have been
too late come home with me
and the lamb frolicked
about her new found friend
gamboling as to the sound
of a wordsworthian tabor
and leaping for joy

as if propelled by a stanza
from william blake
these vile and bloody wolves
went on our hero
in honest indignation
they must be cleared out
of the country
the meads must be made safe
for sheepocracy
and so jollyng her along
with the usual human hokum
he led her to his home
and the son of a gun

did not even blush when
they passed the mint bed
gently he cut her throat
all the while inveighing
against the inhuman wolf
and tenderly he cooked her
and lovingly he sauced her
and meltingly he ate her
and piously he said a grace
thanking his gods
for their bountiful gifts to him
and after dinner
he sat with his pipe
before the fire meditating
on the brutality of wolves
and the injustice
of the universe
which allows them to harry

poor innocent lambs
and wondering if he
had not better
write to the papers
for as he said
for God s sake can t
something be done about it

archy
(Archy of Don Marquis)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Alasdair Macintyre

In explaining most anything
Alasdair MacIntyre is certainly boring
As he begins to dissect
His perception of different "facts".

Like Richard who if you asked the time of day
Would spent the first five minutes explaining away
How a clock is made up of its many parts
And their relationship to all the internal works.

Then when the hour's past
Richard would give you the time at last
Which had no meaning at that time
For the necessity had past; a minor crime?

So Alasdair begins to explain the subject of the hour
By exploring all the literature of which he's aware
Bit by bit, spinning a story
That somehow becomes increasingly boring.

And his sentences go on and on
With seldom punctuation to sound a gong
That here's where the meat of the argument is
Hidden far away from the subject by many a clause.

He should be made to diagram his sentences
In school-like exercise in serving penitence.
So that he can understand
What communication is like to his fellow man.

With his choice of words so rare
Would be nice if he provided a thesaurus there
To (in a brief moment if at all possible) explain
Just exactly what was the intent and so exclaim.
(Perhaps in a footnote?)

But no, he writes for those who supposedly understand
The precepts flowing from his pen.
Pity the poor editor or friend who was commissioned

To review this horrendous submission.

For they unlike the reader such as you
Had an obligation to read and understand the author's spew.
So that any errors of judgment could be corrected
Before in review, the philosopher is drawn and quartered.

S

On reading (or attempted to read) , "After Virtue" by Alasdair MacIntyre.
University of Notre Dame Press,1981. A quote:

On heroic poetry, two central claims: "The first is that that structure embodies a conceptual scheme which has three central interrelated elements: a conception of what is required by the social role which each individual inhabits; a conception of excellences or virtues as those qualities which enable an individual to do what his or her role requires, and a conception of the human condition as fragile and vulnerable to destiny and to death, such that to be virtuous is not to avoid vulnerability and death, but rather to accord them their due." pp 121.

Perhaps he was named well: Alas, dair'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Albion - Thomas Oelker

As I carefully opened the dirty, broken book
Laid aside by one who needless took
It's place on the shelf
And put in another pelf

The book's subject, old beyond my years
Centuries having passed in darkest fears
Until by chance I discovered the treasure within
Words written with ink and pen.

The thoughts of man who wondered what would be
As the balance of war seemed to deny freedom to such as he
Yet his words spoke loud and clear
Victory we must have, have no fear.

The words penned there so long ago
When in despair the heart must go
Where the brain can not be trusted with thoughts so strong
To call forth the memory of Albion.

So it was that Airman Oelker wrote his poems
In the book, Catherine, about the Spanish can of worms
and filed the margin and every blank page
With thoughts of freedom coming of age.

And then the war was ended
And he and others were free, prison suspended
To return to the outer world where freedom had been denied
And cast out his book, and the contents inside.

Until I found it lying there
Its cover dirty, torn and in disrepair
A testament to the will of man
To say, over and over, Yes, I Can.

On finding 'Catherine of Aragon' in a heap of dirty books. Thomas L. Oelker wrote poems and drew cartoons of the planes and the crews that took part in the bombing of Germany near the end of the Second World War. His plane (B26) was shot down and he was captured and placed in prison until the end of the

war. While he is dead and burried, his poems live on.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Alone, Late At Night

'So round, so firm
So fully packed,
So free and easy.

(Well maybe not.)

The product regulated by both
The Food and Drug Administration
And the Department of Agriculture,
Is sold to anyone who can ante up the buck or so,
And it's addictive, just ask someone who knows.

The flip top package invites you in
And from there on, you're on your own.
Appearances are everything and
Madison Avenue has gone out of its way
To entice the unsuspecting to buy not
One but two or more.

Then there's the matter of the food companies
Actually being in this business,
Peddling taste, while ignoring
Additives that may get you in the end.

For those who are discerning,
The manufacturer offers different varieties.
So that if you tire of one,
Or perhaps are just adventuresome
You can choose.

Once hooked, there should always be a stash
Hidden somewhere for that moment when the pangs
Strike and shops are closed, and a long night
Awaits before the morn.

The parent company is one perhaps you recognize,
Kraft, Conagra, Tyson's, Smuckers,
No, not any of these but still
A name familiar in most households.

So in the privacy of your home,
Reach way back, behind all the other items
And choose that which for the moment
Promises to sate your lust.

Best to keep it to yourself
As some may make fun of you for
Being so entrapped in a web
From which there is no escape.

Your offer to share
Will go unappreciated and
You may suffer rejection
For simply trying to do a good deed,
Spreading the word,
Making the product more acceptable
To those that scorn something
That has been a pacifier
For generations.

But first let's consider the shortcomings
That which is so long and cool
Is spiced with flavorings and of course
Like all tobacco products has a fair amount of sugar
Either there originally or added for quality assurance.
Quality Assurance, Sure!

Pop the top and admire the way in which
Industry has met the challenge of putting the most
Of those buggers into an orderly display.
No space wasted here.

And the march of color across the tops
Of those you lust for,
Is enough to cause one to consider dumping
The whole of them on the counter so you can
Have your way with them.

But wait,
Place you nose up close
Close your eyes.

What aroma stirs the emotions?

Breath deeply
And exhale slowly
This is how it should be.
Ah! ! !

Now greedily take one and
Roll it between the thumb and forefinger.
Examine it carefully,
Caress it with you lips,
Let the tongue explore.

Aren't you glad you're alone
No one should share the
Ecstasy of the unknown.
The touch and the taste.

It's too late,
Emotions take control
The first is gone and
You are already reaching for another.

Before you know,
The pack is empty
And yet you are not satisfied,
What to do but open another,

Can of Hormel Vienna Sausages.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Alzheimer's

The Unappreciated Side of Alzheimer's

As he (or she) slips away
It is you, who wishes him (or her) to stay
But like sand trickling through fingers
They seem to no longer want to linger.
Seeking to return to an earlier day,
And with past companions, play.

A kinder gentler world of fun
An ascent into heaven has begun
When all about are as they were
Not burdened with today's maddening whirl.
They smile and shake their head
As if to say, "Goodbye, it's nothing to dread.

For I shall see you in the end
My bags are packed, my trip, I want to begin."

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Ode To An Old Grey Hair

Once you were the Queen of the fairways
Striding along ahead of the pack
Club in hand, eye on the ball
As you with deft stroke played the game.

Time wears away the luster
Of past dreams and lays bare
The fact that Aging is not for Sissies
But for those who persevere.

As the shadows grew long
The shine of your sun-bleached tresses
Dimmed as they grew thin
But memory carried you through.

The hopes and joys of youth
May have faded
But you, although bent by time
Continued to follow a dream.

How much you contributed
To those who follow in your footsteps
Remains to be seen
As they have not the vision of the future
That your generation shared.

Disillusions did not dissuade you
False prophets did not mislead you
Scarcity did cause you to want
Mockery did not bow your head.

Oh, Grey Hair, how we miss you
How we think often of you
How we remember your firm hand
Your gentle encouragement.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Ode To Dr Hitesh Sheth

Once came into view
A man of tallents, not a few
For he wrote as others might
That human experiece is a given right
A right to see the world in a different way
Not as one would like it to be or to endless stay
For Dr Hitesh Sheth (no period after the Dr) as he chooses
So as not to be confused with those blue noses
That study the lint in their navel
Before exclaming, it's a dark hole of which I alone can marvel.
For Dr Sheth has been there before
And knows Medical facts (and more)
Which he places into rhyme in an easy way
As if to say,
"Diogenes and I strive to teach
On the tree of life, the low hanging fruit is in easy reach."

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Ode To Elke Nigro

Poetry and prose
Are like an itch
I suppose,
That you can't quite reach.

But scratch it if you can
Cause it wont go away.
No need to plan,
What to write or say.

Just let the words bubble forth
And maybe, just maybe
What you write will be of worth
So others will say, Elke Nigro passed this way.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Ode To His'oner*

Rudy Giuliani

Late to the show was His'oner
But later late than never
He called ahead to ensure
The audience would endure
How to hold them was the Q
And so he said, 'this is what we'll do.'
Give them ice-cream from the Creamery
That will hold them in good memory
To await my late arrival just in case
There's another delay in our haste.

So the word went out that, tis free for all
And those about responded to the call
Of course there were those that sleep in the street
Who thought this was something that couldn't be beat
They joined the party loyalist
And mingled in their midst
Who knows, maybe some will remain to vote this Fall
While others make the pilgrimage, as the North doth call.

Some had been there hours before
As they had been encourage by free parking lore
When the babes grew tired of the lack of action
Moms and dads were sent a packing.
And the old folks, those over fifty
Gave up as their tv beacons them in a jiffy,
But the true supporters were at last treated
With the arrival of this one who has been glory fated.

Finally, only two and half hours late
The mayor was there to please their plate
For you see he stood behind the counter
And served up cones to those in close encounter
Before addressing the party loyalist
In his well rehearsed address.

But for those who were there in attendance

Only one though will be in their remembrance
T'was the smiling one from New York
Who addressed those in Mundt Park.
Reminding them that this nation of ours
Must stand tall in the face of so many wars.
And be a place of which to be proud
Regardless, when opponents voices are so loud.

Voting is not a privilege or a right
But to be defended, day and night
To ensure that our country has the best to lead
While others seek to deceive.
For a Democracy exist only when
All are given equal rights of man,
When special interest are finally buried underneath
The hubris of the election in defeat.
Republicans will save the nation.
Our work has just begun.

*Lakeland Florida, January 14,2008, at the Creamery, Mundt Park.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Ode To Pascal Bruckner

Pascal Bruckner is a philosopher
In all the meanings of the title,
Who by word, thought and deed
Attempts to alert mankind to its task
Of standing and walking erect.

For while the easy way
Is to just pass the day
In idle thought and action
Man has a higher mission
To see that he is being led
By others who have been fed
Ideas, or theories, yet
That they propound as fact.

Bruckner sees the glass of which we speak
As neither half full, nor empty, but, perhaps with a crack?
Created by man, a fusion of silicon
That can be raised to the lips to atone
For evils, yes evils, proposed by others
Who lay a knife to the whetting stone.
The elixir to be drunk
Said to be contaminated (pure bunk!)

Overwrought working with words and visual images
The Judas' amongst us proclaim the end is nigh
Promising that for sure we all will die
Marching mankind into another Battle of the Roses
Where the leaders proclaim,
'There is no retreat
To do so would be to die in shame.'

And so, as Bruckner writes;
With all the false information
Man soon becomes immune
To the doctrine of hate, environment disaster
And such other palaver
That spews forth.
And taking the glass to his lips

Is soon refreshed.

The Ideology of Catastrophe, an essay by Pascal Bruckner that in translation by Alexis Cornel, was published in the Wall Street Journal, April 10,2012.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Ode To Peter Hammill

Inside the house where you do lie
Is no roof so you see the midnight sky
A brush of air stirs the silence of the room
Moving through walls that suggest a tomb
But the walls are not there as is the roof so
For all are in your imagination and have to go.

The furniture of the room is grand
That is, as if it was there by plan
Chairs, tables, beds and cases for your treasures
Are assembled as you imagine them for your pleasures
But there is no floor in this darkened room to show
Or provide support over the void below.

And the broken mirror that reflects your face
Is put there, not in a distant place
Catching the light of a passing lamp
Reflecting the cold and bitter damp
But with no place on which the mirror to hang
It lies face down just the same.

So you write on paper with pen in hand
Never mind that the words are just traces in the sand
Catching the mood of the midnight hour
As witches, and goblins seek to devour
The kindred spirit that lives within
The fat filled skull that was, yes, a human brain.

Write on, write on, Peter Hammill
For there mongst us are those who know what skill
Is possessed by this one who writes
Of the inner most passion that fills his nights
Emerging with a dark foreboding tone
That happens when we are home (all alone.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Ode To The Passing Of A Champion

There lies the body cold and wet
Left by the survivors less we forget
A shadow of what was and would never be again
The reminder that greatness is a fickle thing.

Once proud the emperor stood amongst others
Warriors, sisters, brothers
But most have passed this way
To be buried or cast away.

This one for which we mourn
Was once a paragon of virtue and strong
But with the passage of time
The body diminished from its prime.

Dead, maybe not quite, some say the pulse remains
Feeble it is, as the soul sustains.
The body, lifeless as the candle glows weak
The phase whereby recovery is not to be.

Look to the eyes that no longer see
The crows have fed again
Picking at the soft tissues as they destroy
Avoiding that which is difficult as they wait.

Like the Indians who saw the tongue and liver as the only
Tissues that were easy to digest
And so tore them away from the beast
As they awaited the self destruction of the muscle and sinew
To make the feast more palatable to their remaining few.

But now we view the body on the marble slab
Growing cold as the heat of emotions ebb away
Soon there will be nothing to remember of this one that was great
A mass that once assembled had a forceful sway,
But not today.

The pallbearers, either honorary or not
Doing the unpleasant task, stand together.

There Poe, Mencken, Royall, Brann and a host of others
Bow their heads as the great one has passed.
They remove their head coverings in respect
Knowing that never will there be another to replace this one
That once stood proud champion of liberty
(And yes well written prose.)
The sisters that remain are weak and pale
Propped up with a false sense of security
But knowing that they also will face this same fate
Only a matter of time before they also will feel
The blade which severs the body from the head.

Some remember when the vanquished stood proud
Full size and strong, but then in a moment of weakness
Became a shrunken one,
Suffering the circumstances of time that
Shrinks the spine and causes a curvature
From which recovery is impossible.

So we await the final extinguishing of the flame
As the Journal's pages no longer contain
The essence of life that freedom impressed
On the paper with ink that could not be suppressed.

(On the shrinking of the Wall Street Journal as it lays cold and wet on the marble
steps of Baltimore.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Old Horse Named Maude (In The Time Of Robert Burns)

Old Maude and me
Had been together seems since recorded history
She'd be about 35 years old
As I recall, through many a winter cold

But she no longer pulls the plow
With wifie leading and I keeping to the furrow
Out to pasture with the cow
And there she'll stay till death's bow.

Master Robert asked me why
I'd waste perfectly good grass on the bay
Yet, there was no way that I'd put her down
For she'd already earned her pay when she was sound.

True her bones showed through
The hair coat, matted, no new hair grew
But she had a life blest
For now she had plenty of time to rest.

In early spring as I was digging rocks in the field
(Seems there are always more when you till)
A boy came across to see me about old Maude
Was the son of James Chambers across the ford.

Said, Master Robert sent him to get the mare
Cause she was there to share
His fine horse had gone lame
And he'd use Maude for a while this spring.

We got the lines from the shed
And the boy hopped on her back and headed
Back to Mister Robert's place
Kicking her sides, as if to race.

But old Maude just ambled along
Ignoring the plummeting to race from home

One foot a front of the other is how
She'd learned to pull the plow.

Months went by
And as the rock piles grew high
I wondered how I'd get them home
With the sled that needed to be pulled along.

Then one day arrived at the gate
Master Robert with his daughter, Kate.
She was driving the rig and smartly too
Being pulled by Maude, stepping high just so.

Kate got down and held the rig firm and good
And at Maude's head there she stood
Brushing her mane and scratching her ears
Offering a bit of carrot to tease.

After a while Master Robert said to me
"I came to make a deal you see,
This old nag has caught me dauter's eye
And so a swap tween us is nigh."

I stood there and admired the two year old mare
That was tied to the back of the rig there
A fine young horse, the best I'd seen
And wondered just what he'd mean.

Said he, "I figure a trade with a boot is in order
If we can arrive with the amount as a starter
Let's just say five pounds would be enough
For a fair trade between us."

I ran me hand along old Maude's neck
Admiring how fat and sleek
She'd become with the attention.
Was a match made in heaven.

Her back was smooth and clean
Polished were the traces she stood between
The crupper was bright and well placed
So's the rig could be forward or backward faced.

I stood there with arms extended
And showed him my two empty hands as I intended
Five pounds was out of the question,
No way could I pay such a ransom.

Then he reached into his sleeve and drew out his purse
A five pound note, he selected first
Placed it in me hand as tho
The deal was done, if I thought so.

"Take the filly, and that's my share"
And he reached behind and untied the mare.
She'll work, cause she's already broke to plow
And I know you need a good horse just now."

Thrust the lines into my hands to show
The deal was done, and said to Kate, "It's time to go."
Up on the rig she bounded with a grin
Turned it smartly and off they ran.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

An Omelette Is For Lovers

Properly season the teflon coated frying pan
With half pound bacon cooked crisp and lean
Pour off the excess fat and leave a trace
That gives a hint of savory taste.

Then in a bowl large and steady,
Grate a cup of the best cheddar cheese when you're ready
Only the best aged yellow will do
When making an omelette just for two.

Crack five eggs into the bowl
And then add in this special order,
Half can of "original" Rotel tomatoes
(seasoned with green peppers and such
The hot or spicy Rotel is a bit too much.)

Make sure half the liquid from the can
Is added to the growing omelette for the frying pan.
Then a heaping tablespoon of Parmesan cheese
Added, is sure to please.

Liberal add black pepper and a bit of salt
More can be added later, if you forgot.
Then stir with a fork to blend it all
The mixture should be lumpy, as I recall.

Now into the hot frying pan do add
The bowls ingredients, with a splash.
Then watch over it like a mother hen,
Bubbles should begin to appear from within.
That's steam formed from the water of the Rotel
It's cooking the eggs, we like so well.

Take a spatula and lift the edge of the omelette
Allowing the liquid to flow underneath.
(It may be necessary to tilt the pan
To make sure all the liquid also ran.)
The lifted edge should show a bit of tan color
Indicating the heat is just the right adore.

Now with a swirling motion move the omelette if you can
So that it doesn't stick to the frying pan.
When it moves freely and the bubbling has stopped,
It's time to make the omelette flop.

Best to stand over the kitchen sink when you try
To encourage the omelette to fly.
Shake the pan as before,
Then when you're ready a flip or the wrist and more,
Will send the omelette up-up-and away
Hopefully in the pan it will come to rest and stay.

There, it's flipped and ready for the final touch
Back over the heat, but not too much.
It won't take much time to tan the bottom
So be prepared to serve it quick for certain.

Perhaps a bit of toast with butter is in order
Depends on what ever taste you may harbor.
Now on the table your bacon, toast and omelette
Are ready for a true feast like no other.

As you survey what you have done,
It's a meal for more than one.
But more than that it is to be,
It's an expression of love for she or he.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Analog Memory

The best understanding of memory
Is provided by Edison and his phonograph.
When you scratch along the groove
A tiny current ensues.

Amplified by whatever means
And in the (phonograph's) realm
Music is the sound
□ tone pure and clear
Loud or silence you hear.

Scientists are intrigued,
When they probe the brain
They find electrons in motion
And assume that's memory in action.

Never giving thought to how
It's recorded for playback now
Or later when the thought arises
To scratch a bit of RNA where it lies.

Stored within brain cells without number
Is memory that can be recalled, awake or in slumber
To flash before your eyes or as a passing thought
That fills in whatever you might.

Nature never gets it right
She stores things both wrong and right
So that on recall perhaps
Facts are (maybe) facts are seen
and remembered in a different light.

So in that bit of grey matter up above
Cells without number are there to record (remember)
In a bit of fancy footwork in writing a code
Of nucleotides that are set aside for later use, a la mode.

Now we come to the question to be asked,
"What happens when you die? "

Is it immediately erased
Or there to be reread (as a record player's trace?)

Puzzle that out if you like
But wouldn't it be
Wonderful to reread the thoughts and visions
Of a departed one who really isn't gone.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

And Then There Were Two

At first there were majors, five
It is not to be denied
They provided services
Expected of financial houses.

They were good at moving funds here and there
No problems, as they dealt with care
For when the pipeline of funds became
Depleted, they were restored, pledging their own good name.

But losses became a burden
Because of issues they could not turn
And one of the five got caught out
While the others went about.

Collapse was eminent
Until a rescue was sent
Covered by a generous offer.
And another house added it to its coffer.

Then there were four
All active for sure
Pledging their wealth
Through fact and stealth.

Until one of the oldest
And noblest
Found that the others
Were not true brothers.

They were acting as a troika
Each sought to undermine the other
And while appearing to be assistance
Were scheming in malfeasance.

Then there were three!
As the market adjusted to see
Who would be the next victim
Of their planned mayhem.

(The maliciously injuring or maiming someone so as to render the victim defenseless.)

Triage was to be expected
One would survive with no help directed,
Another would perhaps require a bit of assistance
To ensure the company's existence.

Alas, the other as a medical team would decide
Had no place to hide
Being bought in the dark of day
And like others passed away.

Then there are two
And higher authorities wonder what to do.
For if either should fail
The markets would surely descent into hell.

So it must be
Since there are no longer three
That two must survive
For the markets to remain alive.

Who are these two that are the chosen ones?
Politics plays a major role it seems.
And who will pay for this selecting?
Will brothers in the cloth put in a bit of skin?

Stay tuned!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Anger

Anger is a natural act
When one responds to a worrismatic fact
And expresses the passion held within
To alert the world that 'it might have been.'

When the offender is unaware
Or even worse, doesn't care
Then let your anger bubble forth
So that YOU can set the course.

The course to correct that which is wrong
And let others know that what you feel is strong.
In love or politics or many other challenges
Passion held within ferments and damages.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Archy The Flying Cockroach

Birds do it,
Bees do it,
Even man has to try.
But can cockroaches really fly?

Archy pondered this though in his head
While munching on a bit of stale, but delicious bread.
Why not? Have I not wings,
In fact two pairs of these flighty things?

How to use them was the question of the hour
No instructions came with them for this endeavour.
Of the finest materials they were made
Just right for power flying or to glide.

A running jump was out of the question
Too much effort would give him indigestion.
Or perhaps to wait for a fair breeze
To lift him as gently as you please.

Time was of the essence as the clock ticked away
Soon, out would come Mehitabel at the break of day.
She'd no doubt laugh and have her fun
To see Archy in a flight, just begun.

No a proper launch would be the way
To enter this event, come what may.
To the edge of the cabinet he boldly walked,
Unfolding his wings that had been so carefully packed.

Testing the wind to see if there was a proper course
Like human pilots wanting to get it in their face.
Unfortunate in this room so small
There was not a breath of wind at all.

What was the words that parachutists say?
Geronomo! That's it as they jump out the bay.
So with this into the air, did Archy leap
A leap of faith as he left his feet.

Soaring freely in the air,
This is fun, he thought without a care.
To the left and right he did go
Flexing his wings too and fro.

Suddenly afright. Impending doom.
Directly in front, a terror loomed.
The fridge with its steel exterior
Brought fear of a crashing terror.

Pull up! Pull up! In panic he cried,
And just in time the wall he shied.
Now upward he soared in flight
Wings a-flapping with all his might.

Now he discovered the curse of flyers everywhere,
A power-stall with nose pointed in the air.
Suddenly throughout the wings and body; tremors
As air no longer flowed over the outstretched members.

In mid air, Archy was suspended
But downward was the course, now intended.
A spiral our flying roach fell into,
Toward terra firma and death too.

Remembering from a book whose cover he once had enjoyed,
Use the rudder and flaps to gain some air were the instructions to be employed.
Alas, he had neither at his command
What to do in this instant head stand.

He wiggled his abdomen with a frantic twist
And success! It appeared the floor he would miss.
Zooming again, up, up and away
He would live to fly another day.

But something told Archy that there was another problem in the air
Everything was upside down, including the table and the chair.
For he saw that in his recovery,
He was flying belly up, not a pleasant discovery.

Wings that once to the cockroach were gifted,

Now, no matter how he tried he was not lifted.
A crash was what he had in store
As he approached the kitchen floor.

On the slick oaken surface, to his final resting place
Archy skidded upside-down in disgrace.
And there Mehitabel found him in the early morning light
Feet up in the air. Dead. Surely done in by fright.

But this story has a happy ending
Archy's life was not suspended.
Once made upright on four legs or more,
He skedaddled neath the pantry door.

So we are told.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Are All Poets Mad?

Are all poets mad?
That's the question, to be had
Maybe posed by Shakespeare (As well he might
in Winter's Night.)

But Robert Burton had the answer.
Yes, they are for certain.
And all others who inhabit this sphere
Are mad as well It's clear.

For in 'The Anatomy of Melancholy',
Burton went on to examine characteristics of
those who suffer from the malady
Called melancholy.
(And he surely did as well) .
Fall under it's spell.

Here's what he had to say
In that long ago day,
About learning, for sure -
Learning is the foodstuff, impure.
That provides the sustenance
To survive an empty belly's persistence,
When affected by the malady
Called by others, melancholy.

His writings are an enigma flowing from his pen,
With no apparent beginning or end,
As he becomes so engrossed in the pursuit of a subject
That there is nothing he can neglect.
He cannot escape the impulse to explain
Just a bit further some issue that comes to the insane.

Burton if asked the time,
Would begin by emptying his mind
Telling you how to build a clock.
Complete with what gave the sound, 'tick-tock.'

For poets, rhetoricians, historians,

Philosophers and mathematicians,
Sophisters (those who use specious reasoning
(which sounds good but which is wrong in telling!))
Are like grasshoppers,
Who must sing in summer,
And pine in the winter,
For there is no preferment
For them in final judgement.

Even so they were at first,
Not curst,
If you believed that pleasant tale of Socrates
Which he told to Phaedrus,
Under a plane tree about noon
When it was hot and soon,
The grasshoppers began to sing
The message of their being.

For Grasshoppers were once scholars,
Musicians, poets, and noted others.
In a time before the Muses were born,
And meat and drink they spurned.
As they required no daily fare,
So were turned by Jupiter into grasshoppers there.

And poets may well be
Turned again into Grasshoppers,
If they are to remain free..

Robert Burton in 'The Anatomy of Melancholy' provides an apt description of the word that has many scratching their head. He wrote in 1617 or thereabouts, 'Many new and old writers have spoken confusedly of it, confounding melancholy and madness... others acknowledge a multitude of kinds, and leave them indefinite... pp 112, The Anatomy of Melancholy, William Tegg and Co., London,1854.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Arrogance And False Pride In The Hudibras Burlesque Tradition

Ralpho scratched his balding head,
Turned to address Hudibras and said,
Clear, tho, as you make it be,
It's impossible for me to see.

Understanding the ways of learned men,
Acting on behalf of kit and kin,
To kill one half mankind is best, *
Just to philosophize the rest.
(From Hudibras in America, pp 117, Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition)

So say you, 'It was in early days,
A group of men found in their wandering way(s)
Wild areas far from civilization,
Where only the Redskins provided competition.

To a lush river valley with fertile soil,
With gentle climate in which to toil,
They came and so did settle,
Far from where other White Men might meddle.

This seemed to be God's offer to them alone,
A fine place to bring womanfolk and make a home.
The Injuns were persuaded to move Westward,
By force of arms and pestilence; peace was marred.

Having established themselves there -
'Sage descendants we shall see,
Shine forth in the next century,
Proving their wishes to inherit
That discontented factious spirit.' (Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, Joseph Peart, pp109)

Perhaps these events would have gone unwritten,
In man's history had not another clan been so smitten,
By the other side of the river and there established ties,
To th' land to raise their own growing families.'

'Ah, Ralpho, lest you forget,
The story isn't finished yet.
These men of great Rakishness,
Had yet to meet their equal in the West.

'They were Religious it is true,
And maintained harsh discipline upon their crew.
Such they do build their faith upon,
Holy text and pike and gun.'
(Hudibras, S. Butler, Part I, Canto I, Line 195)

Let my muse continue, altho unworth,
Lacing History as did Sam Butler's notary.
These two factions of Adam's side,
Were not too long in peace abide.

In circumstances for man to thrive,
Freedoms taken; both far and wide.
Cows, swine and other animal kind,
Were give free range to what they find.

With a sharp knife notches were given,
To pig's ears a marke so riven.
With ownership in doubt, upon one's hogs disappearance,
T'was suspected, other cuts were made to change marks `pearance.

But I get ahead of my story,
Lest I leave out that which is most gory.
First, while peace did exist,
A wariness then did persist.

Second, disputes were for the most part settled,
Not without testing each sides metal.
'And, like a maggot in a sore,
Would that which gave it life, devour.'
(Hudibras, S. Butler, Part II, Canto II, Line 557)

The conflict attracted Government's attention.
Laws of men, were tried as intervention.
They scoffed at the way of this Mad Hatter,
Since it t'was a 'family' matter.

Fine words were spoken by both side(s) .
As arbitrators attempted bridging gaps, wide.
Putting a face on the 'feud' by offering to negotiate,
No wonder neither side was willing to participate.

'Tush! Quoth Mac-..., Never flinch
From principles, nor spurn, no winch:
Ne'er talk of laws 'gainst nature's right;
You know far better things, Good Knight: '
(Scottish - Hudibas in the Burlesque Tradition, pp84. William Meston)

Regardless, as money flowed and life was improving,
Hands freely moved through communities at their choosing.
There existed an uneasy truce,
Except when lubricated with 'corn' juice.

T'was not unusual to partake, outside of Lent,
Of festive occasions and merriment.
Such it is, of a lad and lass, written,
That he and she were smitten.

To the woods they did go,
And nine months later, Nature did bestow.
A love child unwanted by either side,
Suggesting that each had something to hide.

A manchild of the other side, the misses Pater did pursue,
And members of that household he did slew.
Blood was spilled of man and wife,
As powders cheap and so is life.

Some say a sow was the reason,
For pursuit of evil in this season.
Women folk have many names,
Cow, sow, hen and chick or simply dames.

Maybe money was short as were the tempers,
But with these two tribes, it was grudges semper.
'Haps it was menfolk had more free time,
Or maybe, just rutting season sublime.

Whatever, the boastful leader of one group,
Did encroach upon the shrine of the other troop.
The result, an immediate call to arms,
'God, family and revenge', were the charms.

Across the river; house and crops ashes became,
As marauding bands; property and livestock they did claim.
Of course to provide the proper lubrication,
More corn drippings were partaken.

Homes were at risk when foolishly set,
In frontier areas where first the violence met.
The folk therein were soon to pay the price,
For the arrogance of their leaders advice.

Killing became a lustful affair,
Women and children were caught in the snare.
Uncounted among the many lost,
Was the reason for this holocaust.

As it were, one side had better,
Guns and powder.
Destroying all the other's dreams,
And wiped out everything.

Being no match in an open fight,
The other side evened the score by raids at night.
Some of which were suicidal;
Killing others as if t'were cattle.

Each claimed high moral and religious grounds.
The land was theirs! The did expound.
As the warring continued and escalated,
Each offered to stop the violence, if once abated.

Judging if the other cooperated,
Was their 'right' and so they stated.
Until the other side, did as required,
The right to attack, kill and maim was desired.

Striking at leaders is a flaw,
Of some unwritten chivalrous law.

Far easier to inflict punishment,
On innocents that can't escape the battle's torment.

Tie one hand behind your back side,
And swallow your losses and your pride.
Came the offer of peace from the bloated leader,
Who would never accept such terms if other side did tender.

A Court of Authority did speak,
Of terms about which they both might tweak.
But peace was not the objective of these men,
Who's goals were to shame the other and to win.

Offers from one side was seen,
As a weakness of mein.
Each arrogant leader was determined,
To claim the valley for their own Kindred.

To eliminate the other side, and cut the roots of the family tree,
Was the only cause to which they could agree.
So more death and destruction was the fate,
Of hapless members of both clans as peace they did await.'

Ralpho interrupted and said, 'But wait, Sir Knight how does it end,
Are Adam's children to always fight to defend,
Their holy places, homes and family.
Or is there an answer to this malady.'

Hudibras answered, 'Most pious One, you seek an answer,
Be aware, the solution was obtained without rancor.
As dismal as this all sounds,
Peace did come to these hallowed grounds.

To this sacred place where so many died,
And bigoted leaders, to their people lied,
The answer was so easily posted,
That man may wonder how it went unnoticed.

Why did law and order return?
The people did for peace so yearn.
For an answer, obvious and simple,
As the face on which there is a pimple.

In the World without; prosperity spread and offered treasures,
The two tribes were not immune from these life's pleasures.
Prosperity like the tide raising a boat,
Upon the economy did each community float.

People on both sides found,
Themselves to be more financially sound.
Between assets or to fight, they had to choose.
Which? They were willing to lose.

While the leaders remained,
At odds with each other and yet no victory claimed,
The settlers saw that the only way,
they could live in peace was to the laws obey.

Deny the leaders their guns and knives,
Which had wracked so much havoc on their lives.
Remove them from leadership anointed,
To which they had themselves appointed.

One posturing leader was seen to be,
Seeking war for his own grandification and not victory.
He retired to his large landed estate,
Where he lived as a King awaiting God's fate.

The other side's, 'leader', a snaggle-tooth wonder,
Who only wanted riches and plunder,
Was not their leader by their call,
And retired to his young wife, child and all.

So you see Ralpho, fables as L'Estrange did spin,
Often do come to a good end.
Such it was with the Hatfield and McCoy feud,
Two misplaced leaders who became unglued.'

If the 'leaders' looked beyond their world of sand
They would find that peace can be known to middle-eastern man.
These bitter men and women, living in the past,
Stretch out misery and seek only for it to last.

Making peace is never easy and to the letter,
But compromise and it's a damn sight better.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Aunt Lilia's And Uncle John's

There on the main road outside Trinidad
Is a restaurant looking sort of sad,
It's Lilia and John's place
Open for meals at a workman's price.

The parking lot's of dirt and gravel,
With chug-holes to be avoided as you travel
The long distance on the way,
To or from Corsicana.

They serve up a breakfast of grits and butter
Eggs and ham like no other.
The ham's dry-sugar-cured, of a mind.
Not wet and soggy like store-bought kind.

Coffee if you can call it that
Boiled until its mostly black,
Like a cowboy's hard tack
Can be chewed if you like.

And the biscuits are home made
Fresh from the oven, black on the bottom
A bit of lumpy dough half risen
Better fare you'll find in State Prison.

Yet here they are, on the way to the power plant down the road
Stopping for an early morning 'stomach' load.
Pickup trucks, much abused
And cars that have been well used.

Every day they return
As they know the bucks they earn
Will go a bit further at Lilia's place.
- Regardless of the taste.

So this is the place to eat and be
A bit of Henderson county's history.

Ballad Of Old Red

Let me tell you the story of Ol' Red
The finest brindle ev'r bred
'Bout one taking th' best
An' the Dev'l having the rest.

Old was Red before her time
Born in the sunny springtime
Carefully kept away from harm
Until she'd the system learned.

One of many dropped in the field that day
Where the dairy kept them as a place to stay
Gave them a good start while mamma
Recovered from birthing's trauma.

When Pete rode the field that day
He knew this was a calf that would have to stay
Stay with her mother for a day or two
Until she had the strength to go.

Spotted this red touched with white
A heifer that had a mighty plight
For he guessed that she, somehow
Had been stepped on by the mother cow.

Her left shoulder was shattered, crushed beyond repair
Yet somehow, she and her mother found no need for despair
But in a way known only to Old Red
She found another way to get up and stand instead

Moving was difficult to be sure
For that lone right leg had to endure
The weight and balance to provide
Her a way to gain her mother's side.

Pete decided to leave them in the pasture for a couple of days
Hoping that something would come along to ease their pains
But finally Old Red had to make the journey
To the sales barn to be exchanged for money.

At the auction which went right along
Each calf being brought in, in a 'boy's' arm.
Place before Pete supported by his cane
To be sold to the highest bidder in the ring.

A good many calves were sold that day
And buyers claimed theirs and drove away
Until at last only Pete and I were there.
I always stopped for a story to share.

He said, 'I've got one more.' That was a surprise,
For there were no more bidders to cast their eyes.
Got stepped on by her mom, I guess,
And crushed her shoulder; what a mess.'

The boy brought in this red one, that seemed alright
Until she was stood upright,
Then it was plain for all to see
That instead of four good legs, she had only three.

Hobbled around Pete and the ring
Careful not to put the left foot down it seemed.
'How much' Pete asked for this newly arrived,
Then answered his own question, 'Five? '

'Sure.' was my answer loud and clear
Because this one was something dear.
Dear to Pete who wanted the calf to have a home
Otherwise, to the renderer, she'd be gone.

(I know he would have given me
The calf if I wanted,
But, that's not the way
One deals with a friend
After all. It's only money.)

At any rate, as times go fast,
Was decided to close down the veal operation at last.
The remaining 'tail-enders' couldn't be sold
Nor could 'Old Red' as the story's told.

To a farm in Tennessee
That's where they all went to be.
And those scrawny or otherwise not so good
Calves grew until they entered motherhood.

And Old Red like the others did as cows do
And produced calves, in fact quite a few.
But somehow her's always stood out as the best
Maybe she indeed was blessed.

Then one day the time came again
When was time to move and sell all of them.

The buyer looked over the lot
And when it came to Old Red, he didn't stop
But paid just as much for her as the rest
Because it was obvious that she was one of the best.

Don't know what happened to Pete or Old Red
But believe that they have a special place now instead
A reward to those who do the best they can do
And let the Devil take the hindmost too.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ballad Of 'The Judge'

All stood `round
The burying ground
Saying their goodbys.
Through misty tearful eyes.

An old neighbor happened to stay
For he had something else to say.
As we looked around
The hallowed burying ground.

Saying goodbye isn't easy
Some say what will please ye,
While other's look away
Not looking you in the eye.

For in this one gone to ground,
All had found
Life too short
For his kind to abort.

The judge, who
Always seemed to know what to do.
Either for friend or foe
He always seemed to know.

Never a hard word
From him was heard.
As he studied the event
Before making a carefully worded judgement.

This one lingering here
Seemed intent to make his point clear.
Shuffling his feet to gain courage
He decided to make quick his charge.

'He and I never saw eye-to-eye,
Seemed he always could spot a lie
And yet never once used that as a point,
To his side, anoint.'

'He'll be gone fifty years from now
And it'll still be remembered how
He could always find a way
To bring reason to any day.'

'When I'm dead and gone
After the final song,
The crowd will drift away
And forget me forever on that very day.'

'I never thought of him as a friend
But on this day, I send
Him to his final resting place
Knowing the Judge will have no more trials to face.'

His crooked cane from a briar
Stands in the corner - there
Waiting. If he comes back again
He'll surely have a tale to spin
And just like before,
He'll make his point and more
So another can see
That that's the way it should be.

Albert to Mom,
Dad to the kids,
And 'Judge' to all.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Baltimer

It was a morning not unlike most of those that went before.
A gentle knock at the front door.
Hurrying to finish what was just begun
Before answering this demanding one

There on the marble stoop stood a slight older man
Do I need to mention the color of his skin
Not well dressed, but not shabby as some
It was evident that this area was his home.

M'am, he began
In a soft voice that only she could hear
I walk by here as my home is near
And I couldn't help notice the hubcap missing from your car, which I often
admire.

It's something that I thought I could repair
For you see I have a friend who deals in such things
Buying and selling hubcaps to those that are missing them
Or he from time to time finds one that has become loose,
I'm sure that's the fate of your loss.

So I thought I'd see if he had one that might be just right
For the one that you lost maybe in the dark of night
I ask him for he is a friend, if perhaps his rules could bend
And give me a cap like the one you lost
And he said, 'Well I don't like to eat the cost,

But because it's between just us too
I tell you what I'll do,
If you'll pick up the place a bit and sweep the floor
Why I think that would be enough today, no more.'

And with that he removed the hubcap which he had held
Carefully behind his back and showed me the one that was just like
The one that she'd had lost some weeks before.
She'd really intended to replace it sometime soon when she went to the store.

'Why I'd, be much obliged' she said

Using a term that was from the old Southern homestead
'And let me thank you
And pay you for the cap.'

'No, No.' he replied,
'It's something between us neighbors and our pride.'
'But I can't let you go away with only a thank you to be said,
Wait here, I'll get you something for your troubles.'
'No trouble M'am, it be my pleasure.'

And he turned and walked away
His intent was to put the cap back on just that way,
So she hastened to the kitchen where her purse lay
And retrieved a twenty that she'd not spent that day.

As he finished and stood to admire his work
He was called back to the marble stoop for his reward.
Again he said, No M'am, but he was weakening
And accepted the bill with only a bit more encouraging.

Then as she stood and admired the replaced hubcap,
He shuffled on up the street
With his back maybe just a bit more straight
As tho he had done something worthy of remembering.

That evening when the husband returned from work
He was told the story which came with some teary eyed support
So they went outside to admire the new hubcap; so bright
'Twas a pleasant sight.

And they walked around the car to compare
And on the driver's side they saw
To their despair
That only one hubcap remained there.

Welcome to Baltimer, Hon!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Baltimore - On Upper Eutaw

The Past –

Neighborhoods abandoned,
Integration's backlash
Beautiful houses boarded,
Streets covered in trash.

Monuments scraped,
Sold for their metal.
People, in high-rises housed,
Like so many cattle.

January –

The 'Jew-Jew' doesn't live here anymore.
But, locals remember when he kept the store.
Need something – no problem if you have a thirst
Just remember when payday comes, who gets paid first.

February –

A cold February morning,
Out the window. It's gone without warning.
They missed the bus and took the car
You'll get it back. Didn't go far.

March –

Up the walk comes the small mailman.
Don't mess with him; he's got mace in a can.
Passing houses of residents, long since gone
He knows each slot of someone's home.

April –

Ragged vagrants to the shadows keep,
In the early morning hours when neighbor's sleep.
Hoping to find valuables, in another man's midden,
And they do; if the treasure's not very well hidden.

May –

On a bus stop bench, neatly painted in green,
Is stenciled an epitaph to elders, keen.
'Baltimore, the city that reeds', it clearly states,

Reflecting knowledge; another generation awaits.

June –

In the alley, hidden from sight,
Small boys toy with a pistol found last night.
Click on the cylinder, missing a shell,
Recently ended a life and doomed another to hell.

July –

In pants of black leather, the slight man-boy
Returns from an adventure as another man's toy.
To his friends it's know that he's slowly dying,
But to his mates, about his disease, he's lying.

August –

The building's reborn, history revealed.
In a wall, covered with paper; concealed.
A 'butcher' knife. Traces of blood couldn't be rid.
Is this the reason, in this wall, it's been long hid?

September –

Be twixt floorboards of tongue and groove pine
Lie records of inhabitants of another time.
Rusty but still sharp, is many a pin
Here an immigrant seamstress, long hours put in.

October –

Movers arrive and with bulging muscles do their best
To finish the job before the sun sets in the west.
By six, ladies arrive and parade without fear,
Offering the laborers what they want, and which they value so dear.

November –

The house's 'occupied' and the neighborhood's quite.
No vagrants 'll sleep here at night.
Every morning, another adventure begins
As th' new family adopts the house it's moved in.

December –

The old house 'begins to sing'
Revival. See what the future does bring.
Scabs once covered the majesty of Baltimore streets,

The scars may remain, but it s heart-beat entreats.

New Year –

Good people, good food, and sights abound,

Baltimore will rise up, it's that kind of town.

Near the airport, the official sign's a stopper.

Says, 'Welcome to Baltimore.' Certainly, it's proper.

Someone painted an addition, in the best of Mencken,

'Hon! ' Amen.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Baltimore-A Moving Experience

The moving van arrived at break of dawn
And the four unloaders and driver were chilled to the bone
But all had agreed to work come what may
And get the truck unloaded before dark of day.

The stone faced row house like all the others
With basement and two flights of stairs to the floors above
A cavernous space that was soon to be filled
With furnishing and boxes of books
To fill all the crevices and nooks.

A loading strap across the shoulders and chest
Made it possible to carry three boxes filled with the best
And books, many books, carefully packed
Were in those boxes on the laborer's back

Carefully maneuvering the marble steps
No hand rail was there in case of missteps.
Then down the long halls to rooms that await
The possessions of the owners, both small and great.

Lunch time was spent with another swig from the bottle
And back to work for there was no time to dawdle
Soon the alky warmed its way to the bone
And made the work seem more like a bad loan.

Assembled on the side walk below
An assortment of watchers began to show
Picking sides on who was their favorite
The encouraged the men to hurry, it's getting late.

For those standing there in the drizzling rain
Knew that there was a chance for fair game
As the workers would soon have money in their pockets
And would spend it quickly on beer by the buckets.

The work was done with no time to spare
Pay was given to the work leader for him to share
Then to the street the men went with a purpose

To forget today, it could have been worse.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bankruptcy

'Don't Complain, If Your Mouth Is Full.'*

Once was a farmer so bold and proud
Who in the small town, stood out in the crowd.
He grew cotton and other crops most expertly
And his fame throughout, grew exponential.

Others, from as far away as Texas, came and stood with him
As he expressed need to control interest rates which were certainly grim.
The public which about food prices complained
And on the poor farmer, heaped much of the blame.
A saying was heard far and wide; not to be cruel,
'Don't complain, if your mouth is full.'
They took their tractors to the Mall in Washington
To plead for relief from the Banker's Conundrum.

In Washington, representing the district
Was one known as a 'farmer', though he knew not how to pick.
Representative Ed Jones was above it all
As he view the disruption on the Nation's Mall
And to his surprised one Autumn day
His very own tenant farmer filed for bankruptcy.

Such was the fate of many others like him
Who were abandoned. It was such a sin.
For you see Jimmy was in the White House then
Yet there were those who thought him a friend.
The interest on loans went to twelve, then sixteen
And the poor farmer, forced to borrow, was caught in between.

So the farmer about which we write
Was caught in just such a financial plight.
His family and friends knew not what to do,
For them, and others, solutions were few.
One day he left us all alone
The smell of nitrate, and then he was gone.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Batteries

Alas, all things must end,
For as the electrons weave their way
Through the matrix, they send
A different charge, but in the end, decay.

Until the batteries slowly return to an evolutionary state
Where all is at rest; the human is upset
For now the device doesn't work, even if you charge and wait
Communication is done, game, match set.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ben's Dog

They came and took Ben away,
Just after the break of day.
The dog didn't understand
What had happened to his man.

On the front porch, he stay(ed) .
There was no reason for him to stray.
He awaited his master's call
Through the early days of fall.

Neither hunger, thirst nor bitter cold
Took him from this home of old.
Depleted; as days crept by
He watched the ever changing sky.

Finally Ben came; some folks say
And he and his dog went away.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Big Harley

At traffic light
Bike with sundance seat
Amply filled
Blonde, hair blown free

Releases grip
Reaches and smooths hair
Around the ears, over the top
His, not hers

Parts to one side
Then to other,
Searching, searching, searching
Returns and smooths

Massages neck
Down to shoulders
Below collar
Feeling, feeling, feeling

A bump
Fingers probe
Round and round
Not perfection

Fingers dig in
Squeezes
What?
Hand out from collar

On shirt back
Wiping motion
Looks at fingers
Wipes, again and again

Light changes
Bike roars to life
Blonde against back rest
Hang on.

Of nits, lice and pimples.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Big Olaf

Gulf Avenue in a cluster of shops
The Mennonite ice-cream store
Has a small sign out front,
Nothing more.

Inside along one wall
Three tables with simple chairs
Across from the freezer.
Freezer's bare.

Man comes from back
Greets us like we were
One of his
Old customers, dear.

Starts conversation about
Freezer being out of commission
All ice cream
In box in the back for the duration.

What do we want?
Have to guess
Can't just point
At what's in the case.

Rosemary knows
What she wants,
We ask for the same
Ending doubts.

What size?
Prices are posted
With the Big Olaf
Costing three fifty.

Why not!

He brings out
Three tubs of ice-cream

Sits them on table
Behind the case wiped clean.

Begins to dip
Ice Cream
Frozen solid
It seems.

One dip of Chocolate
As a start,
Big dip of chocolate mint
On top of that.

Pure white vanilla
Nothing special
Except dip is
More than ample.

Vanilla carefully placed
And pushed down
On top of other two,
Disaster, without a sound.

The cone splits
A chunk falls away.
This just isn't
Big Olaf's day.

What to do?

Cone and all
Into the trash
And he begins anew
With a showman's flash.

This time dips
Are even larger than before
And the ice cream
Piled higher, even more.

It's done.

He explains to everyone
Freezer can only be
Repaired by someone
With a freezer specialty.

From Kansas
He'll be coming
Flown in special
At his summoning.

Wraps cone with
Another napkin
Hands it to Rosemary
Whose been patiently waiting.

.
Without waiting for us
She gains her seat
At the table
And begins on the ice cream treat.

Our cones are soon finished
Just like hers
And we join Rosemary
Who is half way through hers.

We are soon finished.

Some twenty minutes
Before
We had a large lunch
Drinks and more.

But somehow
She had saved a spot
For a Big Olaf.
The whole lot.

Rosemary weighs 90 pounds
Soaking wet or maybe
When filled with a Big Olah.
A bit more.

How such a small woman
Could eat
So much ice cream
Is a mystery to me.

We miss you Rosemary.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bigotry Doesn'T Require An Advanced Degree

Those of the higher order
Have been quick to add to the disorder
Surrounding the poorly worded stance
Of the Nobel Prize Winner of Science
Who with a blunderbuss statement
Brought about his replacement
In the hole of Wood
Where in good standing he once stood.

While his sweeping generalization
Seemed to include all the African Nations,
His critics (and perhaps Watson too)
Seemed to make much ado
About the intelligence of those
Who are less endowed as IQ shows,
Than those of skins so white
But they forgot in the light
Or is it in Africa's darkness
They forgot that also included is
Egypt, Algeria and Morocco's
Certainly not black as those
In Nations further south
That are the subject Bigots talk about.

So while Watson may have been misquoted
His sins will not soon go unreported,
But what of those intellectual snobs
Who join the chorus
To remind us how smart and unbiased they are
In matters of bigotry.

Let the Wall Street Journal write
Of the similarity of humans, black or white
And attack Watson for his propensity
To speak without unanimity,
While his so called intellectual friends
Are quick to condemn and make no amends.

Watson asked forgiveness for his mistake

But the community will rejoice in the wake
And bury this one whose tongue
Acted as the shovel to dig his very grave.

Good by James Watson
May you soon rest in Peace.
(Along side Rosalind
Franklin)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bill Nelson - The Nowhere Man

Once was a politician, slick Bill by name
Who came to instant fame,
Just by appearing (to appear)
As a mirage, sometimes far and then quite near.

When interviewed by the news
And asked to express his views,
His stock answer which he had down pat,
Was, 'I'd rather not answer that.'

What about the Old-crocks in your party
Seems some new blood would be in order,
And, after thinking much too long
'I'd rather not answer that.' (It's a group to which I belong.)

And about the perverts that are in Congress,
It seems that the Republicans have distress.
Don't the Democrats have the same,
'I'd rather not answer that.' (And share the blame.)

Then there's the matter of insurance cost,
Were not you the one time Commission boss?
'Wait' says he, 'That's old hat,
And I'd rather not answer that.'

Are you in bed with Schumer, Biden and Kennedy
Just to mention these three,
Members of the Blue State henchmen?
'I'd rather not answer that.' He replies again.

So what do you stand for may I ask.....
'Too late,
I'd rather not answer that.',
I've got to dash.

Nowhere Man

He's a real nowhere man,
Sitting in his nowhere land,

Making all his nowhere plans
For nobody.

Doesn't have a point of view,
Knows not where he's going to,
Isn't he a bit like you and me?
Nowhere man, please listen,
You don't know what you're missing,
Nowhere man, the world is at your command.

He's as blind as he can be,
Just sees what he wants to see,
Nowhere man can you see me at all?
Doesn't have a point of view,
Knows not where he's going to,
Isn't he a bit like you and me?
Nowhere man, don't worry,
Take your time, don't hurry,
Leave it all till somebody else
Lends you a hand.

He's a real nowhere man,
Sitting in his nowhere land,
Making all his nowhere plans
For nobody.

Certainly not me or you.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Biotin

What's the unwashed, unschooled,
panic-stricken consumer to do?

It happened in St. Louis as I recall.
One particular beer drinker in the fall
Liked to have an egg in his beer,
In fact lots of eggs in his beer,
Or was it a lot of beer in a stein,
With raw eggs therein?

Now this may sound
A bit distasteful to those around
But for a nation that has embraced
Goldfish swallowing, or a taste
For eating raw oysters, or
Chocolate coated ants and more.
Or, other delicacies in fact
Such as honey with the comb intact
(Perhaps with bee larva as well) ,
On this we will not dwell,
It just represents one more
Unusual dietary practice to abhor.

But I digress.

The beer drinker you see
Developed a biotin deficiency.
As eggs contain a protein
Called by biochemist, avidin.

Seems the claim to fame of avidin
Is that it binds, that is, shackles biotin.
Hence, lots of beer in St. Looie
Meant problems out the cazooie.
Biotin, after all is essential to life and limb.
A fact unknown to our beery him.

Necessary to avoid fatigue and muscle pain,
Plus nausea and scaley skin of dermatitis fame.

One must have a bit of biotin
Free, the doctors explain.
So before you embark on a diet
Or listen to a 'nutritionist' invite,

Think about it.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Blackberries

Rich luscious, bursting with juice
Big as your thumb
Cool from the morning dew
Sweet as only wild berries can be

Vines tall
Thick as a pencil
Barbs everywhere
Quick to catch your clothes
Or draw blood

Leaves tender
Green and dripping with dew
Hiding the berries
Or perhaps a stink bug
Or a tick or a snake

White flowers
Lasting only for a day
Pure white
Open for a visiting bee

Detritus from the past
Rich mold harboring
An untold wealth of
Memories of what has
Come before

This is the battlefield
Where soldiers met
Where cannons blazed
And riffles cracked
Where charge of one side
Met the other
and brave men died.

Memorial Day
Colonial Heights, Virginia

Blood For Oil - A Reply

And the alternative?

Those who as saprophytes live
Expecting others to sacrifice
So they can exist in deluded peace
But their being will be short lived
When no soldier's blood is spilled.

Democracy's enemies Will attack your home
Your peace of mind will vanish; gone!
What then will you say?
As freedom's lost in the fray.
Deniging justice as 'Blood for Oil'
Is popular for those who's hands are never soiled..

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Blood On The Street

The traffic backed up beyond
The intersection for five cars or more
In all directions, they were halted
The crowd standing there
Had found some reason to stare.

A circle had been formed
And newly arrivals were added to the throng
Each trying to see
What was the cause of the melee.

A pedestrian struck,
A biker down
Or perhaps some poor soul
Was dead; on the ground?

What happened all wanted to know
As they watched and waited for an emergency vehicle
Or a truck to tow
Maybe an officer to arrive at the scene
To help the victim unseen.

But yet as even more arrived,
There seemed to be no answer
To the questions voiced
By those that now became anxious
To see the problem resolved.

After all, the traffic was now jammed
Like never before.
Even an emergency vehicle would not be able
To reach the scene to provide assistance.

Finally some thinking citizen
Accepted responsibility and control
And began to usher cars along the road
Until finally only a single car remained
Standing in the right turn lane.

And the driver who was the cause
Stood there perplexed as before
For no solution had yet been given
On how to get his car moving.

The officer arriving late on the scene
Wanted an answer to the reason for the que
Saw the blood on the car's passenger door
And the drivers bloody hand and more.

There, he's under there
Was the frustrated answer to the official stare
Oh, God. He's run over someone
And drug them to their death.
A lifeless body would be all that's left.

On hands and knees he bowed to see
What was the remainder of what he
Had done with this low slung Japanese product.
One who was surely out of luck.

I see nothing, was the officers reply
There's no body that I can spy
But please, he's under there
For surely you must care!

And slowly the story was told
How the driver wanting to be sure
That a turtle was safe and,
Not to be run over for sure.

He'd stopped the car when he saw the turtle
By the side of the road,
Sure that if it attempted to cross
It'd be squashed like a toad.

Was going to pick up the turtle
And save its life
But when he'd attempted to pick it up
It had lashed out and given him a nasty bite

Then as he looked

At his bleeding hand
It had crawled underneath his car
Where it had taken a stand.

Refused to come out
And with quick motion
Would attack an offered hand
He was not going to risk it again.

The blood was his own that flowed that day
Until the officer sent him on his way
While the alligator snapping turtle
Did what turtles do
Crawled out from under the car
And walked away.

On watching a 'problem' develop when a good citizen tried to be a humanitarian
and paid the price.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Blubber

Blubber abounds
In this retirement town.
Usually there's a cushion around
The buttock where it's generously found
And for those well nourished, it's also wound
About the middle, where hanging above the ground.
It overflows the belt; above the pants suspended.
At least for males it hangs there, untended.
And for the fairer sex, there's more.
Glands are fronted, galore
For all to see,
Mercy, Me.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Blue Vitriol

From a Blue state did emerge
One espousing a vitriolic purge.
But what is this compound
Of which we (and she) expound?
Copper sulfate - pentahydrate
Known as Blue Vitriol, of late.

Defenders of Blue Vitriol
Maintain that it is useful for Pest control
And of course to clean sewer pipes so they'll drain.
Or to be added to fire, giving color to the flame.

Yet a well known poison is copper
That in excess comes a cropper.
Caution is expressed as the cure is often
Worse than the pest, for death intended.
Poison the eco-system is a likely result
Which explains why EPA gives no support.

Toxic, toxic, toxic is what we know
As she spews out her brand of Blue Vitriol.

It's best to be reminded that Vitriol
Comes from a sulfuric oil.
Attacking what it does encounter
Substance really does not matter.
It's copper's running mate
Sulfur, the mysterious one of late.
When pure and in a solid state,
Sulfur is yellow and sedate.
But when the temperatures elevate
It turns to a blackened other state.

Given oxygen to stoke a blaze
Sulfur burns and gives off a white haze.
These sulfuric oxides formed,
When in water dissolved; acid's borned.

In the atmosphere, we know so well

Acid rain is the product that does dwell
Drifting meaninglessly across the land
Destroying plants and animals where they stand.

Another characteristic of sulfuric use,
Once a favorite in soda-drink abuse.
To give the pop a certain acid twang
Adding H₂SO₄ was the thing.
Cheap is the term to define
When bottlers chose this product line.

The smell of rotten eggs,
That's hydrogen sulfide or the dregs.
Beware! A trace you can smell
But in excess the nose is overwhelmed
When the smell does not offend.
A toxic dose; life's at an end.

The stench that Nancy P does spread
Warns of her poison's acrid dread.
She's everywhere as all can see.
Appearing daily on tv.
Give the press its day and all,
Sets off this form of Blue Vitriol.

Poison is what we are talking about
Spewing forth from the poluti mouth.
Like the acid we know so well,
She appears innocent but is aggressive as hell.

This wicked witch will not melt away
Compromise is not the game she plays.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Boiled Peanuts

In road-way stands throughout the South
Are fruits and veggies to tempt the mouth.
But one specialty, besides melons and cane,
Is nuts; called Boil'd Peanuts by name.
What is this regional epicurean delight
That causes some to go looking, even at night?

Often sold in a small, brown paper sack
For only a quarter; five to a green-back.
They're to be eaten as soon as they're got
Best of all, when still piping hot.
Shells and all, goes in the mouth, with a smile
And nothing comes out (least not for a while.)

Properly dried and free of sand
These goobers are prizes that tempt any man.
'How do you prepare 'em? ' You ask if bold.
'A method from generations past.' You're told.
Boiled in a black pot, called a cast iron kettle
Somehow makes the nut, fit as a fiddle.

A pot with water and salt aplenty, is set
To cook this goober until the shell's soaking wet.
Turn up the heat and bring to a boil
In the kettle; stew this nut from the soil.
The salt penetrates and gives a new flavor,
And cooking produces a texture you? ll savor.

Let them dry just a bit and cool on the way
It's a treat from the South to be enjoyed each day.
It's a nutritionist dream marriage
With nourishment packaged in the midst of roughage.
So as you drive along side roads and see a small stand
Stop! Here's a treat offered to please any man.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Boots And Shoes

In the old west
It was desired -
Boots on
When they died.

(The wearer, able
And ready
To meet the challenges
Of the day.

And, of course,
When called to meet
St. Peter at the gates
Would be in proper dress.)

Shoes on the other hand
Restrict one's activities
And according to plan
Are oft removed.

(So it is said that one
Who has his shoes on
Is probably
In trouble.

And in meeting same
St. Peter at the gates
Shoes off puts one
In the proper state.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bridge Over Cloudy Water

Standing there
Do you dare
To look to see
What fate is to be.

The water moves
Silently in the coves
Away from the bridge
And the muddy edge.

But, look deeply
Into the cloudy
Water of the soul
For in it is a story to be told.

Others have stood on another day
And did not walk away
Seeing only darkness
And hopelessness.

But look
Into the water's dark
And see a guiding light
That shines by day and night.

The bridge, small or tall
Over cloudy water seems to call
Out, for this is the place to decide
How to swim in life's rising tide.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bring Out Your Dead, Bring Out Your Dead

Are we to revert to the conditions of the Plague(s)
When the cry was heard
As bodies were dragged to the street
For pickup and mass burial?

Then there was no know cure
And the only hope
Was that when the disease abated,
Those remaining would
Return to a 'normal' life.

Now, we set the stage for a repeat
With microorganism gaining the upper hand
As we evolve them with antibiotics
To a more combative state.
As we treat very ill TB, AIDs and Staph patients,
To name only the top draws for medical intervention,
The handwriting seems to be on the wall.
Yes, many of these individuals
Can be returned to a normal life
But what of the rest of humanity?

When bacteria compete
For a favorable environment
Those that have not evolved
Are more likely to predominate
As they aren't 'hindered' by the baggage
Of genes that serve no useful purpose
Other than to give them a favored status
When challenged by antibiotics.

Perhaps without the massive use of drugs.
'Normal' life and death will return
And civilization will survive.
Maybe?

While Congress twitters away its time,
No one seems to be looking over their shoulder
To see if the forth horseman is poised to return.

re: Evolution at Work: Watching Bacteria Grow Drug Resistant, Robert Lee Hotz,
Wall Street Journal, B1, June 8,2007.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Brother Johnny:

Seems I am good for
About one letter a year
(More or less) , and so thought
"I better get one started
Before the winter winds blow cold
And we all start to remember
When we weren't quite so old.'

First and most important
I sadly must say,
That my Dear Martha departed,
August 7th was the day.
She didn't want to go,
Had so much to do
But when her time was up,
My how the days flew.

Was not an unexpected end
Yet no one can be prepared
To see a partner gone;
One who's life was shared.
She left us better
For she planned and planned with care
To see that each of us remember
And for me some clothes, to wear, *

Life goes on
As you and I surely know
And are grateful.
Loved ones help shield the blow.
Tomorrow will be different,
But, yet so much the same
As we travel along
Life's flower-strewn lane.

This letter is in a bit of rhyme.
Seems I sometimes can think better
With the words keeping time.

But so much has happened
In this past year or so,
That somethings important then,
Now aren't worth making much ado.

s

* She told my son at her bedside, 'Look in that top drawer, make sure he has plenty of underwear.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

Coming to a home like yours
They're marmorated that's for sure
Marble like shell or perhaps streaked
They are bugs from hell with appetite unsated.

Love apples, peaches, or most anything else
They feed by sucking out juices till nothings left
Except a mottled, distorted fruit that's ugly or worst
Edible, but who's to like the distorted fruit's face.

The brown marmorated stink bug is here to stay
So there's little that can be done or damages defray.
Nothing likes them, birds shun them in season
After all they're called stink bugs for a reason.

Crush one between the thumb and forefinger
And the odor given off will certainly linger
Till you've had enough of this bug designed in hell
And reach for the pesticide that will certainly kill.

But wait, the EPA and Department of Agriculture
Will want to get involved to be sure that the chemicals pure
And cause no harm to others (that's animals, plants and bugs)
Which means that there's no getting rid of these thugs.
(The stink bugs, not the agencies mentioned,
However, well intentioned.)

It's another fact of life
The World Wide Economy brings lots of strife.
For the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug was imported
Just like lots of other stuff and now is by the government supported.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Brunellus The Ass

If two heads are better than one
How much better is three.
For the time has come
When Translators cannot agree.

Nigel wrote the words in Latin script
And much time has passed
With many Learned Ones pen's dipt
In deciding what the story of the Ass encrypted.

It is not a simple tract
Written in riddles true
For the reader to go forth and back,
Trying to decide if the Ass is you.

Such it is as we begin with the translation
Of Graydon W. Regenos of Speculum stultorum
by Nigellus Wireker who
May not have been Himself, it's true.

Followed up in short order
By J. H. Mozley
Who retitled the text
As "A Mirror for Fools";

Now Regenos, as scholars are bent to do
Translated words and phrases to
Sometimes missing the meaning
Of the text as it was demeaning.
Trying to be accurate in the sense
That a Dictionary presents.

Then along comes Mozley with good intent
(With passing criticism of Regenos sent.)
Thinking he knew to the letter
And tried to make the rhymes better.

To both we are grateful for their efforts
Which nevertheless come up short.

So with a quirky pen and pencil to the test
Mahtrow seeks to bring life to the beast.

So call him Burnel the Ass if you choose
Or Daun Brunellus while somewhat loose,
By Nigel Longcamp or Nigellus Wireker
The name of the Ass is just a moniker.

¿And perhaps the "Ass" is you?

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bullets Don'T Kill, Man Does

The hollow-point explodes
On impact as it goes
Tearing apart the body proper
As there is nothing to stopper.

A toxic dose of steel or lead
That is a death warrant instead
Used to kill and maim
Is the purpose, all the same.

Hollow point bullets are intended
To cause maximum damage when expended.
Perhaps it is the best way
To influence those who otherwise can't be swayed.

When nations seek to kill the leader of another
They open the door to widespread plunder
By saying what they do is right
Makes political assassination alright!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bumbling Hive

In a faire garden put there for purpose without ending,
Stood some one hundred plus hives and their attending,
Populations of swarming bees,
Gathering honey from the surrounding plants and trees.

Now you ask, "Why should we care what the relationships,
Might be, twixt the different hives and sailing ships? "
It is you know, for the balance of the hive's accounts
That the bees search for honey in the greatest of amounts.

No one understands that the stock market is only a balancing wheel,
Where international sports move funds to and fro, hopefully on an even keel.
So that they may gain the greatest pleasure,
(as measured by capital gain) for the stocks they treasure.

And while the bees may buzz about in anxious flight,
Concerning their small investments plight.
The greater bees of nations foreign,
Enjoy financial pursuit more than countries warring.

Is the market tied to the economy?
Not at all. That only happens to the likes of thee.
The market's concern is not the economy in the tank.
Only if the dollar's weak and their investment's shrank.

Then would the Stock market show a massive exodus,
To another safe haven but that's not for us.
So does the market aid the economy,
Or is this an adult game of Monopoly?

Only when it enriches a few and they in turn use,
Their gains for personal pleasure and to amuse.
They may invest for future gain,
Or secret in a haven to avoid tax pains.

When the Federal Reserve lowers interest rates,
It makes it easier for those playing with our fates.
On the international stage,
They do their bets, wage.

Multiplying the leverage they enjoy,
In markets if they wish to toy.
Buying real estate and non-consumables,
Mink fur coats and sables.

The lowering of interest rates,
Pulls monies from pockets of old ingrates.
Reduces the amount of income,
That falls into the hands of some.

Those frugal investors with certs of deposit and the like
Have been told by the Fed to take a hike.
Old, mom and dad and grampa too,
Have less to spend on themselves and you.

They are the ones who now have less to spend,
Putting the consumer economy in a spin.
That spending is necessary to keep the leaky balloon inflated,
So that the wealthy's lust are sated.

Next comes rise in unemployment.
Needing funds to cover moneys spent.
Who make up the unemployed statistics?
No one really cares as long as it's some of Washington's mystics.

If they would just go away and not be counted.
It would be a non-event, with no publicity mounted.
(This happen after some sixteen weeks or so,
No longer eligible; to unemployment offices they cease to go.)

So why is the economy in the tank,
And when will it recover; let's be frank
First to address the tank issue.
All is blamed on Industry's miscue.

The telecommunications industry,
And high - fliers of information technology,
Get full measure of the blame,
But investors somehow escape the shame.

Include the foolish states and their regulators,

Who acted as if there was no tomorrow.
That expected someone else; anyone would do,
To bail them out if they made bad decisions affecting me and you.

They found themselves on the wrong side of the curve,
As energy prices went up they lost their nerve,
They opened up their treasuries to pay the bills,
And emptied the Government's open tills.

At the same time energy companies caught in the squeeze.
Paid dearly; their stockholders giving a final wheeze.
Prices of oil went up nilly willy,
and so did cost to make electricity.

Chemical companies suddenly found,
That to make plastic by the pound,
Cost of raw materials nearly doubled.
What to do? They're in trouble.

First clue of industry sales declining,
Is found with your nose the air a-sniffing.
The gasoline at the pump suddenly had a richer smell,
From high value chemicals contained (dumped) in there as well.

Buying slows as the "consumer" dallies,
Will prices go up or down she worries.
People stop buying, as money's shorter,
For the toys they wanted (spell that computers) .

Things at home, companies no longer make,
It's a "world" community clam-bake.
Buy what's needed from,
Chinese, Koreans, Malaysians, Mexican, ad infinitum.

Five percent of the work force's unemployed,
That's one in every twenty jobs destroyed.
With two income families one in every ten,
On average has someone unemployed therein.

For some wage earners it's worse in their case.
Prospect of not having a job is what they face.
Many are college graduates, .this time around,

Beat the boards for a job that's not to be found.

Many are unqualified to do real work.
Being added to the work force in a quirk.
Employers hired them in a show of greed,
Accumulating people for which they had no need.
(Thinking they had better get them,
Before someone else did, on a whim.)

Easy to let these people go,
Since they were empty vessels in the flow.
Retraining was the cry.
Bull. You must ask why?

They are not going to accept lesser jobs,
Flipping burgers, manual labor? No, they're intellectual snobs.
Can't be a brain surgeon without time invested.
Besides they're too old; physically or mentally defective.

And many fields are closed to them,
Tightly written job descriptions made pickens thin.
Most could not get a job teaching,
As th' teacher's union's preaching.

No jobs for "outsiders" in schools were found to be,
For those educated in another branch of the tree.
They'd outshine entrenched dunderheads,
Even if poor choice, in their stead.

Government jobs at local, state or federal level,
Are tight and going to get tighter than the devil.
So all become consultants to businesses,
Or tried their hands at prose and poetry romances.

Industries that remained (and there's only a few) ,
Survived. They knew not why and had hardly a clew.
Services businesses came and went,
Mostly when the bankroll was spent.

Growth was in the housing industry,
Creating new homes for the wealthy..

Not so in communities,
Where massive layoffs created miseries.

Housing was very fragmented.
In retirement areas, money was minted.
(If the new retiree could sell their house in the North,
They could buy a new one in the South at twice the worth.)

New houses appeal to aging retirees,
And other northerners easy to please.
A house in a gated community with all the bells,
Whistles, and minimum care is what sells.

A house thirty years old?
Forget it. Too much work we're told.
Away from markets and shops,
Hospitals and airports and it flops.

Not many buy a place awaiting,
Fixing or upgrading,
(They don't know how to do it,
But they do know it cost money too boot.)

After a while, house prices in the north-land,
Drop to half, like water sinking in the sand.
Then southern market goes flat as well.
Prices dropping like a shot in less time to tell.

The middle east continues to be inflamed,
Justification for death and destruction by any name.
(Israel's unemployment of ten percent is less,
Than that which its neighbors are blest.)

The introduction of the euro stabilizes,
Europe for a while. Ignoring the politician's lies.
Long vacations are soon to end,
As the population makes amends.

They are wont to fight amongst themselves.
As in times past; blaming other cretin elves.
Small weak nations on their perimeter,
Like Turkey, will feel the peals of distant thunder.

In Japan, hoping to prevent,
Fall of Government,
They're working hard to stabilize the yen,
Before deflation worsens again.

China and Japan have a major face - off,
Competing with each other to prevent face loss.
Taiwan's a chip on the board.
Will the USA play? What can we afford?

If China's economy slowly disintegrates.
How does that affect our own estate.
We may have to save ourselves.
How much of our economy can we shelve.

Latin America may flame out (including Mexico) ,
Wallstreet bankers will say; "I told you so."
In the US, while not acknowledged here; the recession,
Will probably turn into a depression.

So how are we going to get out,
Of the quandary about?
Roosevelt discovered the way,
A distasteful method, I'm afraid to say.

His conservation services, workers progressive administration,
Writers groups and other considerations,
Didn't pull the nation up by its boot straps,
But, the Second World War was on tap.

The nations of the world soon,
Discover it's better to make a weapon,
For someone else who does the fighting.
Than await slow death by starvation.

Expect the new next kind of war,
To be fought in the streets with bomb-laded cars.
Not in the air with bombs and missiles,
But by Rabbis and Omans with their epistles.

Here're the steps to collapse:

First: No action within Congress,
Dem hopes to gain the house during distress,
And the White House is in their offering.
Never mind people suffering.

Second: With purchasing power,
Of people diminished world-over,
China has to make major concessions,
While unrest within its border regions.

Third: Latin America goes,
Into severe economic throes,
Riots become widespread,
Control at any cost is the dread.

Forth: The Middle East continues to churn.
Saudia Arabia and others see their palaces burn.
Will Israel at last faces up to the task,
Of solving their internal problems at last?

Fifth: Japan hunkers down.
No new source of financing can be found.
Can't expect help from foreign lands,
Caught up in their own central plans.

Sixth: With falling exports,
China closes its borders as last resort,
And returns to communism,
By another named - ism.

Seventh: China and Russia borders at unrest,
Who struck out first(?) seeking conquest.
Neither side can afford to win the war,
But neither can they loose so it will be a draw.

Eight: The European nations,
United States and England, shuns.
Closing their doors to all outsiders,
Denying responsibility for all the disorders.

Nine: In the United States unemployment,

Checks are unable to abolish dissent.
Fifteen percent or better are "pounding the streets"
Selling their bodies or possessions to make ends meet.

Ten: Riots occur in all major city boroughs,
Troops are called in to handle the chaos.
Peace comes with an uneasy calm,
The eye of the storm before the new dawn.

Eleven: Housing market disappears,
Keys dropped in the mail box; the banker fears.
Too big to fail are Sally and Fred
But makes no difference to people's dread.

Twelve: Government discovers,
That inflation's spiraling cover,
Reduces commitment to retirees and the others,
Lost in the system as rising cost smothers.

Thirteen: Medical cost, a moot question amongst the ill,
As no one willingly pays their mounting bills.
Hospitals close and doctors retire,
Unwilling to be caught up in the legislative mire.

Fourteen: The United States hoping to please,
Joins Russia in the war against the Chinese,
Land war fought with great loss of life,
Killing million, but does little to end the strife.

Fifteen: After a prolonged fight,
It's acknowledged that there is no right.
Peace is declared over World's war-torn face,
And, the new world order is in place.

Sixteen: Difference between communism and capitalism
Is erased and given an new name, a new -ism.
Supplies from the government carefully controlled,
Ensuring that all "citizens" remain in the fold.

Epilogue-

The bees live in a "service society" meaning they produce little, obtain what we want from others and to raise capital (earn money or honey) serve one another. Or by another name it's an economy based on consumption. Perhaps it is good to remember that there is another kind of consumption. It was once called "wasting disease". Veblin named the bee's disease, conspicuous consumption. Both kill from within and brings those infected to their knees.

Interestingly, tuberculosis cases are increasing.

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Sidi J. Mahtrow

Bumming Pipe

Around the courthouse
Before the heat of day
The benches were filled with
Those with nothing else to do
Mingling with those other few
That had business
Or at least gave pretenses.

A new arrival moved
From group to group
As it was the custom
To inquire if they had news,
From the superintendent of the schools,
Or about the 'Boss'
And his many wives.
Or who was in jail
Protesting innocence and other lies.
Maybe about a new play
In the oil field,
And if it would pay.
Or just to visit and pass the day.

There on the steps,
An excited ring of peers
Surrounded two combatants,
Arms waving
And words flying.
Would they mix it up?
Or depend on justice
To settle their dispute?

Then approached one
Whom it was said
Was well read
On Torts and
Other things.
'How do you do',
And with a tip of hat,
The Judge involved himself.

And that was that.

Seems one's cow had trespassed
Into the other's field
And did more damage
Than should be allowed.

Now it must be noted that
The one most agitated
Was often in the position of one
That hadn't been violated.
This burly one was known
To have many transgressions
Of his own.

When the Judge appeared,
Both simmered down
Hoping to enlist assistance
from this one known about town.

As if intending
To hear them out,
He paused and considered.
What was it all about?
It seemed necessary
To not be hasty,
And filling his pipe
Seemed a necessity.

It was known that
the burly one prided himself
With having the choicest
Tobacco from the shelf
So a request was kindly made
Would he provide
'Just a pinch to start the day.'

Others knew that
If the shoe was
On the other foot
The surly one would have
Asked as much.

Now the judge was known to
Smoke a corn-cob pipe,
One that he favored
Morning, noon and night
As one of nature's pleasures.
That particular pipe
Of which we write
Could hold not more
Than a thimble full
Of Vulcan tinder.

How else could
This one but reply
In offering his pouch,
'Sure. Help yourself'
And he must have had
The thought in mind
That a 'judgement' might
Be made in kind.

Then from deep
In the Judge's pocket
Came a pipe that he had
Never seen before.
Some describe it
More like a cup
That on a saucer
Should sit,
Capable of holding a
Fistful of toasted, aged
Virginia's best.

The pouch was tipped and
The flaked tobacco
Began to flow,
Then more upright,
The pouch was held
To add more fragrant
To the bowl.
Of a sudden,
The pouch was empty.

But the bowl
Remained unfilled.

Not to be discouraged
By this problem of late,
The Judge tamped down
The sweet and spicy shreds
Of aged burley.
And eyed the contents
Of the bowl.

'Much obliged, ' said he to
The beefy gent,
And returned the pouch
To the owner with a smile.
Then taking a match
From who knows where
Struck a blaze to
This awesome pipe.
And took a deep draught
Of the smouldering leaf,
Then exhaled the smoke
In total satisfaction.

The flustered one stared
In amazed confusion,
Then it occurred that
He had been subject
To an illusion.
The Judge had ruled
Against his case
And imposed a penalty
To his face.

Red crept up from
His bulging neck
But before he spoke or acted
Had occasion to look about.
The gathered crowd
Was beginning to grin,
The joke was clearly
On him.

'Your Welcome, ' came
From between clenched teeth
And the loser gave a smile
That must have hurt.
He kicked a nearby clod of dirt.
Then retired to lick his wounds
And consider his empty pouch.

Some in Athens say the pipe
Is a symbol of justice.
Where the scales
Can't be tipped
By a 'bit' of tobacco.

And the Judge went inside
to see a man about a dog.

The Bumming Pipe is based on a remembrance by J. L. Wortham. As a boy, he went to town with his father, which always included a visit to the Henderson County, Texas courthouse. His father was well known as 'The Judge; 'one well read in law, although he was neither a judge or lawyer.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Business

Two villains of the highest rank
Set out one night to rob a bank.
They found the building, looked it o'er,
Each window noted, tried each door,
Scanned carefully the lidded hole
For minstrels to cascade the coal-
In short, examined five-and-twenty
Good paths from poverty to plenty.
But all were sealed, they saw full soon,
Against the minions of the moon.
'Enough, ' said one: 'I'm satisfied.'
The other, smiling fair and wide,
Said: 'I'm as highly pleased as you:
No burglar ever can get through.
Fate surely prospers our design-
The booty all is yours and mine.'
So, full of hope, the following day
To the exchange they took their way
And bought, with manner free and frank,
Some stock of that devoted bank;
And they became, inside the year,
One President and one Cashier.

A Bierce

Geithner and Bernanke sealed the door
So others might not plunder, as before
And treated themselves to the gain
As they found; robbing a bank is an easy game.

S J Mahtrow

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Butler's Ghost

Synopsis of D'Urfey's Butler's Ghost

First Canto -

The Argument

Thomas D'Urfey a continuation did write
Of Sam Butler's tale, so contrite.
Yet in the end he leaves Hudibras as before
A grieving bachelor and more.

Butler left Hudibras in distress.
He (not Butler) was in quite a mess.
For not winning the Widow's hand
Something for which the knight had plan'd.

Along comes D'Urfey with the ending
Although not what might have been intended
. As it opens, we find Hudibras much in torment
And contemplating his body suspended.

In the barn he first thought of falling on his sword
But decided that was messy and untoward
Spying a rope in the loft, he thought
That's the way out, I ought.

Climbed to the rafters and tied the knot
But just in time Ralpho awakened from the straw
And was dismayed at what he saw.
Stop in God's name he declared
Don't end the life we've shared.

If the widow is the problem for you
Maybe we can adjust it with a few
New duds and bath and all
That'll win her heart, I call.

Clean and dressed in clothes apt for a funerary
Hudibras approached the (not so) winsome lass

Timing was ripe for his aggression
Seems she'd been guilty of some transgression.

Her belly swollen by a growing seed
Placed there by perhaps more than one amorous steed.
What to do in this moment of distress?
Wed Hudibras, was the guess.

Second Canto -

The Argument

Thus ends Canto number one with
Hudibras emerging victorious.
But wait there is more than meets the eye
Lovers don't give up so easily by and by.

A grand banquet at Hudibras' expense
Table laid with food and drink Heaven sent.
But one dish was a bit ripe
Perhaps the cook forgot to remove the tripe.

Hudibras to the kitchen did go
And his fair one retired to the bedroom with her bow
Through the keyhole
Did Ralpho spy them acting bol'.

Saw them in bed entwined
In a posture most sublime. To Hudibras he did relate
These events of his cabin mate.
Hudibras in an academic fit
Chastised Ralpho in a snit.
Your eyes and ears do deceive you
It's strong drink and a mind that is amiss.
Not my mistress.

Then appeared the lady in question and
Her consort, face ablaze and dress disrumped
. Here's proof of her actions
Even Hudibras could not deny
Such evidence that Ralpho did apply.

What to do at this late date,

D'Urfey leaves Hudibras in a sorry state,
Wallet bare from the expense
And disillusioned by the act of the wench.

Divorce in Church of England style
Poorer but wiser, marching single file
Hudibras retires to argue and fight another day
Perhaps Ralpho should have stood quietly in the hay?

James L. Thorson of the University of New Mexico in the introduction to a reprint of the book has provided an explanation of the events of Hudibras' day when the characters were real of life and not too thinly disguised by the poem. The Popish Plot of 1660 is part truth, part fiction and it remains for Thorson and others to place it clear in our minds. In the mean time, D'Urfey's *Butler's Ghost* and Dryden's *Absalom* and *Achitophel* provide an interesting window into the time.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Buzzard Banquet

'Twas the hot weather
Likes of this they had never
Seen. Such a stew
That mother nature seemed 't brew.

The possum, a marsupial
With scally tail with no hair a'tal
Two buzzard friends with shinny heads
Worn bald by picking at innards.

Met this sunny breezy day
Alongst the roadside right-of-way.
Drawn by the sight and smell
Of a carcass smashed to hell.

First buzzard said to 't other, 'it's the taste,
Can't afford to waste a bit, in our haste.'
But the second said, 'let it stand and the flavor
Can get only better for us t' savor.'

The possum said, 'it's taste not smell
Upon which I dwell,
I'll eat the carrion
While you carry on.

This is my daily meat
Provided by the roadside, neat.
On this I do delight,
Preferring low carbs, calories, lite.

It's the entrails
That enthrals
You prefer muscle. I guts
You can have the bones and such.'

Like Jack Spat and wife, not lean.
The three picked the carcass clean.
Providing a service to us all
Scavengers rewarded by nature's call.

sjm/08/16/04

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Buzzard Puke Stinks

From a distance,
Up wind by chance,
You'll miss the smell,
Of this turkey from hell.
Watch him soaring in the air.
One would think he has no care.
He feeds on carnage; filth and waste.
There's no telling about his pagan taste.
He's calling his brethren to encircle and feast,
On generosity of another who offers him peace.
Up close on the ground, you see him as he is,
Taking advantage of the circumstances.
In his ideology there's nothing new,
Shared with friends, that are few.
After his moment in the sun,
Clouds 'll gather. He'll run.
'Tis his partisan Politics.
And his usual tricks.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

C. Elegans

The elegance
Of *Caenorhabditis elegans*
Can not be hidden
Or disguised.

This tiny nematode (worm)
Can be seen to squirm
Under the microscope
Of those who wish to poke
Into the life and love
Of this bit of biologie
That resembles man
(Yes it can.)

In many ways
It spends its days
Just as we all do
Feeding and excreting, to name a few.

While most *elegans* are true hermaphrodites
Some few are disposed to have a single y chromosome
Which permits evolutionary courses
To play the game of selection
So that the species while remaining
Much as before,
Can still juggle the genes
To test what maybe in store.

In the short time after mating
And gamete selecting
It goes from a single cell
To the complex organism we know so well.

Then as in all animal species,
It dies as it completes God's mission,
Which is to ensure that evolution
Is something not to be left undone.

[If you follow the thread on the web, you'll discover that this simple nematode

responds to chemicals much like man. Nicotine affects the nematode, although not suppressing or enhancing desires of which it has none (that we are aware of,) as it serves as a stimulant. And there's more, the effect of tobacco on man is there for all to read and understand in Wiki.]

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Caerphilly Miners - A Coal Miner's Legacy

Come walk with me over the hills
Where the lands are covered with scrub.
Beneath are veins that were once rich with coal
Now empty caverns dark, wet and cold.
There's no life here only a trace
Of the presence of man working the face.
Where men earned a daily wage
To support families now grown old.

The children know not what is there
Only that now no one seems to care.

The rotting remains of timbers and spikes driven deep
Into the rock for support and to keep
The earth from regaining its own;
Life isn't here, it's gone.
Gone to another world
And another time.

Have you an idea of the dirt and the grime
That covered them all, young and old?

Yet if you could return to the earlier day
You would hear the sounds of children at play.
Laughing, then crying as they heard the news
That another cave-in had happened in the mews.
What family would face an uncertain future
With no one to provided for children and mother?

It's easy to condemn the mine for taking away
The men who worked underground that day.

Not recognizing that these were families
Who saw the mines as their destinies.
To earn a hard-scrapple living for sure
But the work provided for a means to endure
And succor their loved ones who
Were dependent upon the mines.

Coal, the life-blood of the nation
Extracted a price from each generation.

Now the men who survive
Are still blacked by the dust
That makes their time here on earth
A misery that others can't understand.
For it's a black death
Unlike the one before.
It's of another kind to befall man.

But ask them one or all, if they would do it again
And they will say, it was the only way.

Times were hard then and so much different now
That it's hard for one whose not been there to understand
That these were workers that welcomed the jobs, to a man.
For the alternative was darker than the coal
Here was work for those both meek and bold.
To do other was not an option for their wives and lovers
Needed support to create a life better than most.

Yet their children and their children wonder why
These men would risk the dangers, where some would surely die.

And the answer is chiseled deep in a marble stone
That stands in a graveyard, alone.
It gives the name and date of the end of a life
That labored to save his family from strife.
And it's a testament to the will of men
Who saw working for a living, not ever a sin.

And on the stone is a bit of verse
That recognizes that these mines were a curse.

But deep in the earth below,
Those men rest in peace
For you must know
It was their sacrifice to the living.
They'd do it again
If asked, today.

For life must go on
And they paid the price.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Can Inanimate Objects Think?

How else do you explain
What happens to man (and woman) ?

You see, in my taking a leisurely shower
In the morn after work for many an hour
Seeking to remove bits of grime and sweat
That gave an aura to those nearby let.

Perhaps a bit longer than necessary I agree
But then what? The hot turns to cold by degree
Standing there wet, from bottom to top
Discovering only cold that would not stop.

Dripping wet I emerged and did wonder
How can it be that there is no hot in the shower.
Turned on the faucet in the bathroom basin
And was greeted by hot water flowing in.

So, back into the shower, I returned
(still wet from the previous turn)
On with the rotating device
And hot water - How nice!

But just as I stepped in to return to my pleasure
Off went the hot and cold returned in full measure.
The last traces of soap quickly removed
In the cold water I endured.

For a final act, back to the basin for a test
To remove the hairs from my chin at last.
Was greeted once again by a mighty flow
Of hot water, the God's of device did bestow.

Answer as you will
But I am convinced still
That somewhere in this inanimate world
Is a demon that rules the water world.

Such it is with hot water "On Demand."

Hot water by whose command?

sidi

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cardiac Rehab

There's a place not too far from home
Where old folks go to be not alone,
There they do the most amazing things.
It's exercise for the mind and body of human beings.

They stretch the muscles and work up a sweat
Then check the pulse and blood pressure yet.
If they're not fatigued just a bit
Then the specialist will see that they're too fit.
So they fake it like some other things we know
While others think it's just for show.

Most of those here are the competitive kind
Which shows what's going on in their mind.
And on reflection you must decide
It's the "dog-eat-dog" spirit that they abide,
Which is what led them to this place to be.
It's the stress of life and misery.

Of course they could go to the local gym
And participate in exercise for her and him,
But since insurance pays most of this cost
Those in rehab are misers, most.
And would never pay full fare
Even if they got better care.

So two or three times a week
You'll see the gray hairs make the trek
To the clinic where muscles they flex
And bid in an hour of active competition
For the pretty attendant's attention.

Then it's off to Ben'n Jerry's or the french fry place
To build up the cholesterol they're trying to replace.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Careful What Boon You Re Pickin

hey boss
its me again

was just enjoying
an old book with
leather cover
bout a famous knight
who changed
the world

its a story about
an old man
bent by age
mounted on his charger
who approached
the windmills of change

he was not poor
by the time s measure
but he having spent
too long in study
forgot that to change
the world about
one must do more
than rant and shout

claiming he would save us all
he took to the challenge
and many a fall
for he failed to see
that much was wrong
with the economy

with his trusty aid
mounted on an ass
he raised his lance
and ventured forth
not content with the comforts
of his castle

he meant to change
the world about
without expecting
a disastrous hassle

while his bones suffered
from the falls
he continued to promise
his follower much

the poor fool was
to pay for it all
in blanket parties
and a drubbing here and there

he continued to follow
his leader because of
promises that
his sons and daughters would be
from poverty made free

in the end
as the book tells
following a cause
is sure to be dangerous to those
who don't understand
the ways of man
especially those
trying to follow a foolish plan

so with many a promised boon
from the man in power
the follower arose
at an early hour
to escape without paying
the due
for the lodging of
knights not a few
only to discover
as others before
found many
a surprise to be in store

his boss
unable to distinguish between
men and sheep
was thrust into problems
very deep
and paid the price
exacted or extracted
from his hide
and that of his loyal follower
when he
traveled alongside
the master planner
who maybe
had in mind
his own vision of plunder

the old boy found
a resting place
the asylum or house
was his final disgrace

while cervantes is regarded as one
who brought the crusades
to an inglorious end
others continue to seek
other s money to spend

the moral being
as that hussy would say

careful what boon
your re pickin

as told by archy the flying cockroach

(In memory of Don Marquis)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Carpe Diem

Awake.

Four in the morning.

Stretch,

Wiggle your toes,

Snuggle under the covers.

Yesterday, is yes; yesterday.

Tomorrow may not be.

This is the way

To live today!

I belong -

By your side.

Carpe diem!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cat Who Loved Shoes

There in the doorway
A pair of old smelly leather shoes lay.
Not quite in the same place by-the-by
Where they had been left to dry.

One turned on its side by the door,
The other several feet away on the floor.
Away from the place they'd been dropped
When the wearer momentarily stopped.

Now to get them on again;
No problem as the new day begins.
The pair slipped on; without socks,
No bother to unlace loose fitting tops.

Across the yard through dew so fine
The wearer sloughs, straight tracks in a line.
Water wets the shoes' upper leather
Soaking the feet of the wearer.

The morning constitutional's finished.
Dew back-traced steps by the sun diminished.
To the house the old man goes
To dry feet; heel and toes.

Just inside the door and out of the way,
The shoes are put and are suppose to stay.
Water's imprint of feet momentarily remain
On the well worn wooden floor again.

Now the mystery of what happened
To the shoes the previous evening is revealed.
As shoes cannot move on their own
A mysterious force must be shown.

Slick, the name of the family cat
Usually by the cookstove, slept or sat,
But with the stir of man's morning ritual
She stretched herself to full length and all.

Making her inspection as each day before,
To see what lay behind a closed door.
Could one be nudged open just a mite,
Or perhaps another closed tight?

Then she saw 'her' shoes by the door.
Placed there just moments before.
A thorough inspection with eyes and nose
As if enjoying the fragrance of a rose.

Just millimeters away from the surface.
A superficial inspection would not suffice.
She tested the air above the tongue and lace,
Placing nose deep into size 11's cavernous space.

Satisfied these were her shoes left by the door
She now took a more leisurely stance on the floor
Resting upper body cross the nearest shoe.
Absorbing the smells of something new.

Then tentatively, she reached
Her left paw, nails retracted
(She couldn't resist the temptation.)
To the lace on the companion.

Gave the lace a soft tap to see
If perhaps the loose ends were free.
With her outstretched paw
She toyed with what she saw.

To her shoes, Slick never extends her claws
Instead using her prehensile paws.
Quite adept at picking up bugs and such
From the floor, with a soft loving touch.

Not unlike a mother cat toward kittens.
In a loving way she is smitten.
She treats the leather of her shoes
With a gentle grasp, and softly mews.

Like a cat addicted to catnip spice,

She rolled over, not once but twice.
Embracing the shoe as a mother
Marking with chin and lips the other.

Pure ecstasy.
One could see.
These shoes were hers!
They belonged no other.

Now herself she indulged
In the caresses they deserved.
Rolling over without a care
On her back, feet in the air.

She flipped, she rolled,
Twisted and turned.
Rubbed head and ears without stop,
Across the worn leather top.

Over she rolled and on her side
Tenderly held one shoe with motherly pride.
Between her front paws for better control
Reexamining the interior, the inner sole.

Now satisfied that all was well,
She lay partially over the shoes as in a spell,
Trying to cover and protect them from whatever
Danger they might face from the shoes' wearer.

She was at peace.

But, when her mistress saw her by the door
There, embracing the shoes, putting them in disorder
Slick, gave not a self-conscious stare in return
As though having not a care or concern.

Looked to the madam and sat erect,
Gave a full yawn, as one might expect.
Stretched and walked away,
There would be another day.

Catatonic

Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum

In 1874, Karl Ludwig sat
Staring at his cat
Wondering what scientific discovery
Yet awaited his uncovering.

Seems all the great and renown
Had already placed their markers down
And there was little to be found
In plowing the psychic's hallowed ground.

Came first Aristotle
And others of lesser mettle
Who professed to understand
What was 'melancholy' of man.

Burton in his tome did write
Long and wide
Of the essence of melancholy
and its folly.

In his poem about pain and pleasure
He took far flung measure
Of what it constitutes
And how the mind pollutes.

Then along came Darwin (not the elder)
Who attempted to attribute to love and hunger
The forces of melancholy's strains
That caused to patients their many pains.

Freud, who read Darwin,
Claimed his bit of fame
Expanding on Sex
As it did man, perplex.

Kahlbaum thought it best to let be
What the 'Alienist' could not see.

So, in his records, Kahlbaum did note
Much about his cat, he wrote.

For 'twas described by Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum
A state experienced by some.
And surely the lay public would know quite well
The nature of the cat and how it did dwell.

Stupor is called by some, 'catalepsy'
Which is nothing more or less
Than the state of mind with which the cat is blessed
When spending most of his (or her) time at rest.

For no external stimuli
Can arouse the cat from the bed in which it lie
All (or almost all) motor activity is suppressed
When the cat is in this state of rest.

Even when it appears that the cat is awake
And eyes are wide open to partake
Of events that are going on
There is no awareness that he is home.

In this state of consciousness the animal remains rigid
And if not frozen, in a word, torpid.
Permitting the cat to remain in a fixed position
Unmoving, regardless of external condition.

'Eureka, there's more.' He cried,
For another characteristic he'd spied.
When the cat was wide awake,
The tail was in motion for nothing's sake.
A swishing, and a twitching back and forth
As if moved by some other force.

'I see yet another characteristic, '
Sometimes it can be limp as a wick,
And carried about like a purse
Relaxed as if dead or worse.

But what shall I call my observations
So my reputation will be known to all Nations?

Something that will ensure that Kahlbaum
Will trip from other's tongue.

'I have it, ' he did exclaim,
'It will bring me everlasting fame.'
It's the state
To which all can relate!

Alas, as time has passed,
Karl Ludwig's name is not recognized,
But his cat has world renown
Living the condition that is well known.

Catatonic

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cats Have Opposing Thumbs

Few animals besides man
Have by nature endowed a plan
For grasping objects as they may
Either at work or at play.

Seldom are considered the paws of cats
That have claws within their mats.
They're not thought of as having digits
Useful, articulate and movable bits.

And unless the claws are removed
The 'thumb's' use is not disclosed.
But when the need arises;
A cat improvises.

So it is that a cat named October
Came to be known as a tree climber.
Grasping the trunk as she ascended
She became in space - suspended.

Above the ground without a care
Needless that she shouldn't be there.
Climbing high into the branches
Taking more than a few chances.

How she got down I never knew
But her climbing episodes were not few.
Like on the neighbor's roof, warmly sunning,
Just for her special funning.

Or onto the sailboat she would climb
High aloft; ignoring danger, never mind.
Making fun of those, I suppose
That never learned to use their thumbs and toes.

Sidi

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cavorting

Only a new born calf
Can experience the freedom
From being bound up
In a watery existence
Dark, tied to a mother's string.

Free, free at last
To do as others do
Run with tail held high
Over the ridges and furrows
Over grass grown deep.

Free, like the wind
And with brothers and sisters
Enjoy the strength that is found
In muscles unbound.

To run, run as fast as the wind
Away from mothers care
But not too far
Circling and then returning.
As if to say, I am free
(But not too free
For I still need your care.)

Eyes wide open
Seeing the wonders unfolding
Seeing another, like kind
That scampers away
Giving a meaning to the term
Cavorting!

Communicating in a world
Full of sound
But silent as nature intends
No need to cry out
Distress or fear of the unknown
Brave as only one so young can be
I am free!

And the new mother
Watching and ever alert
To dangers unknown
Follows as if the umbilical cord still binds
Driven by a force unknown
To protect that which is as much a mystery
To her as to the newborn calf.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Celery Stalks Along The Highway!

There they be
Little vegetable trees
Cut off in the prime of life
No telling their pain or strife.

Green, as they grew in fertile soil
A product of man's unceasing toil
In the muck lands they grew so well
A few miles from the Gulf they did dwell.

Then with a blade, the "stoop-back" cut
The top from the plant growing in th' muck
And tossed it into the basket that he drew
Along with the others, in the crew.

Washed in a drench of chlorine waters
To rid the plant of toxic others
Then into a bag of plastic they were placed
After trimming off unwanted waste.

Into boxes they rest, quite secure
The trip north to be endured
Til in the early morning light
They arrive to the shopper's delight.

Displayed, Oh so pretty, in the stack
(new ones always placed in the back)
To thwart the housewife's being selective
In choosing the best of the festive.

Homeward bound go the stalks
Away from others (if only they could talk)
About the injustice of it all
Life; they gave it all.

"Celery Stalks Along the Highway! "

It is said that the band, while riding along in their bus were practicing for their

next show when one of the members happened to look out the window and saw the celery farms outside of Sarasota. He cried out, "Celery Stalks Along the Highway! ", which became the only words in the song which became popular. The name of the band, I know not.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Chanticleer's Message

You'll see,
Sun rise is dependent on - Me!
As hours of dark continues to rule
You and yours will struggle off to work and school
Without a glimmer of hope
For without me, life is a joke.

But, I can't let you experience such a dismal fate
So back to the hen-house door, I'll fly and wait
For the minutes just before day-break
And proclaim, it's time for all to be awake.

Sign me chanticleer,

alias,
x

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Character Of Arthur Ii

On the Utopian islande
surounded by lesse friendlie peoples,
lived a king,
well not quite a king
but a ruler no lese
who was alwais sure that by fortun
was hee blessed and knew the way
in which life should be livd.
Arthur S was his name.
Who followed in his father, "Punch's" fame.
He led a motli crew for sure,
Which societe is to endure.

So it is that Sir Tho. More,
Writ and kepte score
Of events now as before.
Recording conquest and battles fought,
Although the outcome as usual,
Came to nought.
Crusading for the rites of man,
Wel anyway, the best
That this jew can understand.
Attack, attack, attack
Is what the scribes have in store,
Never mind the endless gore.

Arthure, the second,
Sonne of Arthure Ochoe (Punch) ,
Gent of New Amsterdam,
Was in witte and courage
Egall with others,
In bodye and prowesse
Farre under them tho;
Little of stature,
Ill fetured of limmes,
Croke backed,
His left shoulder muc higher
Than his right,
(Som say he nevr favored the Right)

Hard favoured of visage,
And such as is in states called warlye,
In othere menne otherwise,
He was malicious, wrathfull, enuions,
And from afore his birth, ener frowarde.
(Some woud say this
Is ill description of the tarent
But those cliest to him agre
That had the dviel com to arth
Wuld surly have ben as Arthur the secncd.)

None evill captaine was hee in the warre,
As to for whiche his disposicion
Was mare metely than for peace.
Sundreye vicories hadde hee,
And sommetime ouerthrowes,
But neuer in defaulte
As for his owne parsonne,
Either of hardinesse
Or oltike order; free was hee called of dispence,
And somewhat aboute hys power liberali;
With largte giftes hee get him
Unstedfaste frendshippe,
For whiche he was fain to pil
And sooye in other places,
And get him stedfaste hatred.

Hee was close and secrete,
A deepe dissimuler,
Lowlye of counteynance,
Arrogant of heart,
Outwardly coumpinable
Where he inwardely hated,
Not letting to kisse whome hee thoughte to kyll;
Dispitious and cruell,
Not for evill will alway,
But after for ambicion,
And either for the suretie or
Encrease of his estate.

Frende and foe was muche what indifferent,
Where his advantage grew;

He spared no mans deathe,
Whose life withstoode his purpose.

He tried to slewe with his owne handes
King George the secnd,
Held prisoner in the White hoose,
As meanne constantly saye,
And that without commaundement
Or knowledge of the king,
Which would undoubtedly
Yf he had entended that thinge,
Have appointed that boocherly office
To some other then his owne fare brother.

Such was and be the way of Arthure II.
As th Times changeth
So do needes
But Punche's sone
An his follows
Ledeth the nacion in despate Times
To the brinke of disaistr
With arrogant heart.

(Such is how Sir Thomas More might have described the despot that lives within
our Times. After his Character of Richard III)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Children Are Our Future

As I waited
Through the afternoon
In the Intensive Care section
Of the hospital,
I noticed a young mother
And her three children
Sitting there.
After a while she rose
And took the three
Outside the waiting room
For it was obvious
That she intended to go
To the restroom.

But what to do with the three kids?
She would have to leave them
Unattended as there wasn't room
Inside the room for all three.
Her solution was unique.
She gave the oldest
A crumpled dollar bill
Which she took from her pocket
And indicated that they
Could buy something
From one of the vending machines
In the hall.
With that she left them.

The three stood there in amazement.
Never had they seen
Such a treasure trove
From which they could
Make a selection.

The giant soft drink machine
With bottles of so many named products,
All cold,
And right there for the taking.
And next,

A candy assortment
In another machine.
All bright and colorful
In wrappers;
Some like M and Ms
That could be shared
Or others
Where they would have to take
Individual bites.
But not to be ignored
Were the packaged treats
Of crackers and crisp and chips
Hanging there ready to dropp
With the deposit of their dollar bill.

What to do?
The boy gave the bill
To his youngest sister
For her to choose.

And she marched up to the first machine
With dollar in hand
To make her decision
For the three.
But wait with all the choices,
What would it be?
She stopped,
Then moved to the soft drink dispenser
For surely that would be the best choice.
No, better to have something
They could better share
So she moved in front
Of the packaged treats.
And yet, the candy
Was surely something
That would be right.

It was just too difficult a choice
For one so young,
so she gave the crumpled bill
To her older sister.

Certainly that was a wise choice
For it appeared
That each might like
something different.
So why not let her choose for the three.

Something to eat
Maybe since they had been
Waiting there so long.
Or a drink,
But the water fountain
Would do as well.
So candy was the best of all choices.
But no,
Her brother would know what to do
So she gave the bill back to him.
He could choose.

He stood there for a moment
And then placed the bill
Against the face of the candy machine
And carefully smoothed it out
So that it lay flat in his hand.
George Washington's face
While still wrinkled,
Surely would be seen to smile.
So big brother had decided.
He was ready to make a choice.

Mother at this time
Came back from the rest room
And saw her three standing there.
Her son carefully placed the dollar in her hand.

Surely they would have a Blessed Christmas for they were Family.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Chivalry

With the single stroke of pen
Cervantes' Don Quixote
Brought chivalry to an end.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Chocolate

Poems are like chocolate
The more you taste the more desperate
You become to sate your lust.
The muses tease and offer just
A sampling, that like the confectionary
Is all appetite inspiring but satisfying, nary.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Christmas Story

"Twas the Night before Christmas, and all through the house..."
Is how the old poem began but it didn't consider the louse,
Who is the main character in this new story.
Be warned, the subject is much bloodied and the story gory.

In the dark of night, in the Oldsmobile he came,
With headlights off, all houses look'd the same.
At house 106 on this suburban street,
He pulled into the driveway quickly and neat.

Shielded from neighbors by the overhanging trees
No one was to see him, not even the noseies.
Out of his wagon he emerged dressed in black,
A garbage bag of same color he'd use for his pack.

To the back door he crept like a mouse
That's the best way in, to burglar a house.
When what to his surprise did he sadly discover,
The sharp barbs of roses, did rend his silken shirt and smooth skin asunder.

To the swimming pool enclosure he did boldly enter
And found that toys had been left, right and center.
A twist of an ankle sent our hero asplash
Into the pool he went with a dash.

As he crawled forth from this watery cool
He discovered his wallet was lost in the pool.
A sucking noise attracted his attention and to his dismay
T'was caused by the pool vacuum skimmer putting his credit cards away.

Lost is lost and they cannot be recovered,
So out of mind he put the thought that his identit'd be discovered.
Approaching the French Doors of this manse on the hill
He still needed entry before his sack could he fill.

Luck was with him as he turned the brass handle
And the door sprang open revealing inside stockings hung by the mantle.
"This will be easy, " did our burglar exclaim,
Before bumping his shin on the end-table that caused him great pain.

In the house at last, he looked for his flashlight most dear,
There in the pool bottom it shown bright and clear.
Never mind the loss of such a valuable tool
He'd just get by without light; the fool.

First to the bedroom for milady's jewels
The rest could await his search for treasures and tools.
But first he discovered that in haste, owners in departing
Strewed clothes on the floor in which he soon entangled in.

As might be expected to the floor he fell
Exclaiming a statement that ended in.... hell.
Arising, at the dresser, he finally found
The family jewels neath someone's nightgown.

Into his knapsack he deposited them all with a dash
Not looking to see if there was any spare cash.
Back to the center for entertainment he ran
Discovering a skateboard that interrupted his plan.

There on the bench lay CDs aplenty
He knew not, they were copies and not worth a penny.
Atop the jewels he piled them with gusto
Thinking how rich he would soon be tomorrow.

Now to the dining room he went with haste,
And discovered a throw rug that had someway'd been misplaced.
Down on the ceramic he went with such a clatter
Would waken the dead if it really did matter.

Rising slowly he examined the problem,
He'd lost his eyeglasses and needed to find em.
Find them he did when he heard a scrunching
'Twas his shoe atop them to pieces a grinding.

With vision impaired, his hearing became more acute,
A noise came from a bedroom, he reasoned astute.
Pushing the door slightly ajar to see inside
He could see nothing, so pushed the door wide.

A strange voice rang out so crystal clear,

"Jesus is Watching! " Oh dear.
Someone is here and he thought, I'm in trouble sure.
Then the voice repeated "Jesus is Watching! " in tone just as pure.

He retreated to the kitchen to think this one through and slipped
On the tiles cause his wet sneaker soles weren't sipped
Crash to the floor he once again flew
This time breaking the crystal of his Rolex, new.

Regaining his composure he listened again,
As the voice repeated, "Jesus is Watching! "
It dawned on our intruder, the source of the sound
Was a bird, his presence had found.

Emboldened by his discovery he said, "You're a Bird."
And the voice replied, "You're a Blundering Nerd! "
Now he asked, "What're you called? "
"Moses" came back the response down the hall.

"Moses, how stupid."
"Who'd name a bird Moses? Why not Donner, Blitzen or Cupid? "
"Be patient, and let me tell you."
Was the reply from the darkness as the bird into the kitchen flew.

"Jesus is Watching." is what my owners taught me
To frighten burglars and cause them to flee.
You see the name Jesus was given anew,
To the big Rottweiler that stands right behind you.

Two red eyes and a bright shinny nose
Did appear inches away from his own shoe enclosed toes.
Grabbing the black plastic bag which he thought held his booty,
He's out of the house and it's not even ten thirty.

Through the roses again he went with such a clatter,
Neighbors awakened to see what's the matter.
They saw him on his way to depart with his possession
Stealing the garbage was his only transgression.

As he jumped into the Olds and drove away in great fright,
They heard him exclaim something about Christmas and "-- good night"

Chrstmas Carol

A Christmas Carol

Listen my children and you shall hear
The noise above, on this nite so clear
Can it be that Santa has arrived ahead of time
Or is it just the wind and branches out of line.

Again you hear it, and it is for sure
There's something amiss on this nite so pure.
Tiny hooves would make such a sound
As if prancing about on the ground.

Over there, you say
It's as if Santa has landed his sleigh.
A sharp pitched sound is next what your hear
Something's amiss, it's now quite clear.

Across the roof they (or it, if it matters)
Have raised such disturbing clatters.
Near the chimney they go
Perhaps with intent to descend down below.

Could it be that Santa's come just now
When it's early for Christmas, all would allow.
And is he in danger if he is too soon to show,
For you see, the fires' out but the cinder's aglow.

I crept down the stairs so that I could see
What was to happening, this morn, hardly past three.
A disturbance that I knew not was the cause
For down the chimney came something; surely Santa Clause.

And yes; there on the hearth floor
Stood something that I could not easily ignore.
Covered with grime and yesterday's ashes
Surely this couldn't be Santa in one of his dashes.

Looking around to see if anyone's there,
Then continued on his way without any care.

Across the floor toward the tree he went
Leaving presents was surely his intent.

Around the tree he went with dispatch.
Smelling the balsam to see if was fresh
Satisfied that all was well,
(My part in the story is I'm here to tell.)

Having done as Santa must do,
I expected him to leave gifts, not a few.
Finished, he would blow his nose with a snort
And this part of the mission completed, the rest to abort.

But not this one who had entered just now
I seems he had other thoughts as what to allow.
Perhaps the cookies, or the eggnog he'd sample,
For sure, his girth was more than ample.

But wait something's amiss
This surely can't be Santa, not this!
For as I peered from the doorway
I saw in dismay!

It's only Omar (the cat) who has found a new way
To escape from the roof and descend this away!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Civilization Is Three Meals Deep

Civilization has no merit.
If you doubt it
Visualize what you would do
If you missed more than two
Life sustaining meals.
In the beginning, that's how it feels
Zenith of emotions not, nadar yes
As your stomach begins its protest
To rumble in a disconcerting way
In the end the feeling will not go away
Or the stomach's craven demand, a
Need to be filled. Civilization must pay.

Inward you dwell
Sure that you're not well.

There is no solution
Here and now
Regardless of
Everything that is aglow
Elsewhere.

Mindful of the last repast
Enjoyment now past
As angrier you grow
Letting your emotions show.

Determination haunts your
Every move as you become unsure
Emotionally unable to
Perform the simplest of task expected of you.

civilization IS three meals deep.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Climate Change

Man is endowed with many a talent
But affecting the climate is without
For greater forces are at work on the planet
Than man's simply carbon balance.

Adapt and live with it, we all must
For as the saying goes, In God We Trust
As time and history records, galore
This old earth's been there before.

And to believe that we have the primary influence
Is as Chanticleer believing that the sun rises at his insistence.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cock Of The Walk

Cock of the Walk

You've seen them everywhere.
"I'm the greatest - I swear".
Prancing about on two legs or more
To enhance sight (or restore) .

Important beyond all others
He (or she) has no druthers
For presence of mind
Is what's intended - in like kind.

Head held high and shoulders back
A physical presence that others lack.
To let the lesser ones know
"I'm here, get on with the show! "

**

Popular in times past,
I can make a list that will not last,
For other names quickly appear
Like the sun rises - Oh, so clear.

But on life's "cock-walk" for show
The main character fails to know
Into the stewing pot he'll surely go.
While others wait for their chance to "blow".

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cockroach

There ye be whn I tlight th' candle
Scurryng cross my tabl top in a huddle
Cross my tretcher an then into the cup
Rattln the horns that wa for sup.

On the edge you dnt pause
Just launched into the sky with no thought a all
Spred wings I didn't know you had
And flew bak and fro like mad.

Tryng to escape my efforts to squash ye
When you landed on the peat brought in anew
Caused me to spred the dirt far and wid
As Ye seekd a place for to hide

Fin ally I trapd ye behind the milk jug for certain
And raised my boot to squash you to a flat certain
But missed and hit the jug instead
Tumbled it over and spild the milk forward

My missus said that I'd better leave yu alon
For else I cud look for a new hom
So you and me can live here together
Don't see I've got any options ever.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cold

In the hearth, the fire grows cold
But in the ashes an ember glows
Waiting to bring anew a flame so bold
That warms the body and the soul.

Culture and protect that spark of life
For therein lies the future, free from strife.

To the Tea Party and its challenge in reshaping the United States of America.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Come The Revolution

A sister, the illegitimate one,
Is in the background
Waiting, waiting waiting
For there is the breath of death in the air
The smell of rot and decay
As all good things have to end.

What will be the winter's winds;
Grow cold,
Rattling the shutters, twisting the lifeless leaves
Stirring the dust long settled but freshly awakened
Even the sun seems less bright
The moon casting fewer shadows
The brook bubbles and becomes quiet.
The girl's hair thins and turns grey,
Autumn is here.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Confession Of A Non-Poet, E. B. White

'... it is common knowledge
That I have never
Received my
Accreditation papers
Admitting me to the ranks
Of American Poets.

Having lived my life
As a non-poet
Who occasionally breaks
Into song,
I have no wish
At this late hour
To change either
My status or my habits
Even if I were capable
Of doing so,
And I clearly am not.

The life of a non-poet
Is an agreeable one:
He feels no obligation
To mingle
With other writers of verse
To exchange sensitivities,
No compulsion
To visit the 'Y'
To read from
His own works,
No need to travel
The wine-and-cheese circuit,
Where the word 'poet'
Carries the aroma of magic
And ladies creep up
From behind
Carrying ballpoint pens
and Sprigs of asphodel.

At an early age,

It would appear,
I fell into questionable habits:
I liked to rhyme one word
With another,
Liked to fashion lines
That bore some relation
To other lines
In the same stanza,
Liked to proceed
In a strict,
Or almost strict,
Metrical manner.

This sort of thing
Is rare nowadays.
The poet of today
Is neither a lyricist
Nor a cutup,
He is a serious artist
Bent on expressing
An emotional thought
In a straightforward,
If sometimes
Uninteresting way...'

White introduced 'Poems and Sketches' with the above prose which I have put into a format not favored by EBW who liked the rhyme of things.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Conney Catching*

When you chase a rabbit
(The rabbit, of course, isn't there)
But until one tries to catch it,
You don't know or even care.

Conney Catching is always to be seen
Where the politics of economics
Are practiced by those of respectable mein
In the Nation's highest offices
(Where not all is what it seems.)

When they chase that which is invisible
They hardly are to blame, for what happens
For clearly, the Conney is divisible
Into the waiting banker's pens
(On paper everything is possible.)

As Thomas Decker** taught us
So many years ago
His handbook was written just
So that all Gulls would know
(The meaning of in God we Trust.)

For the mark is always
Like a rabbit in bright light's eye
Who freezes and stiffly lays
For plucking by the by
(While those in the shadows quickly fade away.)

And when it's all over
And the shouting is done it seems
The moneyed are in clover,
The victim's poke is clean
(And Cooneys have lost whatever skin
They put in the game they never win.)

A Notable Discovery of Coosnage (1591) , the Second part of Conny-Catching

(1591) , The Defence of Conny-catching(1592) , The Blacke Bookes Messenger
(1592) , Robert Greene

Gulls Handbook (1609) , Thomas Decker

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Conversation With A Poet At The Gallery

They're cracked and crazed he said.
Not true, that's his old girl friend after she shaved her head.
So you see the image isn't what it appears to be.
In fact it's a she, not a he.

But the color, I don't remember that shade of bleu
Well varicose veins can happen to more of you.
From top to bottom and in between
That's what you see. Know what I mean?

It's the gallery light that gives it that special cast.
No, its just the glaze that seems to blast
Out of the deep base that is more than skin deep
That's what I mean, 'so to speak.'

Sort of twisted and distorted is what I see
Could have been more pleasant, seems to me.
Well that's just the way it is
That nose and the rest of the phiz.

Just a big lump of expensive clay
Probably finished it in less than half a day.
If he'd spent a bit more time it's true
Then the resemblance would have appealed more to you.

But the bottom line is what will some fool pay.
Bought it at a show is what they'll say.
Everyone knows that art is something that only appeals
To those whose judgement never yields
To modern ways, or even to old taste
Instead they just have money to waste
So flaunt it before us they haven't a care
To know or to even share.

The starving artist must depend on peanuts
(And soft drinks and sandwiches in tiny cuts)
To feed his appetite until he can escape
To something more promising than this wake.

Where he (or she) if the case may be
Will be amongst friends such as we.
There he'll share a bit of brew
And have a story to tell to me and you
About the one that got away
(That's artist talk about the sale that didn't happen that day)
About the visitor from outer space
That visited the gallery in haste
And discovered just before the closing,
That he was in the wrong artistic happening
And put away the folding green
And rushed away from the scene.

Or perhaps it was just his imagination that was indulged
As the show was much a-judged
To be of such superior talent
It was a waste in any event
To set prices before the local crowd
Who would never imagine the price allowed....

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Corporate Farmers

Flying high
Over fields of green
Others get the chaff.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Country Girl Gone Wrong

To Humbug Molly, her ilk, and all
Misfortune attend and disaster befall!
May life be to her a succession of hurts;
May fleas by the bushel inhabit her skirts;
May aches and diseases encamp in her bones,
May lungs full of tubercles, bladders of stones;
May tapeworms securely in her bowels give an itch;
This one; if a dog would be surely be called an old bitch.
May used corn cobs from the out-house be snarled in her hair,
May pigeons droppings anoint her as they fly through the air.
May blue-flies buzz round her; an old meadow muffin
And tumblebugs roll balls, she's the finest for certain.
Aroma of skatoles and indoles do hang in the air
Following the presence of this one, not fair.
May the bile spread in her libelous attacks
Splash back on her, this journalist hack.
May all be blessed by her passing
And give Thanks everlasting!
At dusk the no-see-ums
Will seek out and bite some
Sketters will buzz around her head
They leave disease if they bite it's said.
May her skin crawl just thinking of the ticks
The numbers increasing as each one she picks,
She deserves it all, this devil's female kin,
Evil! Sister of cupidity, cradled in sin!
Writing prose with a Poison pen!
Doing harm to great men.
May the death angel
End your spiel.
Til then,
Not when,
May she be
Infested `n Besieged
By Bedbugs and lice feasting
(It's the insects way of caressing)
On abundant skin folds grown flabby.
A banquet provided by this no-lady.
Hiding in her drawers in spite

They'll come out at nite,
For a nocturnal taste
Of writer's waste.
To Molly Ivins,
She's no Texan.
Tho she claims to be.
She's a country girl gone wrong.

Avenging H. L. Mencken, whom she compares herself to.

(After K. Q. as quoted in Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Creation Of The Sausage Roll Universe?

The sausage roll I see
Is a country fair pastry
Where a stick is stuck into the meat
So that one can hold on to this treat.

And like all things that we enjoy,
The best is gone before the pastry
So all that remains is the gooey mess
And a stick that seems to harbor more, not less.

Regardless of how you see it
There must have been a major architect
To create such a awesome mind bending
Product that keeps going without start or ending.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Cuckolded

He got it from the neighbor's wife,
Who got it from the plumber,
Who got it from his roommate,
Who got it from the nurse
Who got it from the doctor
Who got it from his patient - OMG - his wife!

So,

Obama got it from Romney,
Who got it from Gingrich,
Who got it from Herritage,
Who got it from Stuart Butler
Who got it from academia,
Who got it from, OMG - his wife!

In history, Cuckold is a term for a man who has an unfaithful wife. Comes from the practice of a cuckoo laying an egg in another's nest. The result is a bastard offspring.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Curley

Whatever happened to Curly?

No one knew
But his days
Were numbered,
Just a few.

Broke his pizzle stick
That's for sure
And before it'd been
Broken in, good and quick.

They put him in the chute
To keep him calm - That's a hoot.
For as soon as Curly saw what's in store
He cried out, "Please Doc, No More."

Down on his knees
He fell and pleaded,
It hurts and now you've
Got it bleed'n.

The doc thought, then said
"It's looking bad,
I can fix it but it'll cost a lot
Five grand, on the spot."

Well he's a good one
But no use,
Cause without a good stick,
Keep'n him, there's no excuse.

Back to the group of assembled
Sympathizers
He went without any
Tranquilizers.

Knowing his days are numbered
And he'll be called up yonder.

You may find a bit of hope
For old Curly.

But his fate is no joke
He'll wind up like others before,
Joining his like kind
On the slaughter house floor.

Curly - The best bull I ever had
Is no more.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Darwin's Bestiary

Animals tame and animals feral
prowled the Dark Ages in search of a moral:
the canine was Loyal, the lion was Virile,
rabbits were Potent and gryphons were Sterile.
Sloth, Envy, Gluttony, Pride—every peril
was fleshed into something phantasmic and rural,
while Courage, Devotion, Thrift—every bright laurel
crowned a creature in some mythological mural.

Scientists think there is something immoral
in singular brutes having meat that is plural:
beasts are mere beasts, just as flowers are floral.
Yet between the lines there's an implicit demurrals;
the habit stays with us, albeit it's puerile:
when Darwin saw squirrels, he saw more than Squirrel.

1. THE ANT

The ant, Darwin reminded us,
defies all simple-mindedness:
Take nothing (says the ant) on faith,
and never trust a simple truth.
The PR men of bestiaries
eulogized for centuries
this busy little paragon,
nature's proletarian—
but look here, Darwin said: some ants
make slaves of smaller ants, and end
exploiting in their peonages
the sweating brows of their tiny drudges.

Thus the ant speaks out of both
sides of its mealy little mouth:
its example is extolled
to the workers of the world,
but its habits also preach
the virtues of the idle rich.

2. THE WORM

Eyeless in Gaza, earless in Britain,
lower than a rattlesnake's belly-button,
deaf as a judge and dumb as an audit:
nobody gave the worm much credit
till Darwin looked a little closer
at this spaghetti-torsoed loser.
Look, he said, a worm can feel
and taste and touch and learn and smell;
and ounce for ounce, they're tough as wrestlers,
and love can turn them into hustlers,
and as to work, their labors are mythic,
small devotees of the Protestant Ethic:
they'll go anywhere, to mountains or grassland,
south to the rain forests, north to Iceland,
fifty thousand to every acre
guzzling earth like a drunk on liquor,
churning the soil and making it fertile,
earning the thanks of every mortal:
proud Homo sapiens, with legs and arms—
his whole existence depends on worms.
So, History, no longer let
the worm's be an ignoble lot
unwept, unhonored, and unsung.
Moral: even a worm can turn.

3. THE RABBIT

- a. Except in distress, the rabbit is silent,
but social as teacups: no hare is an island.
(Moral:
silence is golden—or anyway harmless;
rabbits may run, but never for Congress.)
- b. When a rabbit gets miffed, he bounds in an orbit,
kicking and scratching like—well, like a rabbit.
(Moral:
to thine own self be true—or as true as you can;
a wolf in sheep's clothing fleeces his skin.)
- c. He populates prairies and mountains and moors,

but in Sweden the rabbit can't live out of doors.

(Moral:

to know your own strength, take a tug at your shackles;
to understand purity, ponder your freckles.)

- d. Survival developed these small furry tutors;
the morals of rabbits outnumber their litters.

(Conclusion:

you needn't be brainy, benign, or bizarre
to be thought a great prophet. Endure. Just endure.)

4. THE GOSSAMER

Sixty miles from land the gentle trades
that silk the Yankee clippers to Cathay
sift a million gossamers, like tides
of fluff above the menace of the sea.

These tiny spiders spin their bits of webbing
and ride the air as schooners ride the ocean;
the Beagle trapped a thousand in its rigging,
small aeronauts on some elusive mission.

The Megatherium, done to extinction
by its own bigness, makes a counterpoint
to gossamers, who breathe us this small lesson:
for survival, it's the little things that count.

Philip Appleman, "Darwin's Bestiary" from *New and Selected Poems*, 1956-1996.

This amazing poet and his poems needs more widespread recognition.

Enjoy!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Darwin's Cat

On the desktop there he lay
Reaching out to help move the quill in a special way
Each stroke of his master's pin
Seemed to need assistance from him.

Dip it in the ink pot and then write so carefully
He studied the method of Charlie D.
Of course it was simply a game
One to endure just the same.

And when his master tired,
So did he
And sought out new pleasures
For him to see.

In the study of pollination
It was clear Charlie needed some instruction.
Note how the flowers were shaped,
Just so for an insect to partake.

Of course he could have explained
That the monk had already been this way
And studied how inheritance came into play.
Who discovered that peas and their flowers
Were much easier to handle in a monastery.
But no, Charlie D. insisted to do it his way.

Now in the garden, planting seeds
He observed Charlie D.
Place a bit of fertilizer carefully,
So what to do but dig alongside
And make a deposit there to hide.
Showed him how to cover it just so
That the plants were sure to grow.

Certainly the plants would prosper
And he taught Charlie D. much more
That while much was made of the Descent of Man,
Altruism was God's plan.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Darwin's Dog

Was in the early days of life
Before he learned to hunt and fish
Charlie's twin Ralph, thought it would be nice
To have a companion, was his wish
('Twas too early to consider a wife.)
So he went a looking
For a pet he could be taking.
Into the wild he went that day
Seeking something with which to play.
Found a mother wolf there
Deep within her cozy lair
Had a lone puppy at her side
All the others must have wandered off
Which explained how it was that she
Was tutoring this one so carefully.

Saw Ralph looking in
Into her cavernous den
Thought what a change he'd be
And surely more than she
Would need on that blustery day
When this Darwin ventured out her way.
Of course 'twould not to be polite
To give him a fright
So she welcomed him to come
And play a while before going home.

Ralphie sat down and explained
How it was that he came
To visit her that day
And intended to take her pup away.
No problem was her quick reply
For she saw no reason why
That her only one whom she loved so much
Shouldn't be the one that he would touch,
Just sit here next to me
And explain 'Change' plain as it can be.

So he started out on his cause

With never a thought or pause
Saying that survival of the fittest was the game
That Nature played with all the same.
Those that ventured out and found
The world was a treacherous place all around
Where the weak and dumb were the first to go
And mother wolf, nodded, 'Yes it's so.'

Come closer dear
For I would like my son to hear
What it is that you propose
About wolves in sheep clothes.
How by suggesting that all is well
The innocent can be caused to dwell
Just a moment too long
While listening to the siren's song
And how they become guest at dinner
Just in time, when the larder's growing thinner
Filling a spot at the table
Where we'll them enable.

So with Ralph the story ends
Yet sometimes history bends
The fate of Ralph's puppie
And Ralphie too, unhappily.

Note: Charlie went on to write
How it is 'alright'
For nature to select the best
And perhaps make dinner of the rest.
So we see
How it happened to be
That Darwin's dog is not to be found
It was the other way around.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Darwin's Fish

Darwin had a fish named Very Brighte
'Twas marked with spots of orange amongst the white
Such a fine example of selective breed'n
'Twould be a shame to see him eat'n.

Charles D., taught this very special fish
To take a walk on a contrivance; called a leash.
On days when weather was good and fair
Brighte was released from his leather snare.

Under trees so green and supple, the two
Frolicked, as only friends could do.
One day they took a different path
As they were deep in thought, discussing math.

They approached a glen so inviting
The fish dictating, Darwin writing.
There in the cooling shade,
A brook's babbling sound was made.

'Memberances of times in distant past
Thru his brain the pictures flashed.
Caused him (the fish, not Darwin)
To leap right in.

'Twas here, the poor fish did discover
A truth known to father, mother, sister, brother.
Pollywogs, as well, have found it's true,
One cannot go home to waters, blue.

As he sank into the deep,
Poor Darwin's fish began to weep.
Sink or Swim, he did remember.
But forgot all else, that day in September.

Perhaps he forgot how to swim and drowned.
Yet his body was never found.
But Darwin was convinced that it was evolution,
That brough Brighte's life to its conclusion.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Darwin's Goats

Charlie had goats, it is told,
Evolved from ancestors, meek, yet bold.
In the hills that abounded
In Scotland, where they were founded,
Ungulates loved and multiplied,
Numbers increasing far and wide.

Slopes being difficult to navigate
Evolution became a part of their genetic fate.
On the hillside unreached by many
Goats; kids, billys and nannies,
A way was found for all
To get at grass that was so tall.

They grew one pair of legs shorter than the other
Made it easy to gather grass without bother.
Upside legs just shrank away
Shortened from wear, some might say.
Embedded in their DNA, its suspected
These vestiges of fins were directed.

Those that didn't change by chance
Were at a disadvantage in romance.
Two similar species evolved
Identical in the way this problem, solved.
Some went right and others left
Grazing each slope and mountain cleft.

As these wool-less animal bounded so,
Nothing was in their way to go.
Of course, this required that their way be clear
Of obstacles far and near.
All was good and fair we must suppose,
Until man arrived and decided his property to enclose.

Raised a rock fence in places near
And thus fenced in all of creation's dear.
But as luck would have it, all was not well
For Darwin's goats in this a place did dwell.

When Darwin's goats approached the wall
They found they could not turn or go at all.

So there they stood and would till this day
If sex had not come into sway.
A few right thinking nannies were impressed by
Left-handed billy goats that were not shy.
As Mendel discovered, long before Darwin's fame,
Rolling the dice is the name of the game.
To produce offspring from a variety of mates
Requires dominant and recessive traits.

Those with even legs escaped (as was their fate)
From this mountainside fence without a gate.
Recessive or dominant gene(?) awaits another to discover
All that's know is that these new goats, much ground could cover.
As they walked on legs, as even as those of you and me,
Even useful in climbing fence or tree.

Darwin's goats may not have been: it's true,
No fossils remain, not even a few.
However, before one judges what truth be,
It's important, all the evidence to see.
Much remains as science uncovers.
Nature's secrets in out-of-reach treasures.

Recent scientist, most wise,
Found a fossil bird in disguise (?)
Had four wings they declared
As the discovery they shared.
Feathers on legs and feet
Would some to seem a trick so neat.

But if they had visited a county fair
To see Asiatic's*. They need not stare.
This breed of chicken has feathers
Covering legs so bare on others.
It's a far stretch to see
How scientist(?) could miss this so completely.

Darwin in his day
Sailed to shores so far away.
Returned with ideas most bold
(However, they had been by others told.)
He said that nature once in nitches, restrained
Developed species to fit the terrain.

Huxley used Darwin to advance his cause
Attacking Church leaders and their laws.
Ignored those of different training.
They were not worthy of explaining.
Science must be pursued by scientist only,
Was his mantra, and pure baloney.

Getting monies was his intent
As he lacked funds, Heaven sent.
Communism was his cause
Embraced evolution with all its flaws.
Observations he could readily bend
Any means justified the end.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Darwin's Rabbit

Darwin had a rabbit,
It's true.
Was one of a special kind
Of which all the Island knew.

A rabbit that began as a lump of cheese
Or something else if you please.
Twas kneaded into a shape to disguise
It from what would be otherwise
A most unpleasant thing
That would be served while the angels sing(?) .

Called Welsh rarebit I suppose
Which was a name chosen by those
Who must scrimp and save
So that the backbone didn't rub away
The other side of the stomach there
When the space was filled with air.

So the Darwin family sat and admired
That which they really didn't care.
Hoping that Charles would bring home the bacon
So there would be an alternative (and soon) .
But observing scientist that he was
He really didn't want to make a fuss
So a boat he leaped upon
And was soon enough, gone.

Finally returning after a year and a day
They gathered round to see what it was that he would say.
And as they all bowed their head
They heard the words that all might dread.
'Thank you Lord for this humble treat.
And next time, God, could we have just a little meat'.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Daun Brunellus

Watching two cows lazing under the trees
Switching their tails aimlessly
For no flies were around
As pesticides had been their doom.

Nevertheless they stood there
Batting the breeze - that is the air
With the tail they controlled
Swinging back and forth so bold.

Reminding one of the story told
in Mirror of Fools (Speculum stultorum)
Where two cows lying in the water
In the dark of winter
Found their tails frozen fast
What to do? Alas.

One with a knife how she did it is not told
Cut her tail off in a stroke so bold
Freeing her from the icy clasp
But would suffer come summer at last
For how was she to swat flies and other pest
And be given not a moment's rest.

Her sister chose to remain trapped in the ice
Waiting for the thaw that came at last
Freeing her to go on her way
With tail attached and did gaily sway.

The moral of the story is hard to find
For the author had a clumsy mind
And forgot to tell us but left us to guess
Think first and long before making a mess
For otherwise (It's true)
The Ass is surely you.

And so we have Brunellus the Ass, A Mirror of Fools, Speculum stultorum or Daun Brunellus, if you prefer by the original author who provides confusion aplenty in the Latin as either Nigel Longcamp or Nigellus Wireker.

Translated by Graydon W. Regenos, J. H. Mozley and many others in languages not our own.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Day Is Beautiful

Some walking through the morning dew
Leave behind footsteps noticed by a few.
The imprints are quickly gone
And all that remains is not etched on stone,
But rather the mental image of the time
When man strode forth, in time sublime.

Day is beautiful
Night sublime,
Life is beautiful
Death sublime.

(Some would say the reverse is true
But it depends upon how it is you view
Death is the end for some
But to others the beginning; life eternal has begun.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Diagnostics Exemplary

The doctor said,
'Where does it hurt you? '
'Here, ' said the maid.
Pointing to the ankle, swollen and blue.

'No bones broken nor is the skin
Just a minor twist
Before you came in
That hurts a lot, I'm sure miss.

But I always check for damage to nerves
Just to be sure
So here's a bit of additional pain I serve
For you to endure.

And he took from his pocket
A safety pen
And into the left leg's knee socket
He stuck the point in.

An ouch, and a jerk
Was the instant response
And the Doctor said, 'It's no quirk
That you jumped at once.'

'There's no nerve damage within
I'm happy to report.'
As he returned the pin
To the pocket of his madris sport.

This is a true accounting of a visit to the emergency room of the Doctor's
Hospital back some years ago.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Dna - Un-Zipping

I

Darwin thought when he wrote 'The Descent of Man'
He would be describing the Maker's plan*.
How little did he know
What science had in stow.

Residing in all cells large and small
And creatures short and tall
Is a bit of chemistry that reveals
Inner secrets of errors and thrills.
There for all (well at least the biochemist) to see
Is the genetic code for you and me.

As DNA comes unfolded
Some parts may best be left undisclosed
Shortcomings of battles lost, not won
Are divulged to the enquiring one.
How best to deal with each new known fact
Depends on how one may choose to act.
Do we want to be so blessed
With Genetic Errors that aren't suppressed?
Providing drugs to save the day
Only delays when the reaper's axe comes into play.
Maybe it's better to let the weak and ill-designed
Peacefully go into decline.

II

Some organisms need not a mate for propagation
To produce a new venture in population expansion.
That's all well and good; and they are capable
As their genetics are eons stable.
Diploids by a conservative bend
Will be with us to the end,
Having little stimulus, or ideas new,
There will be improvements, few.

While Diploids seldom challenge nature's laws.

Haploids shuffle and combine to advance the cause
Producing life anew
Although some will suffer; in fact quite a few.
But that's how God (nature if you prefer) intended
As the faulty genomes are ended.
But when improvement is the goal of procreation
Random-choice yields results of major proportion.

So, Haploids unzip your DNA and let her rip
It's a species sustaining, hedonistic trip.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Do You Remember

Do you remember that girl
Walking stooped and bent in a curl
Trying not to show that she
Was much taller than he
Wanting to fit in
Even if it meant she had to bend.

Smarter than some she was
Never answering, 'Just because.'
Knowing more than all the rest
Which for some made her a pest
But still always there
When it was time to share.

Couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time
Even if it was hopscotch or some other game
Often last to be chosen
Although there was less than a dozen
Kids who wanted to play
Regardless of the time of day.

At ballet or swimming she was a flop
But try them all, non-stop
She was looking for her special place
Where none would hold her in disgrace
And where she would achieve what she wanted most
Not always coming in hindermost.

Then one day she arrived
To be the apple of my eye
And on a pedestal she stands
None other deserve the accolades she commands
For she has become
Wife and mother to my children, bar none!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Does Satire Lose Its Bite On Printed Pages Over Night?

Verse 1

Oh! me, Oh! my, Oh! you!
I don't know what to do.
'Haps publish a paper or two?

Hal-le-lu-jah!

The quest-ion is pe-cu-liar.
It's a quest for the new yer.

Its got me on the go,
My students are feelin' lo,

It'll take a lot of dough,
T' hire some-one to tell me

That it isn't so,

Chorus Does the satire lose its bite
On printed pages, done in spite?

If you publish in the morn-ing
Will reviewers pan with delite?

Can't you see I'm a get'n hazy,
Won't somebody shed the light?

Chorus Does the satire lose its bite
On printed pages, done in fright?

Verse 2

Th' Illumini rise in unison
And send their favorite guns,

To address the matter
on which they're hell-bent.

Does satire require poetry is the question
That involves these malcontents.

Chorus Does the satire lose its bite
Done in prose by those, uptight?

If you publish it on the web,
Will it have the same delight?

If you tilt to the left side,
Will you offend the right?

Chorus Does the satire lose its bite
When no printed pages are in sight?

Verse 3

Here comes the English on th' rising tide,
American "boobs" nestled at their side.

To the altar they're a goin'
With book-learning they're a knowin'

The editor has this thing
Bout, satire - and the bells begin to ring.

Publish the book of chapters
And reviewers begin to sing:
(Isn't that a pretty dish to sit before the King.
Ops! Wrong poem.)

Chorus Does the satire lose its bite
On printed pages, black and white?

Would you use it to attack, or
When no answer is in sight?

Put your mind to politics
You'll find satire's there all right!

Chorus: "Does your chewing gum lose its flavor
on the bedpost over night? "

(Billy Rose and Marty Bloom, ca 1924)

And, Yes.

Chewing gum does retain

Its flavor for a time

On the bedpost,

But it is better

If you do your own chewing.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Do-Ing The Dog

Don't know if they are out of a job, recently fired
Or maybe amongst the ranks of newly tired
But from early morn til after eleven,
They walk the streets as if in heaven.
Always accompanied by man's best friend
With a plastic bag to put poop in.
They never stop to chat or make amends
For misplaced droppings that in my yard; ends.
Unaware that a dog's sign on a post
Means to other dogs, this gardeners's a host.
No way to erase the tell-tale watery flow
That to an azalea does death bestow.
Haps the economy will take a turn
And to some distant place they'll return.
Should new opportunities abound
I hope it's out of my hometown.
They can take their friend and all
To a new city and job that may enthrall
As long as it's far, far away
So my plants can live another day.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Doorway To Dreams

Alas, the Canadian pink velvet door
Is broken, it swings no more.
Once it welcomed the soul to enter in
But now it's by reality - broken.

Once was the image before mind's eye
Capturing the past as th' future sped by
Now reality's broken through
And the past is past - nothing new.

Once was the smell conjured up
As nostrils flared to engulf
Now reality deadens the senses
As artificial odors overwhelm with pretenses.

Once was the sense of warmth and awareness
Brought by the imagined touch of another's closeness
But reality now sweeps all away
As one finds life in cold disarray.

The pink velvet door swings on hinges
Worn and broken by false images
But it should be and can be repaired
And once again memories are to be shared.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Dorothy

On appearances

While Dorothy was no different
from the rest of the class,
having committed to more than they could
and can accomplish,
she like all the rest
in her own way, stood out.
So, you remember certain things.

As example, in the first lab,
she showed up with the most ugly
set of protective eyewear you can imagine.
'Bad-ass' is the term that comes to mind.
They would have been great
for a shop class or a mechanic.
On the second meeting,
when it became apparent
that there was a supply
of glasses that were 'loaned' to the students,
she asked if she could trade.
Why not?
So, Dorothy who never called attention to herself,
was conscious of her appearance,
wanted to be just like all the rest,
although she was approaching 40.

The terrorist

In a discussion of Anthrax,
a particular devastating
bacterial disease of cattle and man,
I pointed out that anyone
with an understanding
of microbiology could culture this
'weapon of mass destruction'.
And, in addition the ingredients
were readily available at the supermarket.

As example, anyone
who made 'home brew'
could easily culture the anthrax organism
or many others of equal value
to a terrorist.

To emphasize the point,
I asked if anyone brewed beer,
to which, Dorothy
was the only one raising a hand.
From that point on,
some labeled her a 'terrorist'.

'I paid for the course and I'm going to finish it'

In late November,
it was obvious
something was wrong,
her voice which was never bold or loud
had a tinge of something in it>
which was just not right.

Sort of like
when you are talking about something
where you aren't real confident
and your voice is just a bit higher,
and not as strong.

Unknown to most of us,
she had been told that her cancer
had metastasized.

Well finals were approaching,
and one of her friends
asked why she was
studying so hard for the exam.

She replied,
'I paid for the course and
I'm going to finish it'.

On Compassion

And then,
one particular day
when the lecture I gave

was particularly bad.
And, I knew it.
What did Dorothy say?
Remarking about the grading policy
I had established,
but obviously with other meanings, >
she said;
'your a good guy'.
Nice.

Collecting

One writer
in trying to summarize her life,
concluded she collected memophilia.
(Frank Braun's 'Wizzard of Oz')
Naw,
Dorothy collected people.

There was a bowling event
for a fund raising
that countless family,
fellow students
and other friends attended.

In watching one of the kids,
about 8 or 9 years old,
bowling,
probably for the first time,
get a perfect strike,
you had to think
that he would always
remember this.

Someone commented,
'It's a shame Dorothy
isn't here.'
In looking about
at all her friends gathered,
I thought,
'She is.'

She died on March 28,1998 after cancer took its toll on her body but not her spirit.

Somewhere over the rainbow -

Some students think the prof isn't watching, not paying attention to who they are and what they are doing. Well perhaps some teachers don't, but for the most part when you invest your time and efforts into a group of students you look for their idiosyncrasies and you remember them.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Double Bubble - Double Trouble

Double Bubble is not to be confused
With the chewing gum that issued
In 1928, just before
The market crash we all abhor.

Now comes another reminder
Of what happens when missteps occur
And regulators step in
Before the market's binge's end.

A double whammy (Double Bubble if you prefer)
and the Trouble is compounded as never before.

Stock Market

The stock market is now in an upswing
Only to surely experience another binge
Which will come
As more deals come undone.

For those who most wisely jump in
As they've decided the binge is at its end.
But will discover that there's still bite
In the market taking delight
In chewing up another group of bedfellows
As it cascades downward to new found lows.

We had those (Treasury and Fed) in the know
That wanted to protect the market from unknown lows,
Thinking the market would crash some two thousand points
Unless they took action to save a few joints.
Turns out they may be right
As the market can give up that much and more overnight.

Real Estate

And those in real estate so dear

Are far from being in the clear.
In buying properties at distressed prices
They are making 'educated' guesses
But may discover with a fright
That the bottom's no where in sight.

Commodities

There are those that believe
That commodities grow on trees
And jump right in
Only to lose whatever skin
They put in the game.
Alas, it's all the same.

The moral is:
Be wise and don't be amiss.
In confusing the jingle for Doublemint*,
For a Double Bubble class event.

*Double your pleasure,
Double your fun
Chew Doublemint
Chewing gum.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Drawing A Line In The Sand

Did you ever think how meaningless it is
When someone has a cause
And says, 'I've drawn a line in the sand! '
As if this has meaning to their fellow man.

A line in the sand is quickly erased by wind and water
Which brings nature back to perfect order,
Unblemished by those who use a stick
To draw an imaginary limit on an issue, they pick.

They, like their cause will fade from sight
As the mark created for their own delight,
To impress like minded ones that they've been there,
And that they, 'Really Care! '

If they had the courage of their convictions,
It would be 'Etched in Stone' without correction.
There for all to see and remember that once
Passed this way was one, who now is gone,
But made a mark for others to see
That's recorded permanently.

A visit to the resting place
Of those who served in the Nation's grace.
Lived and died so that all could share
The freedom they gave up without a care.

Those stones that stand so silent and tall;
On them are etched words to remind us all
That freedom is not free
And another sacrificed his (or hers) for you and me.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Dreams

Dreams are what you make them to be
Flighty things that may hover about or flee.
Some are just a filament of imagination
Others are built of mortar and stone by the ton

For a dream is a dream

It's your very own
To be kept and seldom shown
For others may laugh and criticize
That your dream isn't just the right size

But a dream is a dream

And if you dream the best of dreams,
You'll find that others (at least it seems)
Will envy you for having been wisk away
Into the magic land where Dreams are meant to stay.

As a Dream is a Dream

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Earmarks

Earmarks they're called by those that know
Are notches put in a pig's ear or perhaps rings in the nose.
Which are put there to draw attention
That this hog belongs to one of some station.

Turned loose to run free at public expense
To feed outside the confines of a proper fence.
A rouge that is said to belong
To one of certain renown.

Earmarks were once put in a legal register
So no one would confuse ownership (for worse or better)
But in the current day and time
Earmarks are put there for a reason more sublime.

You'll never know who was responsible
Perhaps someone that should be culpable(?)
Yet they're called earmarks because
Now the object is to obscure ownership within the laws.

Before earmarks were known by a title more correct,
Pork (as it was called) which did reflect,
That fat was mixed midst the lean
To flavor the pot of a politician it would seem,
So that he (or she if the case be) could claim
Ownership (after-all everyone does it) without shame.

Yet now the pols of the hour
Making faces, most dour
Have proclaimed that they'll have nothing to do
With earmarks (well maybe only a few) .
And point their finger at those on the other side
Who surely have so much to hide.

It's a game that the Hatfields and the McCoys did play
As they fought tooth and nail in their day,
Until they discovered that earmarks were good
As long as the 'record' was clearly understood.
And that someone else would pick up the bill

(Well isn't that the way things are done on the Hill?)

Congratulations Ms. Nancy!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Economist - Cat Fanciers

Once there was a farmer, poor
With wife, a babe and four children more.
One day the farmer chanced to read
The poem about Whittington's cat and deed.
Exclaimed, he; 'Wifemate,
We must send 'fore it's too late,
Our children to University school
So they will be nobody's fool.
They can be, by tarnation,
As rich as Dick Whittington.'

Every day from dawn til dark
The farmer and his wife did work
In the fields, fed their pigs, milked their cows,
Collected eggs and did other things that God allows.
And finally came the day
They sent their children to college, far away.

The first born because he witnessed the efforts of
their plan,
Became a world-class, economic-historian.
The second born became a popular economic-theorist
Because he saw how was needed direction with a new
twist.
The third born who'd been responsible for counting the
egg money
Became an econometrician, to teach wealth accumulation
in times of plenty.
The forth born seeing the impact of politics
Became a politico-economist; studying all their shady
tricks..
And the fifth, the younger, because he was the wisest,

Became a freakoconomist.

A horrible accident befell the family homestead,
The mother and father by lightening were both stuck
dead.
The children returned from their comfortable city way

To the family farm much to their grief and dismay.

As is usual they need decide the fate

Of cattle, and the rest of the estate.

When the cat was found to be missing in the morn,

They thought perhaps it had fallen into the cistern.

For sure it would to high heavens smell

If not removed from this under-kitchen-floor, well.

They found a piece of old rope and lowered with a
winch

The first born into the dark, dank, but dry cistern
which

For many years, for the family had been

The sole source of water for cooking and washing.

The first born was soon brought back up to light

But he didn't have the cat, or relieve its plight.

He insisted the cat was there; it was theirs alright.

For he knew what it looked like.

After lunch, the brothers lowered the second born

Into the dark space where the cat was, most forlorn.

The others could hear him bumping about with
exclamations

Cursing madly as he went in all directions.

He didn't find the cat in the cistern,

But nevertheless in turn,

When hauled back to the cistern's top,

Described the cat in detail, non-stop.

The third born, the econometrician,

Was then lowered into the cavern.

He sat quietly in the dark, perhaps from force of
habit,

And after a period of time, exclaimed, 'I have it.'

Quickly, from the cistern, they hoisted the expert
with equations

But he was found to be empty-handed like his other
relations.

'Damn.' he exclaimed in light of day,
'I had it but it got away.'

The right thing to do
Was send the forth born into,
The cistern,
For it was his turn.

When the political economist
Reached the bottom of the pit,
He struck a match and in the dim light saw
No cat. Reasoning's fatal flaw.

His brothers would never believe him
And might accuse him of being dim.
So he called up, 'One of you
Must have injured the cat, too.'

'I'll never be able to bring him up.'
So they hauled the brother to the top.
They would have to send the younger sibling
To effect the rescue of the feline.

The fifth brother, rogue economist that he was,
Imagined he could solve the problem, and find the
cause.
Gathered up all sorts of data, much
Equipment, so forth and such.

The brothers lowered him slowly into the cistern
And when out of sight, a light he did turn on.
Alas, he dropped the flash he had thought to bring,
The light went out; there would be no seeing.

In the dark he called up, 'You are wrong
The cat is here. Hasn't been injured all along.
She's made herself quite a nest
For a litter of kittens and is in no distress.
Another way in and out she has found.
Haul me out of this hole in the ground.'

The five economist were quite pleased,

Boarded up the cistern. Threw away the keys,
Sold the farm; returned to the city,
And retired on their legacy.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Eldritch Mungo's Boots

Those boots were made for selling
Not for walking
Cause they were sold as the very best
Without mentioning all the rest.

The tops were made in India
The soles in China
The laces came from Malaysia
The leather from the USA.

And the price you paid was for the advertising
Materials, construction, packaging and shipping.
Of course there's the profits too
Which came to all those who served you.

So bemoan the fact that the soles cracked and fell apart
But next time, the best place to start
Is to look for a product actually made
In the Good Old USA.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Emoticons Are Nothing New

While much is made of the shorthand expression
Which can be had with few stroke impressions
The history of the art goes far beyond
The simple computer eon.

No, an emoticon can be found
In written works that astound
When searching for the 'picturesque'
Did the reverend Dr. Syntax speak.

Giving his respectful eulogy to a smoke
Either he or the publisher with some three stroke(s)
Did for posterity record a 'smiling face'
Which on page 115 did embrace
That which we have come to call
An 'emoticon' for one and all.
(Of course it could well have begun
When the typesetter in frivolous fun
Inserted characters; semicolon, dash and bracket close
For all to see his art in repose; -)

Seems the good doctor, reverend (too)
Had completed his most famous tour through England, old and new
And having sold the publishing rights
Gained his favorite chair and other delights.
While his wife of many a year
Provided him with food and good cheer.

He mused on the wonders of it all
As author, William Combe, did recall
Recorded his famous essay on the many pleasures
Available to man in his leisures.
And so it is written
On page 115, the book committen:

(Nor when that thought gay Lucian spoke,
He did not mean to crack a joke; -)

For you see as has been told

Dr. Syntax when he spoke was bold
And a fair tail he could spin
(Provided he had ample tobacco in)

He like Lucian traveled wide
To obtain material for the book; his pride
And having finished his quest
Was as Quixote, sought to rest.

Back with his faithful mare
Named Grizzle for her colour fair
Like Rozinante, who with the burdens of life
Met disaster, pain and strife.

While Rozinante's burdens are known to you,
Poor Grizzle lost her ears, and tail too.
For as she carried forth the doctor,
She paid the price for her wander.
Ventured into a pasture green
And there met a farmer, Oh so mean.
Gave up her ears and tail, her passion
As was the penalty in that season.

But this tale of men and horses
Has much to remind us of Nature's courses
As things thought to be unique
Are found to be commonplace to those who seek.
And such it is with 'emoticons'
That they've been around here for eons.

I leave you with the reverend's happy face
Which in parting is no disgrace; -)

nb Lucian was trained as a rhetorician, a vocation where one pleads in court, composing pleas for others, and teaching the art of pleading, but Lucian's practice was to travel about, giving amusing discourses and witty lectures improvised on the spot, somewhat as a rhapsode had done in declaiming poetry at an earlier period. In this way Lucian travelled through Ionia and mainland Greece, to Italy and even to Gaul, and won much wealth and fame. From Wikipedia.

Dr. Syntax, William Combe, Frederick Warne and Company, 1878 (approx.) , pp 115, Bedford Street, Strand, London.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Energy Independence

Nancy P.
And Harry Reid
Have a record to defend
As they ascend
To joining with Obama
In a troika
Where they control
All the levers new and old.

Smashing the Republic,
Which indeed is sick
Will come about
As they lead the rout
Of Capitalism
In its war against Communism.

Then they will ensure
That the 'Welfare State' will endure
Any attempts to correct
Mistakes that voters try to forsake.
By seating judges that are known
For Left-leaning on their own.

So while we view the exercise
In correcting 'Government' wise
Problems in energy allocation
Congress will never give attention
To development of coal to gas
As the answer that should come to pass.

While they worry about what will be
With no assurance they can see
Into the future any better than
Any other man,
They insist that the only solution
Is to stop Carbon Dioxide pollution
Knowing not that they endanger
Survival of our Nation by their wager.

If our children and theirs to come
Are destined to survive this Holocaust of nonsense by some
Then now is the time to act
And put the Nation back on track
To be energy independent from all
Those that seek our downfall!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Eugene's Old Grey Mule

Mostly he just stood there
Next to the fence
Looking at what,
We knew not
Eyes were closed
As he dosed.

Sometimes he shifted
His weight from three legs
To another three
Putting a hind leg in place
Of the one he raised
And maybe his head
Was too much to bear
So it hung down
In apparent despair.

But the Old Grey Mule
Was a testament
To times gone past
When farming was for
Survival to the last.
When the rows of
Of cotton or corn seemed endless
As the Old Grey Mule
Pulled the buster
Down the middle.

With progress
If you can call it that
Eugene had a tractor
And equipment to match.
He had no need
For the Old Grey Mule
Who had no place
In the modern world
Of a fast pace.

But Eugene kept him

As a reminder of times
Long ago
When feeding the family
Seemed so
Difficult as there were
Many mouths to feed
Not just the ones of
His own family breed.

But neighbors also,
When the times were rough
All hoed the row, freeing the
Crops of weeds; mighty tough.
And when layby time finally came
There was a pause in the routine
That to all seemed the same.

And the Old Grey Mule
Could stand alone by the gate
Hoping for a nubbing
Or something else to eat.

Whether he sensed
That in the Fall
He'd not get
Eugene's call
Was known only
To him who stood
In the shade waiting.

As others returned
To the fields
To save the crops
After the corn ears drooped
And the cotton bolls popped.

Time was when
Back in the field
To pull the wagon
With faithful companion
Of many an eon
(She'd gone the way

That all critters do
And her bones lay
In the gully scattered ado.)

But now the rumble of the tractors
With diesel smoke aplenty
Easily did the job
That once required many
The wagons filled
With fluffy cotton
Captured from hanging open burrs
And no one seemed to understand
What a blessing harvest is
Saving the crop
From waste and distress.

So the Old Grey Mule stood
Never blinking an eye
As storm clouds
Gathered in the evening sky
And in the morning
When the terror had past
The Old Grey Mule
Was found lying
There in the grass
Having given a final sigh
As he passed away
With nothing to comment on
Or to say.

But Eugene knows that surely
As the Old Grey Mule died
The same fate is due us all
Who pass this way.

And the Old Grey Mule
is a reminder
That life's for the living -
time to consider.
Take time to stand and
gaze into the near pasture
For soon it will be home

For the bones of another.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Farther Vs. Further

A rule of thumb comes in handy here
The difference between the two is quite clear.
Further is what you say when in proper form
And Farther is when you are willing to accept scorn.
Far breaking the word down into syllables you see
In less than polite company is fart and her
Certainly nothing she'd want you to hear.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Fat Jacks

Sitting in a booth at Fat Jacks
The morning crowd of regulars
Were there and a few strangers
That happened upon the place.
In the booth next to the door
Was a woman and two small boys,
Maybe five and seven, not much more
Having breakfast or maybe lunch
As the occasion permitted.
It was mid-morning,
When their order arrived
As the cook intended.

A big order which was
The specialty of the house
Three eggs, a slice of ham,
Two links of sausage
And three big slices of bacon,
As well as a bowl of grits with butter,
Plus three slices of white bread toast.
Who could ask for more.

I wondered what the boys
Would have to match
From the endless food
That the kitchen dispatched.
Then I noticed that she
And they each had water
To drink and nothing more.
What was on the table
They would share.

On the small plates on
Which the bacon and bread arrived,
She carefully divided the eggs
And bacon between the boys
And sat and watched them eat.
Each boy ate a single egg
And a slice of bacon, crispy fried.

Then when the first had finished,
He passed his small plate
Back to be replenished.

One of the sausages,
And a cut of the ham
Plus a slice of toast
And a spoonful of grits
Became his next treat
Which was soon wolfed down.

Now the mother
(I assume too much)
Ate the egg that had remained untouched
As well as the piece of ham that remained.

Disciplined as the boys were
They could not be still
And I wondered what was
To be the war of wills
As now, all that remained
On the table was
Slices of toast and the bowl
Of grits mostly untouched.

The older boy carefully
Took up his knife
And added several pats of butter
To the bowl next to his mother.

She tasted it and must have approved
For she offered it to the one
Who had been unmoved.
Carefully did the boy
Take up a piece of toast
And dipped it into the grits
With their buttery gloss
And eating carefully
So none was spared,
He finished off the toast and the grits
That none wished to be shared.

The meal seemed to be over
Except for one thing,
The jelly that comes in small packets
That the waitress brings.
Opening up one,
The smaller boy took a single taste
By sliding his tongue
Across the gelly face.
Approving of what he found,
He took up his spoon
And soon it was all down.

The older boy as probably
He had done many times before,
Put the remaining packets in his pocket
And searched for more.
But none were to be found.

Soon after, the mother went to
Pay for food they shared.

If you have an ear,
You can hear the bell
On the old register
Behind the counter
As the drawer is opened.
But no sound was heard.
Only a thank you,
No other word.

They left as silently
As they came
And once again Fat Jacks,
Lived up to it's name.

'Nobody Leaves Hungry'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Feeling

Lie quietly

Imagine your hand moving slowly

Palm up, open, fingers extended

Can you sense the pleasure of touch

An embrace that causes a quickening of the senses.

But there is more

The breeze through the window

Rustles the curtain and cools the skin

The hair on your legs tingle with the caress

But you shaved your legs.

The radiant heat of something quite near

Comforting yet not to be determined

What is the source

A warm body of some other

Or your imagination.

The feel of something that is not there.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Fire Ants

You'll learn real respect,
If you mess with fire ants.
They attack in numbers when enraged
The poison injected results in a blister
Soon the skin in the area dies
And it looks like a boil
Which takes up to a month to heal.

And the fire ant is just a tiny speck.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Floppy

Was out checking the cows
This morning and stopped
To watch "floppy",
The cow
With ears
That seem to be hinged
Different from the others.

She was lying down
Doing what cows do most
When not grazing or sleeping,
That is, chewing her cud.

The other cows
In the area
When they discovered
I had nothing to offer,
Wandered off, leaving
Floppy by her self.

Finally sensing that she was alone
(I didn't count obviously.)
She rose in the particular way
That cows do.

Because they have to get
The barrel of a stomach
Off the ground,
They use a swinging motion.

Shifting weight to the front
And then to the back
Then to the front again and
Raising their butt up in the air,
Again swinging their weight
From front to rear,
A lever in motion
To get the front end up.

With weight now
Distributed on all four legs,
The cow usually stretches,
Arching the back and
All is well.

Seems there was
A fence post
Just in floppy's reach
So why not scratch.

Ah, feels so good.

Then, floppy did something unusual.
Decided to see
If the top of the fence post
Would fit in her right ear.

Didn't quite fit
But she tried,
Maybe her standing position
Was wrong.

Shuffled her feet
And tried again.
No luck the top of the post
Was just too big.

She contemplated
The top of the post.

Maybe if she licked it,
Got it good
And wet with saliva,
It would fit.

No.

Well maybe it's the ear
Not the post,
So she tried the left ear.
Still no luck.

Finding herself all alone,
She wandered off to
Gain the rest of her group.
Leaving me to wonder,

"Did she do this for my amusement? "

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Flying Ants

Can ants fly?
Most certainly,
As they reach their passion
For procreating the species, everlasting.
Seem to come from you know not
Where, but in the morning
The evidence's there.
Carcasses large
And small
Seem to
Have spent
Their last moments
Searching for the perfect event
Where a male and female of the species
Come together. Yet here's proof that nature
Intended for survival of the fittest to fly and prevail
While all those others that tried, seemed to fail
Look closely and you will see what was
A large number, flying for the cause
Ants that didn't make it for sure,
They lie there, big and small.
Scattered about the floor
Lifeless as others before.
But wait, is there something that can be
Said for this Dance of Death where surely,
Ants must die so that the species can survive?
At least one Queen, the mating flight, will energize
To lay fertile eggs, numberless, in the selected nest
Where workers will ensure that offspring survive to the last.
There they'll grow large and aplenty with no evidence that
They're awaiting Nature's call for a moment of nuptial bliss
When on a night they'll arise in flight, moonlight kissed
To gather in the reflected light, circling to meet their fate.
Wings a flutter, soaring in the air, exhausting their energy fare
Then spent, bodies accumulate as they come to rest in silent doom.
Where you come across this; nature's Graveyard, in the room.
Evidence that many have perished so the species can renew.
Be grateful that these are flying ants, within your view,
With body shaped not unlike this poem.

Head, articulate neck, slim waist
And large abdomen.

They are not Termites!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Food Fraud

Let me deceive you, let me count the ways
Because food is what we consume all life's days
Recount the contents of the larder
Those in which are clearly imprinted for a starter.

Ice cream which I dearly love
In abundance, more than any oth-
Those handy containers with pretty pictures
That suggest gustatory adventures.

Small print at the bottom gives the quantity
Assuring there's no tomfoolery
Clearly states that there is within
One and three quarts you will fin-

Among the statements promoting the product
Is one that mentions how convenient it is to store
Doesn't take up as much shelf space as before.
Of course you pay the same as once you did
When the contents were two full quarts* instead.

(*That's half gallon for those who really care.)

Then if you like your cool drinks from the frig
You may be enticed to buy a jug of 100 percent juice.
On the plastic it states to get juices flowing,
Blackberry, Pomegranate, Raspberry and maybe Cranberry too.

In small print, it mentions may contain six different juices
The majority of which are apple and grape(?) .
Of course if you don't choose 100% juice,
You can be assured that a bit of water has been added, in truth.

Accepting all of the above,
There is now a further statement added o the deception above
Seems the container is new and improved
Easier to hold in the hand perhaps has been proved.

But wait if you read further down

You discover that the amount of juice contained
Is now 60 ounces rather than the half gallon as before.
A half gallon being 64 ounces.

So you are paying a bit more than 5% for the pleasure
Of holding the improved container in your hand.

There's more and more deception to be seen
Wonder how the employee who thought up these means
Of enriching the manufacturer in product sold
Are rewarded in coins of old.

(Or have they no scruples and see that the public
Really deserves to be screwed in any way subject
To of course the regulations imposed
By the Government to those.)

Note that for those who are history bound,
Bread loaves weighing a pound
Had added to them limestone
To make the loaf weigh the same.
Such it was in The French Revolution
The outcry was fraud was in season.

The Government didn't serve the people.

(Could go on and on about other food items, but you get the idea. It's not fraud
if you clearly state what you are selling and let the buyer beware.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

For Misha Mary On The Warmth Within

An Irish aire
Is there to share
Of winter's soul,
A life filled mold revealed.

Where underneath the cold
Lies a resting world
That come end of solstice
Will spring forth life anew.

When buds of leaves to be
Burst forth on now bare limbed tree
And crunch of snow becomes
A rivlet awakening rushing to the sea.

As alone I walk
Feeling the warmth within
I know that soon to be
Is Winter's end.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

For Want Of A Loaf Of Bread

For want of a loaf of bread,
A child was lost.

For want of a child,
A family was lost.

For want of a family,
A community was lost.

For want of a community,
A Town was lost.

For want of a town,
A state was lost.

For want of a state,
A nation was lost.

For want of a nation
A society was lost.

All for the want of a loaf of bread.

Making fuel from grain has unintended consequences.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Fort Lonesome

At the bar after the shift
All were covered with the dust of the mine
A bit of calcareous cake that clung to the skin like some sort of brine
From which you could not shake it, for it was so very fine.

Made from residues of creatures eons ago
That inhabited the land and sea that we all know.
For here in Bone Valley in memory of them who
Gave up their lives with nothing to spare but a fossil or two.

Now the granules, black as coal
Contain phosphate with which crops need to grow.
So man treats it with a sulfurous brew
And soon the products are ready to strew.

The residue remaining is a fine talc like dust
That settles on everything that it happens to touch
Some of the miners look like a ghost walking around
While others are clean as a whistle because another job they've found.

So as we tasted a bit of the brew
It seemed to be lacking but that was nothing new.
For the taste buds give way before all else do
And it's the bang for the buck that's needed by me and you.

On the stool next sitting a bit glum and dreary
Was Bill who was a bachelor if you should query
He lived alone and seemed to like it that way
Sleeping alone and working all day.

So me and Bud approached him that day
And Bud had this in a thoughtful moment to say.
'Bill that waitress seems to like what she sees
And it appears that she wants you for to please.
So why not ask her out and have a good time
After all it's a long weekend away from the mine.

Maybe you can hook up with her
(That's what the youngsters say,

When seeking some words with which to play)
And, what the heck,
Maybe she'll wash the grime off your neck.
(If you know what I mean.'
Said Bud, without coming clean.)

And to our surprise Bill took from that stool a flight
And him and that waitress went off somewhere's that very night.
And they were gone, to where no one knows
But for two days and nights they were probably rubbing each other's noses.

So back on Monday we stopped in to see
If Bill and the waitress would be there a-glee.
She buzzed about without showing a care
And Bill just sat there giving his beer a dark stare.

Bud finally worked up the courage and wanted to know
What might have happened on the weekend, blow-by-blow.
Searching for words that would sort of fit.
He finally came up with: 'Well how was it? '

Now Bill who's never been one to waste words on deep thoughts
Just took another sip and studied the foam before he answered about what had
been wrought
And finally he said a bit so no one else might hear
As if he was talking to his empty glass of beer:

'Messy isn't it.'

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Fred Babbin Is Growing Old

So Fred Babbin is growing old,
Not much of a story here to be told
But just recognition that someday soon
We all must dance to our Maker's tune.

Yet when you have not much time to kill
Then it's best that you make the best of what you will
And write poems that have a meaning to you alone
For others may mistake the elements of the poem.

Your poem of how God came to be
Is one of my favorite bits of poetry.
For you surmise (and rightly so)
That trying to make better is what makes us go.

So keep the spirit alive and sound,
And forget the feelings of aging bones that abound
For this year and many more to come
Will bless you in God's Kingdom.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Free Range Chickens

Scratching in the sand
Henrietta mused about man.
Not any particular one
But the role of some.

Her friend and companion
Took time from dusting fun
Shaking her feathers
Like all the others
And carefully considered
The fate that awaited.

Seems just a day or so
When others were free to go
They voted to be free;
Free from responsibility.

It appeared to all
They had misunderstood the call,
For it was expected of them
To answer 'Man's' every whim.

They must produce an egg each day
(That's the price they are to pay.)
If they were to receive
Food and water free(?)

A bit of a strain but they agreed
They would accept it now, but would later plead
That it was injustice to all
That only hens must answer Nature's call.

Why not the cockerels or roosters too?
But then, why were there so few
Of those God's creation of the other sex
They seemed to be nowhere in respect?

They must have gone off to some other place
Escaping the burdens of the race

Where all were expected to carry the load
So all could benefit as it was told.

However, rumor had been spread
That they were, can you believe it, DEAD.
That's right they had been put away
Simply because eggs, they could not lay.

So we hens must carry on
Each day singing our clucking song
Producing one egg or more
For the ever-demanding store.

Of course we have the benefit
To range as we see fit
Although one can't deny
That the fences are quite high.

Fences to keep the fox away
(At least during the day)
But at night when the dog's asleep
His cousin often times does creep
And capture a sleeping hen
And bring her to a bloody end.

Perhaps if a rooster had been around
He'd have patrolled the ground
And sounded the alarm
Before the fox could do harm.
But no, it had been decided
That only hens would be provided
With the free and luxurious life
Away from struggles and strife.

Free; what was the meaning to be free?
'This, ' said the other hen, 'is what it seems to me.
Housing provided at no cost
Food abundant (but not of highest taste)
No demands on our time
Where lolling about is no crime.
Then there's the companionship of other hens
Why there is no need for roosters (or men) .

So what's wrong with this idealistic pleasure,
That we have in full measure?
Perhaps it's the crowing of other hens
That seem to never make amends
And their attempt
To come a little close.
Or maybe that egg a day routine
Gets a bit old and tough to maintain.'

Henrietta's thoughts could not follow along
So she burst into song
Singing the praises of the day
That had come their way.
And how happy it would be
When they were offered a trip to see
Distant lands and places
That were filled with shining faces.

Why she had heard of plans for transportation
To a far off place; most important.
They were to go to Campbell's Soup
A place for tough old hens to recoup
A clean and decent place
Where one could find eternal peace.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Friends

My friend said,
"I get my best thoughts
On my back in bed."

I asked,
"Do you wear shoes
Or wiggle your toes? "

She hit me!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Frostproof's Three Hurricanes

There on the map for all to see
Is a place you really didn't want to be.
Nature's wrath held in store
Wind and rain; flooding galore.
Formed by three hurricane's direction
A triangle-area of destruction.

People hunkered down each new day
Knowing not what was coming their way.
With each passing storm,
Inner strength became the norm.
Optimism and hope and prayer
And for neighbors if need be; care.

Then when the storms were past
And the sun came out at last
Neighbors and friends came
To replace that lost from the hurricane.

And found amongst the debris,
The renewed feeling of community.

Polk County Florida, 2004.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Fudge And The Leaping Lizard

Found a lizard on the floor,
Was creeping toward the door.
T'was caught, in hand, clean
And after examination, healthy deemed.

Though an unlikely domestic pet,
And yet?
Could from the house be cast out
To the garden, near about.

Would be an insect eating resident
And could be admired, from time to time, in any event.
So was decided; the lizard's fate was sealed,
And at the door to it, the garden was revealed.

Clasped in hand, so secure,
The lizard would be out - problem cured.
Yet in a moment, reconsideration, did befall
As the lizard had a different mind to forestall.

A lizard is a curious thing,
And examination by others, is a sure thing.
Notice of what is provided,
To other animals, so interested.

So was that lizard proudly shown
To those about, that were chosen.
Disaster, when the lizard was made to appear,
To Fudge, a horse, not exactly his peer.

Who dutifully sniffed it with an air,
As if to say, in hand, what have you there?
The lizard, not desiring this attention,
Was time for some other action.

And when the mighty Arabian gave a sniff,
The lizard decided was time to go and be off.
So into the nostril flaring wide
Was a dandy place to hide.

With a bound that would make Superman proud
The Liz took flight and was soon not found.
For into the opening the Lizard upward went.
Alas, not the end of this event!

For the holder (past)
Discovered the Lizard was lost.
And in a wail of despair
Cried out, 'He's gone in there! '

Of course Fudge was slow to know
That there was something up his nose.
Standing there calmly by the fence
Ignoring the most recent past event.

Humans have a way of saying,
Sniffing is your way of doing,
A different animal that you are,
How you can sniff my property, it is no more.

Peering up a horses nose
Is not the easiest thing, I suppose.
But regardless, no liz was in sight
It was clear; it was up there, alright.

Yet, perhaps it has reversed its course
And had dropped from the nostril of the horse.
Alas, no such was seen
For no Lizard was there on the scene.

With eyes bulging with tears,
(The child's not the horse's) , a scream,
In it, it went
And there it stays at this moment.

There with studied anxiety, a response
From Fudge who stood as if in a trance.
With shaking head, and ears laid back
And neck stretched out as if in a frenzy attack.

Made a choking noise

A 'garach' the best sound coming close.
(Explain this to the vet if you can,
How to retrieve a lizard out of hand.)

Perhaps an 'oesophageal extraction'
Of the lizard is the medical action?
Wonders never cease
For the Vet is hard to please.

No reward is just
Cash is what is deemed the best.
(Receipt of first born
Is scorned.)

Another sound of distress
'GARACH' came from nose, head and chest.
For the sound of man, a sneezing,
But for the horse, such as this, a wheezing.

Standing there awaiting what,
As Fudge shuffled about
More antics of head, neck and chest
He was in deep distress.

Suddenly, gulping air on high
He sensed this was no time to die,
And he had nothing else to lose
Gargling sounds as the horse through his nostrils blew.

(While the child close by with teary eye
Pleaded, Dear God, don't let him die.)
Close by the nostrils, hand held gently
To comfort the horse in its infirmity.

Suddenly, an explosive snort
And from the left nostril came out,
A huge glop of jellied slime
Emitted finally, and just in time.

Size of a ball that fell into the hand
Of the child from which tears ran.
And there to behold

Was a green mass, growing cold.

To be sure, the horse was interested too
To see what was the cause of much ado.
There interned in the thick massive glob
A bubbly slime of green and gold.
Was the lizard of 'old? '

Like an animal creature of the past
Embedded in amber whose fate was cast,
Having experienced a bout with the unknown
The Lizard had changed color to atone.

But in the the past reminder from which he'd parted
Was a change in color he'd just studied.
Not green, or yellow or other colors
His was just a pale, compared to the others.

The body, lifeless, it appeared
But to dispose quickly, in death, was feared.
Then like Lazarus arising from the grave,
The exhaled lizard a wiggle gave.

Slithered from its jelled tomb
And sensed that it must be away, and soon.
Like a tadpole or fish emerging
From the egg, the Liz crawled, twisted and was free.

And like times of old
The horse, Fudge, seemed so bold
As if to look and as if to say,
This is a strange way to spend my day.

But an apple would be good
A reward for the time
And what I've done for you.

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This poem is based on a story by L. Mc Donald about her family's horse, Fudge, and its encounter with a lizard.

Galapagos: The Garden Before The Fall

Captured by her mind's eye
As only she can see
Another world captured against a radiant sky
Creatures of land and of the sea.

Lives of a distant world
A world away from Man's turmoil
Turmoil both new and old
Before Nature's spoil'd.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Garbage Feast

Buzzards are smart as most birds are
For they know the day's of the week, as well as the hour.

They come just before the the Garbage Collector is due
To feast upon the leavings, not a few.

Tearing open plastic bags is an easy game
And spreading the waste is more of the same.

Then when they are done and well content,
They often tip over the can as a final comment.

"Please more meat and bone scraps next time
For the carbohydrates and fats are hurting our diets and waste line."

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Gasket's Ball - A Christmas Story

Gasket discovered that at
Stocking Opening Time
Around the Christmas tree,
There was something for everyone,
Cats and dog included.

A special stocking
Was always hung on the mantle
And sure enough come morning,
It would be filled with treats and toys.
At first the children delighted
In opening their stocking gifts,
But after a time,
It became obvious
That the cats were not to be denied
The pleasure of discovering
What Santa had brought.

Typically there would be
One or more cans of tuna fish and sardines -
As it turned out,
The cats really didn't care for these
No matter how high
They would be piled on their plate
(Only to be discarded to make way
For the more traditional treats from the table.)
No it was that
As the crinkling of paper continued
And toys emerged from the wrap,
The cats could not keep away
From the activity and would gather about.

One favorite toy that is cheap,
And fun to play with
Is the rubber paddle ball.
A tennis racket shaped plywood paddle
To which is stapled a length of rubber band
And affixed to the rubber band's other end
Is a rubber ball,

Not much bigger in diameter than your thumb,
Makes up the toy.

Anyone can play with it,
And as one becomes expert
Can make the ball
Do some amazing bounces.
Of course the action of a ball
Can't be ignored by a cat
And they watched one particular ball
As it was bounced harder and harder, until –
The ball became unattached
From the rubber band.

As if planned all along,
Gasket sprang into action
And as the ball
Cascaded through the living room
And into the hallway,
She was in hot pursuit.
And, catch it she did.

What happened next
Was worth retelling.
Having caught up with the ball,
She grasp it in her mouth
And carried it around the room.
Then, for some reason
Known only to her,
She took it up the flight of stairs
Between the first and second floor.

On the second floor
We could hear her
Talking to the ball
And from time to time would hear her
Bounding down the hall
Pursuing the ball
And then there would be silence.
Followed by her admonishing the ball again
Before releasing it for another merry chase.

This continued for some time
Until perhaps by chance,
The ball escaped
By bouncing back down the stairs
Into the living room area.
In hot pursuit,
Came Gasket,
Scratching out a quick turn
On the hardwood stair treads
As she attempted to catch up
With the bounding ball.
Of course, the ball had the advantage
Of gravity and Gasket had the disadvantage
Of poor traction
But catch up with it she did.

Now with the ball
Finally in her possession,
She picked it up,
Not unlike a mother cat
Picks up a kitten,
And returned to the second floor.
But this time,
Rather than chasing the ball down the hall,
She instead released it
Back down the stairs and
Came in a rush after it.
Again it was captured and
Again she returned to the second floor,
But all then was silent.

What had happened to the ball?
Had she lost it?
Perhaps it was under some piece of furniture?
Or maybe she had grown tired of the game?

From the back of the house
Where the stairs go
From the second to the third floor,
Came a crash!
She had taken her ball
To the third floor and

Released it down the straight flight of stairs
Between the two floors.
While the front stairs
Had a landing half way down,
The back stairs did not.
So when she released her ball
On the third floor,
It had a straight run down the stairs
As did she.
But, at the base of the stairs,
There stands a wall
And a sharp right hand turn.
Poor Gasket's ball
Made the turn in good fashion,
But she did not and
That was the crash
As all ten pounds or so of
Animated cat reached the turn.

Again silence.
Then we heard her
Admonishing the ball
For having played a trick on her.
She spoke at some length to it.
And, then she released it
Down the front stairs
To continue the game.

Finally, Gasket lost the ball and
So the game was over.
The house returned to a semblance of normalcy
And with the passing of the season,
The stockings and tree trimmings
Were put away for another year.
However, as luck would have it,
Gasket's ball was found
So it was packed with the other treasures,
To await the next Christmas time.

Perhaps this would have gone unwritten and
Forgotten except the following Christmas
As stockings and gifts were unwrapped,

There in the cat's stocking
Was Gasket's rubber ball.
It was rolled across the floor
And while the other cats just watched,
Gasket pounced upon it and
Quick as a wink,
Was off to the second floor with it.
Soon we heard her
In active conversation with the ball,
You can use your imagination
As to what must have been said,
But in short order,
The ball was released from captivity
And came bouncing down the stairs -
Gasket in pursuit.

It was Gasket's Ball!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Gen Lost - A Response To Mill Field's Poem

Listen and you'll hear them
But they are far away and sight is dim.
So go forward toward the sound
And perhaps they will be found.

Look about and perhaps you'll see
it's possible you'll find out where they be.
Still no sight but the sound is loud
Could it be they are under a shroud?

Still the sound, but no sight,
Maybe a different sense will find them. Right?
Sense of smell is called into play
For sure they are here as the odor's say.

Near they are, so near they be
Perhaps you can touch them before they flee.
Yes, you know there are thousands
Or perhaps as you say millions,
Are all about by sound and smell, but sight and touch
Should reveal their presence. But that's too much.

Why did you not see them is the puzzle?
Could it be that they're invisible
Or perhaps they are not there after all
Just some visionaries' wakeup call.
The Gen Lost are not to appear
Yet they are everywhere.

This generation of men and women are all about
Their presence is obvious, have no doubt.
For they contribute to the hubris every day
As they work (or should I say, play?)

Consumers all! And an essential element
To the progress that's called: Government.
Mindless souls that have no substance
As they rely on other's presence.

So now we know there are millions - everywhere,
Living free, without a care.
And perhaps we are like them after all
As we contribute to society's fall.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Georgia Nut

The Muse dictates that there is much to be said about peanuts of every kind:
Green, boiled, nuts in and out of the shell, even peanut butter made chunky or
fine.

But there's another of which we must write,
Before the World Court, is brought this endite.
Another kind of nut from the red Georgia soil,
Is a'festering, like a old sypillitic boil.

Put this nut in a group of Socialistic thinkers
And you've got yourself some world class tinkerers.
Dedicated to give all away,
That man has labored for to this very day.
From each according to his ability, to each according to his need,
Is the basis of their Communistic Creed.

Give this nut a prize and pedestal on which to stand
And this goober begins to think he's God's gift to man.
He'll infect others with the idea; take from other's toil,
Regardless of consequences, to the needy goes the spoil.
From him comes this warped Baptist thought
Reopening wounds from battles lost, he has fought.

Make him a World Citizen and all can see
This nut's cracked. What a real pity.
His skull's a shell designed by nature to protect,
But there's something inside that we must suspect.
Cracked open to reveal the resident kernel.
You discover insides something that's truly infernal.

Beneath the skin, a musty poison's harbored
Like an Aspergillus mold growing inward.
This nut forgets, that is; if he ever knew,
Criticizing the homeland's something you don't do.
A measure of quality, character and/or propriety
Are all lacking, in his reach for destiny.

Don't blame the farmer or the vine
That produced this nut we happened to find.
Georgia farmers long ago learned to dispatch

This kind of trash as leavings, in the peanut patch.
Their hogs root-up the sandy ground,
In hopes that some morsel will finally be found.

But with this nut, we all come to fear,
They'll be poisoned by the stuff, he holds so dear.
This one was found by the Clerics, to be without guts.
He and his friends are simply, Communist nuts.
Who have compassion for the poor, it is true,
And, give to them what is earned by me and you.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Gertrude Stein

Ms. Stein went to France
With her sister (lover) , seeking romance
Having much money to spent,
They had no trouble finding a friend.

The artist on the bank embraced her
For where else could they find such a lover
Who only wanted to be known
For having slept with every one!

Third rate art they thrust anew
On these sisters who knew
Nothing of talent or value
Only that they were the monied two..

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Giving The Sage A Shave And Haircut

It's known far and wide
That the Sage has knowledge on his side
For his investments are made when he
Has determined the weakness of the other party.

He drives a bargain hard and true
As he extracts the last dropp of blood that's due.
Gaining advantage when the other
Is about to go under.

Rape it's called when the victim is unwilling
Although some would say they're deserving
And have exposed a bit of flesh
When modesty would have been best.

But judges sitting about the table late in day
Say, that's just the Sage having his way
And he's on our side for sure
As we're judging what is right and pure.

Forgetting that come another time and place
It may be them that has to face
The Bastard of Finance
That serves only one that calls the dance.

Yet as the hour grows late
Some begin to question the fate
Of those that were in the jaws
Of this bulldog who makes his own laws.

Did they deserve to succumb
To this unholy one?
And were they like a virgin
Cast into the lion's den?

So as they think anew
Of what may their due,
They begin to plot to destroy
The one that has played so coy.

Waiting patiently in the wings
As yet another falls to his schemes,
Knowing full well that he
Will become even more greedy.

Sometime in the near future,
He'll again venture
To swallow whole another victim
That ventures into his lair of Gomorrah.

But like the snake
That did a golf ball mistake
For something egg like
Which was it's final act.

So the Sage will discover
That there is another
Fate that awaits those who are
Greedier by far.

And on the High Plains
He'll have digestion pains.
Pains, for which no friend or doctor
Will provide a remedy or succor.

Under the sod he'll lie
Having harvested the bitter crop, and 'll die.
Neatly shaved by the barber
That with a swift swoop, cuts his jugular.

And on the stone above the corpse
Will indited these words of remorse.
'One too many swimmers did he plunder
Until his heavy purse took him under.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Globalization And The Slaughter House Goats

Like the goats of old
These ones grow increasingly bold
For they see that at the end
There's more food for those who remain in the pen.

So they attract the hedge funds
And those who are of similar minds
To follow their lead
To satisfy their increasing greed.

With loads of capital to entice
They offer rewards to those who play nice
And for those who go against the stream
The consequences can be quite mean.

But wait those sheep that follow so blindly
Are of independent minds, supposedly.
Yet as they are entranced by computer trades
They are entering a hell worse than de Sade's.

For once the commitment is made,
The sheep (or other cattle) that trade,
Are caught up in the method from which there is no end
As they aren't able their trading to suspend.

Greater and greater grow the swings
As the noose is tightened on each new bing
They seek to cover the losses, as before
With an unwillingness to face what's in store.

The goats; Asian central banks,
And those of Petro-dollar ranks
Have discovered the clout of investments
With political, military and/or economic motives.

So Wall Street is to become
A slaughter house for some
As it no longer will be
A place to harbor one's money safely.

And no matter the actions of Gentle Ben
Or the shuffling of Old Greenspan
To provide as sure a bet as before
For the writing's on the wall to notice –
or, sadly, ignore!

Alas, banks and mutual funds that once seemed so wise
Will suffer most severely, I surmise.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Glucose

Drip, drip, drip
With each life giving bubble
In the tube, the saline glucose solution
Holds the key to life for the one that lays so still
The plastic bag hanging, swinging free
As the gurney rushes past
Doors open and close
Then it's over

Life
Is no more
For another one
Who served his country
Will he be remembered so
Or just another one
Who passed
On

Those
Gathered about
Will they remember
Will they care -
One life
Gone

The
Gurney
Returns to
Its place
And

Waits
For Him
No

More

drip,
drip,

drip.

Memorial Day,2006

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Gpcr

GPCR

A simple molecule it seems
That affects cell membranes
By changing conformation just so
Permitting a messenger to go
About its role in playing fast
Causing amazing effects that last.

For within the intricate structures of the cell
Nothing is more complex than the molecules that dwell
In a jumbled heap they appear,
Until X-rays made it clear
That those twist and turns
Are needed for the effectors.

Such it is that GPCR's are modified
So that events outside
Are able to induce some special action
That is within the cell, sanctioned
To result in a very specific event
That sometimes in cascades are sent.

But what exactly are GPCR's
Is a secret known by some authors
Who forget that everyone must start
At the beginning to learn the art
And unless the meaning is made clear
It's outside looking in, that clouds the beer.

A GPCR is simply put
Nothing more or less, but
An acronym for a named receptor
That's the R, to the professor
Preceded by the C in terms, simple
To which something is coupled.

Which brings us to the P
Which is for a protein, as we shall see.

And the G is for a type of protein
Which dependent on the receptor's mein
Causes a specific action when it's bound
To the receptor site allowed.

This functional site to which a chemical may bind
Is called an orthostatic (primary) ligand site,
Which means that it is so designed
To confirm to some physical characteristic
To effect its role on the cell system
Producing a cascade.

So now we have a GPCR in total
That has wide ranging effects it's told.
For on that receptor site
If a specific protein should alight
Will cause a reaction of minuteous form
Within the cell on which it's worn.

Sounds a bit complex to understand
But that's the beginning of mice and man
As well as plants and other organism
That have a way to communicate in this fashion
As the environment in which cells survive
Effects their activities when alive.

But wait, there's a cloud in our understanding,
For there are compounds that are called allosteric modulators.
Finding a point of attachment away from the orthostatic site
They somehow change the configuration of the membrane
So that a compound targeted for the primary site,
Suddenly has enhanced activity outright to its delight.

It's a bit like when you spread wide your face
So your tongue can take a favored place
Jutting out just so
To produce a comedy show.
The tongue is like a GPCR now prominent
To accept an effector to begin a new event.

Now for all those who take medications
'Drugs' as said in less sophistication,

These GPCR's, G Protein Coupled Receptors,
(For which I prefer G Protein CROSS-MEMBRANE receptor)
Have the task of recognizing if they may act
On provoking some kind of chemical pact.

Take for example drugs that are given
To aid someone schizophrenia driven,
It is important to know
There are three actions to show:
Positive, Negative and Cognitive by name
Whose actions are not the same.

Positive GPCR's are directed at paranoia
And hallucination actions that destroy.
Negative GPCR's hopefully prevent
The loss of speech in the schizophrenia event.
While Cognitive GPCR's are directed at those involving
Loss of memory and attention subsisting.

Sad to say while this is known,
Most drugs don't act alone
And while the intent of the Medical Profession is clear
An arsenal of Drugs is plainly not here.
So they do the best that can be expected
And a drug may cause harm is often suspected.

While it is possible that a well chosen drug may have value,
It's often discovered that its effect is on other GPCReceptors
Having unintended consequences
Far from the targeted events
As example, a drug for Parkinson's disease
Can cause plaques to form in heart tissue.

Estimates range from thirty to fifty percent of drugs
Act by the mechanism of GPCRs,
Information not known before this decade of research
That has much to add in the search
For new and better drugs that will
Hopefully, save – and not kill!

And to quote a recent author on this subject,
'Researchers are just beginning to tackle this new frontier.

Exactly how they will harness the emerging knowledge
About allosteric modulation and functional selectivity
To create better drugs remains to be seen. '

What you see, taste, smell and hear
all have their origin in the first dear
Fifteen days of life's twist and turns,
Building an information base in man (and worms)
That in its complexity
Is beyond human understanding.

Living organism, including man
Have developed in an organized plan
That from the beginning
Has been about life and living.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Green Peanuts

Harvested just after the first frost
The viney tops are blackened and soft.
And underneath like potatoes all snug in the soil
Are Spanish peanuts that reward farmer's toil.
Dig up the vine or pull if you like
Last summer blossom was set in a spike
Beneath the soil protected from harm
It waits for harvest and being stored in the barn.

Properly dried and free of sand
These goobers are prizes that tempt any man.
But when last year's production's no longer about.
Some are tempted and its cousin, the green nut is often sought out,
Pulled from the vine, too early in the season.
Shouldn't be done and there's good reason.

The gut aches when challenged to stomach
This green seed from the Georgia Plains patch.
And, if that's not enough, they exit a roaring
From gases passed, in odiferous blowing.
So be patient and wait for this season's nut.
There's no need to suffer such a pain in the b-

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Green Sea Turtles Are Good To Eat

In the seventies, a company, that will remain unnamed, had an idea,
Involving the use of tropical islands in the Caribee.
The Company's in the business of supplying food,
For people's health, which all agree is good.

Their plan was to harvest Green Turtles from the sea.
Now they knew these large turtles are an endangered specie,
But they reasoned, by growing them in tanks and setting them free,
Numbers would increase and then there would be more for you and me.

So they put turtle hatchlings on an island they own,
And sure enough into the sea, they were gone.
Years did past and the turtles grew,
To a size just right for a tasty stew.

Alas, it was bad timing for their venture, as you shall see,
They ran afoul of environmental groups who are difficult to please.
Can't do that, they were told,
They're endangered, not to be sold.

Sad to say, the Company lost its' shirt on this venture,
So the issue should be closed on the adventure.
Except for the efforts of scientist two,
Doctor's Ira Sham and Betty Blue.

Thought they, why not use Genetic Engineering,
To make the Green Turtles more aggressive and daring.
So with the Green Turtle they found a Snapper to mate,
Which predestined the new hatchling's fate.

Thus could their turtle be identified, and there's more,
They emerged, with shell unlike any before.
Soon was discovered the snout of a nose,
Had an ending which could deliver many sharp blows.

They had forgotten the snapper has a well deserved name,
Alligator Snapper, by those who encountered him, such was his fame.
As all scientists do, they focused much on the point of the hour,
And ignored that which would bring their results into disfavor.

True it was their turtles had a much higher growing rate.
And the Company could be sold on the fact that profits await.
But with the protest of environmentalist many,
The Company said no, we have other problems' aplenty.

The scientist continued with their project in stealth anyway,
To the island off Barbados did they go, and in the sand did they play.
Along with fun in the sun and much merriment,
They took their wards which were of genetic bent.

In the warm sand did they hatch in the early morning mist,
(The turtles, not the scientist.)
When back home, the Company discovered the adventuresome play,
Of the Doctors who charged time for each sunny day.

Pink slipped them, they did. Now ending the story I must,
But there's more to tell and you want to hear, I trust.
For you see their turtles after goin' to sea for a while,
Engaged in reproductive passions to bewitch and beguile.

This select few and others as well, returned to the shore,
Of the origin from which they had emerged from, before.
When the new batch of hatchlings emerged as turtles anew,
They were drawn to the lights of the cities, all orange, yellow and blue.

Green Snappers could care less about bright light,
They were hungry, and a dog or cat was just right.
Into the lakes, rivers, creeks and streams now they dwell,
And to the gulf and all oceans they went pell-mell.

They spread like wild fire with natural enemies few,
Even the environmentalist became alarmed of this biology new.
What was the answer to this eco-disaster?
No time for scientist, years seeking answer.

The solution was where the research began.
The good Company, had just such a plan.

They taste good!

Note: The company, green sea turtles, Caribee islands, alligator snapping turtles,

and environmentalist all exist. The company did embark on this bit of harvesting turtles from the sea, but gave it up when the environmentalist got involved and the United States government prohibited importation of either turtle meat or polished turtle shell jewelry. Green sea turtles grow to about 70 pounds when of harvest size and are poached throughout the Caribbean. Had the private venture been allowed to proceed, the abundance of green sea turtles would have likely brought an end to poaching and moved the turtles from the endangered animal list. Reference: Feed Management, January 1997, page 3.

Scientists named, the process of crossing sea turtles with the snapper and the result is pure spoof.

By the way, turtles do taste good.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Gregg's Yellow Cat

Where ever Yellow Cat was
MoJo, the bear-like dog, was sure to be
Mostly asleep
But always ready to go.

Yellow cat was more house cat
Than outdoor, not feral for sure
Outdoors was for those bodily functions
That were best done in private.

But as dogs do,
Perhaps this also was the linkage
Between MoJo
And Yellow Cat.

In the living room
A pile of concrete blocks
Four high and carefully stacked
As only an Artist can,

A resting place for Yellow Cat
Above all, to survey and to sleep
Yellow cat as cat's do
Found it to be, the place to be.

He could not stretch out to his full length
No. Tail draped over the end,
Legs extended into space, head dangling,
He slept and MoJo kept a careful eye.

With time
Gravity took its sway
Weight distribution
Played a key.

Slowly, slowly, slowly
(Perhaps Yellow Cat's rhythmic breathing)
Moved the resting mass
Toward the floor.

Like a slow moving lava flow
Or perhaps the creep
Of a shadow, Yellow Cat was in motion.
Unbeknownst to him.

Should you awaken him,
Alert him to impending doom
Or watch how Nature adjust
To the force of gravity?

Like a drop of molasses
(Syrup of the Southern kind)
The drip which was Yellow cat
Shifted its weight.

Until, friction no longer held
And the whole of Yellow Cat was in motion
Unperceived, for he
Was as only cats can, Slept on.

Gravity rules
And down he slid.
Awake at last
Before his head hit the floor

He awoke
Extending front legs in perfect timing
He stood and stretched
For sure, he had planned just this.

MoJo raised his massive head and watched
A game was to be played.
For Yellow Cat
Was on the move.

Outdoors beacons
The "cat's door" carefully placed
In the screen door
Was the exit to another world.

Out. Out he went to business only a cat can do.

But what of MoJo, friend and companion
All 80 pounds in a rush
Passed through the "cat's door".

I know not how.

Friends.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Hallomas - (After Robert Burns)

Was the mirkest of night
No moon in sight
When some say "ol Hornie" has his way
On this a very special Church day.

Yet in O'Riley's tryste-the-well
As the usual batch was there, with no thoughts of hell
For the beer with the faem blawn clear
Was a welcome repast for those of good char.

Along about ten some say it t'was
That the blathers had all they could haud
And most of the feckfu' chiel stroan
Behind the garden wa'.

Then out the door came a light brust sheen'
An' who should emerge but the village's darling Mollie O'Queen
Hair red, some said, was "cockernony wi' a snood holdn'
As spright as a bonnie jinker, buskit for a weddin'

From within, came many a gud cheer
For they had a fondness for this one so dear.
An' she made her way down the path well trodden
In the darkness, towards the lo in the gardn'

Then came a blud-curddlin' skirl't that would raise cloutie from his sleep
"As tho he wern't waukrife"
A scream that raised the hens from their roost in the trees
Causing them to cackle and carry on, th' devl to please

Followed by this walie
Came a series of oaths equal to the deacon's aith
Blessing all who came afore an' aftr'
Causin' all those within, to rash out the browster's door.

For the gilpeys had in a moment of pleasure
Moved the bog-house six paces further,

Down the path.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Halloween,2007

Halloween,2007

The 'guest' arrived in droves
Until finally a straggler came almost too late,
While in the shadows an adult waited.

'Trick or Treat' was whispered
Almost too quite to hear
Unless you were at the door, standing near.
This one had no idea of what to fear.

Candy for the treat was offered
With no questions asked.
'What tricks might be in store? '
There was silence, nothing more.

'What a costume you have
So pretty and nice
Just the one for this Halloween.'

And the most beautiful words to hear:
'My Mom Made It! ' said loud and clear.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Handicap Principle

You're flying the 140,
Pull the nose up, up, up
The skin crackles and pops
Higher you raise the nose.

The frame shudders
How much more can you
Stand the plane on its tail
Until the stall?

Moments are like hours
Your hands sweat
Tense, you hold your breath,
Why are you doing this?

A final breath
Hard forward you push the stick
Right rudder, the plane spins
Down you come.

A perfect recovery.

You're solo-sailing the O'Day,
Wind's picked up to 30 knots off port,
Strong gust,
Flying the 150 genoa, main fully out.

Hat blew off long ago,
Salt spray stings your eyes,
Wedged against the bench at 45 degrees,
Arm aches, tiller dancing in your hand.

If you come about,
You'll demast and sink.
You dropp the genoa.
Maybe reef the main later.

Sail on!

You're a moth circling the flame
Close, yet closer
The heat draws you near
Can you recover?

One more time around.

The Wasabi inflames
The sharp bite, is it pain?
Your nose is in flame, Eyes tear,
Top of your head's blown clear off.

You ask for more.

Wearing red shoes with four inch heels
Toes crammed into the pointy end,
Arch support, never,
Heels a flopping.

She dances.

The 'bull' spins, bucks and spins again,
A puppet with head and arm cracking,
Legs splayed wide, holding on for life,
Just a few more seconds.

Ride On!

It's called the 'Handicap Principle'
You do it to prove
You are strong

In the face of adversity.

It's evolutionary.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

'He Is So- Pragmatic! '

He is so pragmatic begins the quote
As the learned ones do dote
On the subject of his (or her) affections
Without consideration of the implications.

In the twinkling of an eye
One's memory draws nye
And comes forth with an understanding
Of a definition of 'pragmatism.'

As taught in school long ago
To be pragmatic is so –
A pragmatic person is
One not to be reasoned with.

For they are fixed in their way
And arguments will not sway
For they are sure they are right
And to disagree may start a fight.

Alas, woe is me,
It seems another definition is here to see.
The new meaning is to award
An intellect worthy of the Bard.

For when 'he' is pragmatic,
It is assumed; that is automatic,
That he is (as Webster directs) ,
A student of cause and effects.

But before you settle on this alone,
Consider other meanings dwelt upon.
'Officious or meddling,
Self-important or busy', are some.

Perhaps, most to the point of late,
Is 'pertaining to the affairs of a community or state'
But rarely it is supposed to be
That 'active or skilled in business.' is he.

Or consider another of Webster's tomes,
The Dictionary of Synonyms,
That list as alternative words to see,
Officious, meddlesome, impertinent, intrusive, or obtrusive.

By comparison and to give meaning to pragmatic and its usage,
Webster stresses 'the disposition to busy oneself fussily,
Especially in that which is not one's own affair;
It also carries a stronger connotation
Of self-importance or self-assurance'
As example cited, 'like some pragmatical
Old coxcomb represented on the stage'
(quote from Francis Burney, English novelist,)

So I defer to Noah in an earlier era
(In his dictionary of the 1856 year)
Wherein 'Pragmatic' he tells
As 'very positive' or 'dictatorial'

If you prefer, from the English shore,
Johnson's Dictionary of wordly lore,
Where he defines 'pragmatic' as one
Who is 'meddling; impertinently busy;
Assuming business without leave or invitation.'

A bit harsh I admit,
But of Samuel Johnson be wary,
For he was known to carry
Biases into his dictionary.

So for a current definition of such terms,
We must return
To that great philosopher
And Constitutional Scholar
Who reminded us
That the meaning of words
Is often unclear, as example,
Different meanings of the word 'is, ' are more than ample.

s

While from the same base, pragmatic, pragmatic method and pragmatism seem to have evolved different meanings. From a philosopher's viewpoint, William James considered 'pragmatism' in the sense that if the outcome is the same, it matters not which path you take. Thus if one is twisting in the wind, being overwhelmed with facts, and rendered indecisive, fates dictate the outcome. Lecture II, What Pragmatism Means (1906) .

So, place your bet and take your chances.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

He Was Here

He was just here.
It seems like an eternity ago
When he brought a presence
To awaken and quicken the pulse.

An old white haired man
Easily lost in the crowd
Unless you happened to hear
The quiet words, softly spoken.

Or if you saw the gleam
In his always searching eyes
Looking into the very soul of man
As if he had the keys to the universe.

The quick smile
Not for everyone as he
Sought out those to favor
And those in need of his embrace.

Now he's gone
Climbed those stairs
Springing of step as if to say,
My children, I've done my job.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

He's In The Bog House Now

Stepping quickly from the room
He appears to be shrouded in gloom
Rushing away from the irritation
Of those that seek resolution.

Through the garden, down the path
He seems resolved to avoid questioner's wrath
Intent on only one thing - that is escape
To the house that offers relief. Others can wait.

Here he's alone with his thoughts
Mind twisted and overwrought
By the burdens of the day —
"Why, Oh Why, can't they just go away."

He soon will emerge with unclean hands
Ready to disclose his newest plans.

He IS in the Bog House Now!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Hillary C.* And Nancy P.

□

'Do it my way, ' says Hillary C.

'Not so fast, ' replies Nancy P.

'My way or else, ' said Mrs. C.

'We'll see, ' says Speaker P.

'I'm the people's choice, ' says the Queen B.

'Well, in the People's house, I'm the key.'

'As President, I hold all the cards, Don't you agree? '

'Never! Nothing is without my approval, legislative.'

'My husband will twist a few arms, wait and see.'

'Sure but without my approval let the eunuch plea.'

'Some who have crossed us, no longer be, '

Says Hillary C.

'Some who don't vote with me

Rue the day, you'll see.

Earmarks, pork if you prefer, or a spending spree

Have short lives in the house's melee.'

'So how are we going to agree? '

Asks Hillary C.

'Easy, just follow the lead of Bill C.

And kiss my A..' Says, Nancy P.

Assuming that Hillary Clinton wins the Democratic nod as presidential candidate and wins the election in November.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Home

Yes, you can go back home
As told in this simple poem.
When you are far afield
There's not much to provide a shield
From the miseries of the day
And all one can do is say,

'Take me home again.'

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

How Rufus Lost His Tail

Rufus you may recall
Is a special kind of animal
Who learned to read and write and such
 But Rufus was left handed you see
So his writing appeared upside down
 To you and me.

As Rufus wrote his hand was always in the way
So he really couldn't see what he had to say,
Some said Rufus just scribbled here and there
As if he really had no care.

Not true! Rufus was a special one
Who wrote and wrote till the light of day was gone
Not only did Rufus write but he
Drew pictures of things that only he could see.

His pictures sometimes were a bit weird as,
The ideas popped right out of his head.
A cockroach that had eyes so big
And then a skinny kind of purple pig.

But this tale we are concerned with here
Is one which to Rufus was most dear.
You see Rufus often thought why is it that
A rabbit hasn't a long tail like a rat,
Or perhaps a nice furry one like a fox
Or maybe one with feathers like a cock.

No, just like he had to write with his left hand,
It seems that he must take what one can.
A powder puff didn't seem proper
So, Rufus thought how about a real show stopper.

With a bit of glue, and my imagination,
I can help with this abomination.
Taking some feathers from the duster,
He thought that's just right to make muster.

Done with the slightest effort
Rufus had a tail that would make a peacock start.
Standing in front of the mirror on the wall,
Rufus, on hind legs, stood so tall.

What a surprise it will be
When my friends take a look at me.
A bunny rabbit, I am no more,
No I'm an avian quadruped for sure.

Alas, Alack, Oh Woe is me.
When they saw him they began to flee.
Afraid of what he had become
A fearsome sight and then some.

Of course when he tried to explain
That he was Rufus, just the same.
They asked, 'Why is it that you should be,
Something that you aren't clearly.'

So Rufus thought perhaps having a powder puff
Wasn't all that bad, and the feathers sure were rough.
Got to get rid of them I must
So that my friends will again me, trust.

Easier said than done
As feather removal was no fun,
A bit of hair and hide came off
As he tried the feathers to doff.

But finally Rufus the Scribbler
Was free of the feathers and a bit of fur.

This is the tale that Rufus told
About the tail that was so bold.
Stay as you are, don't try to be
Something that you aren't destined to be.

Your friends will see you as you are
One who really does care,
One that although you may write with your left hand
Doesn't mean that you can't write. Yes you can.

And draw those pictures that pop into your head
They represent – imagination not rote drawing instead.
How much better it is to scribble day and night
Than do nothing wrong or right.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

How The Jackrabbit Got Its Name

Once upon a time, not so long ago
Was a rabbit pair, a buck and doe.
Who thought how delighted it would be
To have an addition to their family.

So as rabbits are known to do,
They made plans for the arrival of one or two.
Providing a soft bed of clover and such
Newly cut, with a fragrant touch.

And then the day did arrive
When Jonathan Rabbit came alive.
What a fine bunny he was (and is)
Sleek, round, roly-polly and full of fizz.

The apple of his parents eye
How they praised him, (I cannot lie.)
Smart as only a bunny can be
Mastering language, algebra and trigonometry.

Slowly did this bundle of fluff and fur
Grow, and grow and grow some more.
Why legs so long and supple
Just the thing for hopping out of trouble.

And eyes so bright and clear
Could spot a carrot or clover far or near.
What gleaming teeth he had as well
To bite or nibble on (who can tell?)

Yes Jonathan Rabbit was the talk of the town
As he became known far and wide; renown.
But wait, was there something a miss
Perhaps a characteristic of his phiz?

For you see upon his head
Were two protuberances; instead
Of small ears like his maw and paw,
His seemed to just grow, and grow and grow.

Some would whisper and point and say,
Others were less polite and make a mule-like bray.
And he was teased and not allowed to play
(Because his long legs let him easily bound away.)

One day when the rabbits were out, it seems,
Gathering greens and other things.
The farmer's dogs caught their scent
And came charging over the field, intent
On having rabbit for their noon-time dinner.
(As always, slowest the loser and fastest, winner.)

Unfortunate it was, the rabbits had not paid attention where they went,
And had strayed far from their burrow by the fence.
Disaster was in the eyes of all, large and small
As the dogs would surely feast on them, one and all.

Panic struck, instead of running, they froze in their tracks
All but one it seems waited for the attack.
But John stood tall and then instead of running away,
Chose to go directly into the fray.

The dogs saw him first, tall ears poking above the grass,
Hopping leisurely all alone, slow not fast.
Across the field in the face of danger,
Came John, courage to him was no stranger.

Of course the dogs knew what to do
Why catch that rabbit. They would pursue.
And as they took chase as before,
They knew not what they had in store.

An easy prey was what they thought,
A tasty rabbit waiting to be caught.
The spotted hound gave out a cry
To let the hunter know the rabbit was nearby.

And others joined in the song
As they followed along.
Over the ridge in the full sun,
Came the pack of dogs in full run.

Behind followed the young dogs who were learning
How to hunt and catch rabbits away from their warren.
All joined in the melee,
While the clutch of rabbits, stole quietly away.

How sad to lose dear John to the foe
But how brave it was of him to go.
Into the face of instant death,
He chose to sacrifice himself.

They could only listen to the sounds of the chase,
Which seemed to be prolonged, on its face.
What was taking the dogs so long?
To catch John who for sure was gone.

So one old rabbit chose to stop and see
What was happening to John as he sought to flee.
Looked out of the briar patch
Through a hole in the berries' tangled thatch.

There in the field was John just hopping along,
With the dogs behind in full song.
Sometimes as they came quite near,
The young rabbit seemed to shift into another gear.

With a mighty bound or so,
Left them behind this smokey joe.
Then he would slow as if to catch his breath,
For sure if caught it would be instant death.

Then away he would charge up the hill
With the dogs baying, oh so shrill.
Now the rabbit turned toward the farmer's house,
The dogs lagging behind on this final course.

Still, they were in pursuit it is said,
Until alas, the rabbit was behind instead.
Now he seemed to be driving the dogs along
Looking back, they were terror struck to the bone.

A charging rabbit, hopping oh so high,
Ears flopping in the noon day sky.
Close he came as he neared a trailing pup
Who gave out a whimper before he shut up.

The older dogs now more wise than before,
Had had enough of this rabbit devil's spore.
And rushed through the gate and under the barn
Escaping this one who (maybe) meant no harm.

With tongues out and breath so short,
The dogs were willing to this hunt abort,
And so it was for John you see,
For he had enough of this game of 'flee'.

Away he hopped toward the briars
Hoping that all would be there.
As he came across the ridge,
He heard a cheer (remember his tall ears)

It was for Jack! Jack! Jack the Rabbit!
Who had assumed another habit.
No longer would he be,
John, with long ears, you see,
He would be known far and wide
As Jack, the Jackrabbit, the coney's pride.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

I Gotta Hitch In My Git-A-Longs

On many a cold December morn
When the sun's rays were yet unborn
Dad would reach for his shoes
And bemoan the coming blues.

For he knew as right as rain
That there would be in his lower back a pain
That made it difficult to tie the strings
Or do most every things.

But outside he must go
Through rain, sleet or snow
To 'see a man about a dog'
The meaning was clear - no fog.

So he struggled like all days past
To get out of the house at last
And take a walk outside
Where dog and man had no place to hide.

Then return to the warmth within
Where coffee, and pipe offered help to him
To make the best of the 'git-a-longs'
That were with him to the end.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Immanuel Kant

'Day is beautiful',
'Night sublime.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

In Defense Of Bigots - A Reply To T Mch

Well dear Tara let me say
Perhaps the bigot had his way
Of entering into your mind
To affect what may not be so kind
As to persuade you to lash out
At the one perceived to be a mindless lout.

There's a place for bigots to be sure
To help us all think thoughts that are pure(?)
Some individuals, in their own way
Are due to have their private thoughts on display.
And cause one to review the basis for their mein
Even if we don't agree with her or him.

So while blood flows, red as only iron can make it
It's time to take a deep breath and forsake it.
It being the bait that has been cast
Before the fish in the race
That represents the whole of the human race.

For you see a bigot's intent
Is to lure you into a mindless torrent
Where you enter the pool of discontent
And offer up nothing that is not self-evident.

By responding to the bait,
You have now to await
The plummeting of the other side
Who after-all has nothing to hide
For they have achieved their goal
And now you've given them an audience
To try Job's patience.

Sometimes it's best to let alone,
Those who have nothing to atone
For they will go about their way
Uninfluenced by your actions to sway
Their judgement or their actions
Without imposing any real sanctions.

And while you and your brethren are as likely
To think that you speak profoundly
The other side is just as happy to see
That they have provoked the likes of you and me.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

In Defense Of Washington's Public Stews

In Defense of Washington's Public Stews

The "houses" are there for all to see
Pillars of justice, they be
For the fathers knew that there would come a time
When man's passions would become sublime

A time when men quested for reliefs
From the world's victories and defeats
Where one could find solace
Without the danger of losing face.

So it is that it came to be
That Mandeville's thesis
Gave rise to Public Stews
In the capital city of Potomac views.

Here men (and women too) found
Their indulgences could be profound
And rewarded them most handsomely
By satisfying their appetites for quest and victory.

From time to time there comes
An innocent who offers rare plums
Free for the taking if none object,
(And who could resist the temptation of plundering and sex.)

For every four or eight years as the record goes
A virgin one appears at the doors
And is sacrificed on the alter
As the heart is ripped out of him (or her) .

The neophyte thinking that he
Controls all that he can see
Soon to discover that the houses are there
To be used but never showing signs of wear.

Soon a bastard child is produced that none claim
For it is the product of passions blazing flame

The product of a moment of interludes
Where justice never intrudes.

Perhaps the procreator of this unfortunate one
Thinks that he has done much to right what's wrong
But naive is he
For the fates are aligned most certainly.

What to do with this unfortunate birth
That has no place on this planet, earth
Death is what is often prescribed
But that is too kind for this wanton child.

No it must be reared and brought to maturity
For its future affects all as they seek security
How to manage the cost of this one who
Will bankrupt the people, such as you.

Charge the people for the crime
Take from them that so often whine
The wealthy can afford to support
This one, the product of our licentious sport.

Give to the poor or others more deserving
(But tax them all, never the less) , a decent serving.
For once the horse is out the door
It's time to look further for some more.

The now not so innocent will exclaim
The fault lies other where, "they're to blame."
Give me more time to right what's wrong
And all will sing my praises as we go along.

The whores of the houses are soon made happy
For they get their daily food and nappy
Only serving those that can pay
For a romp in the legislative hay.

Not much changes with the season
For man is short of memory and of reason
And the smooth shaven one will appear
To shrink away, have no fear.

To be replaced by another that's for sure
Maybe one not so innocent, but more secure
In understanding the ways of Washington town
A place where one discovers what's under the flowing gown.

Protecting against gleet and other emissions
That arise from legislative actions
Is not the object of this public stew
For they all only want what's due.

To continue as they have before
Acting as a public whore
Serving for a price that must be paid
Shades, of Marquis de Sade.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

In Earth's Darkest Hours

And yet, after winter comes the spring
When all is renewed once again
With the promise of life
Even if it means surviving strife.

For nature is a force unto itself
And even disasters are source of wealth
As the earth regains its direction and spin
And life returns to normal once again.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

In Praise Of One Most Barberous

Stood there in his emporium
Where noble heads offered up their cranium
For which he did apply
The towel, lather and with thumb, decry
That plumage that grows upon
The best and worst of renown
Sometimes just a bit of tuft.
Other's having far too much.

Regardless, as they fall under this master of
Facial hairs made most soft,
Some claim it is the razor most important,
While others deride such thought for a moment.
As it is the honing of the blade
That makes it glide across the plane
Through the lather, thick and thin
Applied by this master of the chin.

Perhaps the soap could be the secret
As each hair is soaked most discrete.
Yet as all who have shaved before,
Is know that prior to being shorn,
To the face warm and wet
Are to be applied as yet,
Another towel steaming from the bricks
Laid upon the harbinger of bristly sticks.
Only then can the suds
Wet and soften the daily hubris.

So stood that master of the chin
Who by advertising created a paper din
With poems, essays and claims of regal being
Sir John Richard Desborus Huggins became the first, with feeling,
To apply the grease to the skids
That became known as advertising blitz.

Famous, he was for sure
Not just for the barberous blade to be endured
But for his advertising might

That brought men and women day and night
To his 'emporium' of treasures,
Fine perfumes, oils, salves, pearls, wigs and other measures.
Sold them all at a small profit (according to him)
But judging from his prices; his memory dim.
Nevertheless, famous men must be shaved
By this master of the cup and blade.

And for the ladies, far and wide
(not their dimensions, save their pride) ,
Came for wigs and other things most proper,
Necessary for the fair one, a fashion shopper.

Huggins in a most barberous tone
Set the stage for advertising, all alone.
So the next time that you remove hair or whisker,
Remember the admonition of this Master.
Name recognition is the reason -
For customers being there in every season!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

In Praise Of Snow Peas

The threat of the freeze is past
And I survey those that cast
Their lot to Grow in this Wintery Season.
Some would say lacking Rhyme or Reason.

But there they stand, Soldiers
Against the Blast of Norther's Past
Bowing their head in reverence
But with a Godly perseverance.

With the Morning Sun
They again have Begun
To do what is written in their genes
To produce in abundance it seems.

For on one or two early risers
There is the suggestion of flowers
That will in a week or so
Have flattened pods that grow and grow.

Then when Once again I judge them
Many a pea will be suspend from wirey stems
Ready for picking and preparation
In a Winter time Celebration!

On a plot only three feet by four, a planting of snow peas was begun in late November, placing the white wrinkled peas in a double row, spaced some three inches apart. Within a week they emerged. Because they are a climbing plant, a support must be provided to enhance their reach for the sun. Slowly at first they grow but soon their tendrils catch the wire and entwine about it bracing the plant against the wind and leading the vine ever upward. A few flowers appear at first followed by a slender flat pod. One has to resist the temptation to pick them when they are only one inch or so in length, but by the third week in December a number are right for the picking. On Christmas day the time has arrived and those that have been carefully picked daily and refrigerated, are all together for the celebration.

The stem end and bloom end are harshly pulled from the pod, removing a thin wirey thread and leaving the pod ready for cooking. Into a microwave dish they

are heaped in a pile and three generous pats of butter place on top. Then into the oven they go cooking them on the same setting used for popcorn, but only for thirty seconds. (Fewer beans require less time and more require a longer interval.) It's better to undercook them than render them sadly limp, but even when overcooked, they are a treat.

Of course you could have bought snowpeas in the market and avoided all the trouble. But you miss the reward of knowing that you have provided a most generous treat. One that will be repeated some thirty or more times before they give up the ghost.

And best of all a second planting can be made even while the threat of frost is there as long as the ground isn't frozen.

All snow peas require is their very own place in the sun.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

In Search Of The Golden Fleece - The Sheepskin

Seems just a moment ago
When it was said to be so
That owning this piece of tanned leather
Guaranteed a pass to 'where-ever'

For it was widely known
That the owner would be renowned
As the bearer of good news
And could name the price for his union dues.

A trip to a noted school was all it took
To mark a salary in the book
That was in six figures or more
And best of all, no one kept score.

So mom and pop's favorite one
Would the long gown don
Then take off for Wall Street
To join others feasting on the meat.

Some of the carcasses were ripe
While others were just bits of tripe
But regardless, all that was required
Was to trade pieces for bits of lire.

Best of all the rivers and ponds were full
Of catches that with a bit of 'Bull'
Could be shaped into another vehicle
For investing by those not so fickle.

So this bit of sheepskin cast
Upon waters racing past
Trapped bits of what appeared to be gold
And it mattered not, truth be told.

Gold or not, it was of no concern
As there was always another sucker born
Who would see the color and the flash
And insist that good times were here at last.

Many a mansion on the hill
Or on the water front, better still
Could be built and sold again
Before it was necessary for payments end.

Fortune was there to behold
As everyone wanted their piece of gold
So with encouragement from the Fed
And Congress, to whom they were wed
Insisted that all should have a share
In the abundance that was everywhere.

Buyers came from near and far
To participate in the bazaar
Sheiks and other notables
Were among the buying rabble.

Insisting that regardless of price
The must have something twice as nice
Wine and women, could be bought
With the profits of the moment.

And best of all, there were the cautious ones
Who sought out safe investments from their clones
Offering a return far greater than the market would allow
If they would trust the bearer of the sacred cow.

No one bothered to question; the word was 'trust'
After all, there was no way of going bust.
So everyone flipped and flipped again
As if the world would never end.

Then one dark and gloomy day
There was a foreboding that came that way
Suggesting there were too many sellers
And buyers were gone in a blur.

With payments coming due
The panic stricken wondered what to do
So they dropped the keys and walked away
Leaving the holder with no funds to pay.

Then it occurred to some that the solution
Was to be had in a new administration
That promised that all would be made right
Correcting the evils of the Conservative Right.

A new broom sweeps clean is a given
As the new ones arrived as if from Heaven
And set about correcting the eight years of wrong
That all had suffered for so long.

Alas, alack and woe was the cry
We inherited such a mess of broken clay
That it will take a Strong Government
To bring an end to this ill Continent.

And of course the newly minted sheepskin bearers
Were the very ones who would be carriers
Of the water for all the rest
As they filled their own silver chest.

Rushing to the Potomac without a plan
Except to rid the nation of the Man
Who all had hated for the years past
Now gone in a flash.

The easiest task was to change the gold
Into a paper currency of old.
To make it appear to be
Much more than was there in history.

A bit of Merlin's tricks and shazam!
In the eye of the beholder it was the same.
Pyrite was cheap and available
And it was just as stable.
(Well not really.)

Who would know that the smell of sulfur in the air
Would be the only clue that Old Nick had been there.
And now all would be made whole again
As Inflation was given a fatal spin.

As to the sheepskins that once trapped tiny bits of gold
they're empty as the pyrite has been over sold.

The Golden Fleece;
We've found it, and are here to tell,
The meaning of the word,
Fleece, has other meanings as well.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

In The Piney Woods (Or The Education Of John)

In the heat of the summer,
When the grass crinckled under foot,
The blue haze rose from the pines
And dust devils played across the roads.
Guest; Young John, Alice and Wayne,
Slept late,
And had no plans for the day.

So it was, with the windows open,
And not a breath of air moving,
That they moved to the porch,
And sat looking out at the pines
Where in the wood
An old man in long sleeve shirt
Heavy overalls, worn hat and
High topped shoes
Climbed off the battered Ford truck
With the makeshift bed.
Poles standing upright to
Hold the pulp wood.

The old man really didn't really care
How hot it was,
Or for that matter what time it was
The day was just like every other
And this was another a job to be done.

The day before
he'd spent his time
Cutting the loblolly pine
Laying the fallen trunks
In a straight line
Along side the space between the rows
Where the truck would drive.
The branches had been trimmed and
Were piled in the neighboring space.

Every third tree, he'd left
So the others could

Grow tall and strong
Those for pulp
Had been felled
with his Homelite chainsaw.

There the pulp wood lay ready for loading
After the trees were topped and trimmed
And the trunks sliced in perfect sections
Sized, to fit on the truck's rack and
The train cars that would take them to the mill..

The negro
Hitched up his pants
And prepared
To stack wood on the truck
As the driver headed it down
The open row.

Out of the cool house
The boy; no hat, no gloves,
New store bought clothes,
Thought to play a game
with the old black.

He'd help load the truck,
A trifle he though
As he was a weight lifter,
strong as an ox.

On one side, the old man
Began to load the truck,
And when the sections from the
First tree were loaded,
He walked over to the other
Side and began to load those.

So John began on the near side,
Picked up one of the logs in the middle,
And hoisted it shoulder high,
(It must have weighed a hundred pounds.)
He tossed it on the truck's growing stack

Not exactly straight as an arrow.
The wood fell across the others there
Which required him moving it
To make it rightly lie.

He grabbed another
As the truck coughed
And moved down the line,
This one he hoisted high
And just in time
As the old man added his to
The growing pile.

The black moved along
In an easy way
Singing a wordless song.
As if enjoying the day.
Sweat out of every pore
Oozed and soaked his shirt and pants.

John's back ached
But he didn't dare
Look to the old one
Whose work
He'd decided to share.
His hands and shirt were
Soon covered with sap.
Resin that flowed so free
From these sections of pine
That yesterday was a tree.
In a mixture of dirt, bark and sweat,
His jeans were soon black,
As black as the man
Who seemed not to notice or care.

Somehow John kept up on his side
And near the end of the line
The truck jerked and stalled as
The radiator hissed,
Then started again with a roar
As the driver put his foot to the floor.
Gingerly the truck moved ahead

And the pile of wood on the bed
Continued to grow
Higher and higher.

Matching pace by pace
And piece by piece
John and the old one
With genetic dark skin
Just kept on histing,
Ag'in and ag'in.

At the end of the row
While the truck
Turn'd about and stopped to cool
They shared from a jug
With wet burlap wrapped about it.

Not a word
Passed between them
As each had his own thoughts
In this lot of piney wood trees.

John, arching his back
Looked to the truck
With wood piled high on the rack
And wondered how it
Was it to be
That one could pile it even higher
When the top he couldn't see.

So he waited for the old man
To take the lead
And watched how
He wrestled this
Fruit of the sand.

A bit of balance and
A shift of the load
And sure enough, he
Put another aboard.

Poetry in motion

Is how it's described
As the old man found the
Midpoint of the wood still undried
Raised up one end while
The other remained
On the ground.
For a moment he rested the up-end
On the hitch of his belt
Then he leaned back
And lifted the wood like a pole.

Swinging the outstretched
End away from the ground
While turning slowly around
In a continuing motion,
The oft end was lifted high
Then with a grunt he raised the
Chunk up to the sky.

Shifting his hand
On the end oozing sap,
He placed it there,
And sent the pine piece
To its proper place.

For the rest of time,
As they moved
Down the row,
John struggled with
The lengths of pine wood
Which he lifted and threwed.

From time to time
The old one picked up his pace
Then helped John put
His pulp wood in place.

At the end of the row of trees
The overheated truck
Again sputtered to a halt
And the old man climbed aboard.

John stood to the side as
The truck belching white smoke
Started, then with
Gears grinding, the
Truck strained to carry the wood
Down the field path to the
lime-rock packed road.

Through the open window,
The old man tipped his hat,
And said, 'much a-bliged'

And that ended John's education for the day.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

It's Been Blowed And Saucered

When you're with friends
and they say
Here's your favorite coffee,
just the way
You like it fresh an' hot
Just off the stove,
and pipin' hot.

For you it's special
Cause as we
move into fall
And wint'rs coming shortly
With the wind blowing
a special chill.
I know you'll appreciate
so much
When th' cups too hot to touch
So I blowed and saucered it
Making it a pleasure to sip.

Do you remember when we
were once young and gay
And with our friends and neighbors
shared each and every day
Never thinking that we
would get so decrepit
Making it so hard
to move around a bit.

But with this special coffee
You can be sure that you and me
Will get together again
in the spring time
Just you wait and see.

So if your cups been overflowing,
Maybe it's cause of your own doing,
And just another way of saying,
Your coffee's done been

Blowed and saucered,
And is for you to enjoy and to sip
For it's time to warm old bones
Before memories glowing fires
And maybe get another cup.
So go ahead and take
Another well deserved sip.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Janis Martin

A tiny morsel thrust upon the stage
That grew too large to chew, much less swallow
So RCA chastised her, condemned her to death.
But she wouldn't stay buried.

Emerging, again and again
To tempt, threaten or succor
Those who found that she was
What she claimed to be.

A 'Female Elvis' she was called,
But no, she stood taller than them all
For she had a talent that best explained,
Said, 'I'm a Hard Rocking Momma, that's my name!

(A tribute to a lady, now gone but not forgotten.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Jester In Chief

Standing amongst his peers
He says, (to quote another) "Lend me your ears"
For I have wit to share
Saying what no one else would dare.

"I am the one who knows
What is required to lessen the evil blows
Of fiancé and societies, woes.
Listen up, here is how it goes."

"Say so many things that the listener will find
Something of which is good for his kind
And will follow you till the end,
All you have to do is call him, my friend."
(As in: my friend, Sarkozy.)

Alas, the group of twenty assembled
Has heard this all before and were chagrined
To hear him tell,
They must remain under his spell.

In the group picture of the world's leaders
He seems to be absent before the photographers
For he was off on flight to places for him to speak
Of visions (spiced with humor, of course) that the masses seek.

So away he goes appearing before those who want to hear
America's "Jester in Chief" wearing asses ears..

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

John Cooke (May He Burn In Hell)

Lawyers have not always been charged with the best of reason,
As example when John Cooke tried Charles I for 'treason'
The crime for which the King was held, was failure to separate
Church from State and on this basis, he met his fate.

Yet Cooke overlooked the trials and tribulations of Oliver C
As just the way it was done in those, the times of excesses
Finally Cromwell became more a despot than the old King
And the common man helped the monarchy to regain.

So it was when Charles II once was restored to his royal position,
That John Cooke found himself in a most precarious situation.
Now charged as he had charged before,
With treason and even more.

Separating body from head seemed much too
Mild a punishment for the lawyer and his crew.
So he was to be hung, slowly so he could enjoy
The torments of the crowd as they did toy.
His family jewels they removed that day
And cast them to dogs that were astray.

The rest is difficult to report as punishment
As was most cruel in those days of torment.
Christian apathy was the rule
And the disembowelment was most cruel.

Yet as we consider the lawyer's place
In being the advocate of those in the devil's embrace,
We must be reminded that they may gain their place
In the halls of Justice that they now deface.

So it is with the ACLU that speaks from both sides of it's mouth
Said to be protecting the underdog against the crowd's wrath,
They oft times forget the fate of lawyer - John Cooke
And are seen to cast a despairing look
At Justice, as they mock, 'it's within the law.'
Seeking self righteous vindication for one and all.

They tear down the very civilization
Which has been our salvation
And attack the very foundation
Of this a Christian Nation.

Sneering at those that have religious beliefs
As outmoded in this, the modern world of 'thiefs'
(Sorry, should have been thieves but it doesn't rhyme,
Maybe, some other time.)

One might read 'The Tyrannicide Brief' by Geoffrey Robertson to gain perspective
on the life and times of John Cooke. Pantheon Press,2006.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Judge Maryann Sumi

A judge likened to those of the old west
Has emerged at the liberals request
She's a hanging judge for sure
As she tracks in the barnyard manure.

Liberal like all her Madison friends
Can see nothing but the benefit of Labor's ends
An end-run to avoid the pain
She's at it, again.

Threatin' sanctions or otherwise
She is a model of wisdom's evil side
As she twist and turns the law to her own way
Attempting to reverse the tide in voter's say.

Drunk with power (not like Judge Roy Bean)
Who was alcohols most adoring friend.
Sumi is a hanging judge that will suspend
From a legal rope those that aren't her friend.

It's liberal politics at its best
As they go on a Quixotical quest
To defeat the windmills of Dane County
In Madison (20 square miles surrounded by reality.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Jug Fishing

One evening, a group of us
Decided to set out a trout line without any fuss
In a lake not far you see,
From the Capitol dome in Tallahassee.
We'd cook a meal over an open fire
While sampling liberally of Bacchus ware,
From canned goods, a choice selection
Obtained at the close-by filling station
(Gas station to those not of the area
Who might want to know or maybe don't care) .

I must add as an aside
That I never could figure out why
If states, counties, cities and so forth
Were so opposed to drinking and driving of course
Why they ever permitted sale
Of intoxicating liquids, both dark and pale.

At any rate, we got the line set in due time
The number 10 hooks were baited with chicken livers all in a line.
To plastic jugs the line was tied about ever ten hooks or so,
And lead weights added in between to let gravity keep them down below.

All this was accomplished by use of Wayne's plywood pram,
Which we all had a hand in making, such was the plan.
And now time was nigh for reaping the benefits.
In a merry time of evening fishing events.

The little boat was all of four feet across and eight feet long,
And reinforced by oak strips that made it quite strong.
The dimensions were dictated by the sheet size
Of marine grade plywood used for the bottom and side.

The size was ideal as any larger craft
Would have been impossible for two people to lift
And secure on the top of Wayne's Renault
(But that's another story which you must await.)

Now sitting on the south side of the lake

With a gentle breeze wafting across our wake
To keep the mosquitoes to a minimum,
One can smell the 'freshening' according to some
Of the lake when the temperature changes.
The 'evening sweat' as the water rearranges.
It seems that shortly after the sun sets,
The lake gives up its last warmth as evening awaits.
A more uniform temperature away from the sun's flame.
This is the time when old fishermen claim
That the really big lunkers come out to feed,
Especially where a full moon is there, it is indeed.

So there we sat, with lots to say,
Discussing the events of the day,
Wondering if the labs were deserving of our talents,
And who was doing what to whom, in our absence.

Finally after frequent trips to the tub of beer,
And less frequent trips near
To the protective shadows of the live oaks and pine
We decided it was time to run the line.

Wayne in front, Dave in the middle, and I in the back,
(Wisely the other three remained on shore guarding the beer and rest of the
tack.)
The boat had only about three inches of freeboard
Separating us from the fishes and their watery abode.

This arrangement was set to the letter
For Wayne was the spotter,
Picking out the jugs in the beam of the flashlight
As he directed us to the line more by memory than sight.

Dave was assigned the task of pulling in the line
Being careful that none would be entwined
As Wayne removed the fish and put them away
Away from the line, hooks and jugs for another day.

While I provided the most important task of all
As the counter balance (and as I recall)
The motive force for the boat as I sculled across the lake
In search of our watery take.

Wayne declared we must have something on the line
As it had moved considerably since last time.
It was not where we had placed it
(Or else he'd just forgotten where it'd been set?)

Ah, there it was, as before,
Maybe just a bit closer to shore

I gave the oar a final tug
And we drifted along side the first jug.

Wayne caught the jug, and passed it to Dave and then,
Dave began to slowly pull the boat as line came in.
Up came the first couple of hooks,
With the bait missing, stolen by those feeding crooks.

Which lead us to concluded that either livers
Were a poor choice for bait for these fishy feeders
Or we were in for a good night,
As the fish were hungry for our bloody delight.

Next aboard came a good sized catfish
Probably weighing three pounds at least
And so we knew that cleaning fish by someone
Meant for the others there was work to be done.

Then came more hooks that were bare
And we were past the second float in the lights glare.
Wayne spooled around the first jug the line and hooks
So they didn't catch the unintended in their crooks.

Now we were in for some real landings,
The next two hooks also bore fruit for our findings.
Although not as large as the first.
They'd be ample to go with our beer quenched thirst.

Just past the lead weight was a good sized crappie,
Which made Wayne happy.
A crappie feeding on chicken liver was not very wise,
And at this time of night, lead to its demise.

Then, Dave said, 'The line must be hung on something'.
He'd pull and the pram would move, on the line a bumping.
But there was little slack to gather up
And it wouldn't come onboard our floating tea cup.

With hooks in the water and something astir
One can't be too careful with the line stretched there
For getting caught up on one in the dark of night
Is not anyone's idea of fun and hard to make right.

So Dave carefully pulled on the line
And finally we were just about straight over our watery find.
Whatever it was on which we were hooked was sure to be
Maybe the granddaddy of all the little fishes.

Now, the line seemed to move a little, giving some play
And Dave appeared to be making headway
In getting a few more feet of the line aboard
While the pram moved not a bit more.

He slid his left hand down the line,
Then a gentle but firm pull was fine
In bringing a few more feet
Up from the watery deep.

Each time before he'd give a pull
He'd lean over the side, then grow quite still
Catching up the slack in the line below
Before putting his arm in the water up to his elbow.

Several empty hooks and a weight latter,
He said, 'Whatever was there is gone from our dinner.'
For the line now was moving freely.
He continued to pull most gently.

Then just as he raised the line with a tug,
Just inches from his hand, was Nature's ugliest mug.
The barbed hook on the nose of the largest head
Of the meanest alligator snapping turtle I'd learned to dread.

We all just looked; no words, no motion.

Did we continue to breath? I'm not certain.
Finally, Wayne with the filet knife, made one carefully directed cut at the line
And separated Dave from our turtle in time.

Still, not a word from this jug fishing crew
As Wayne did what he had to do
Taking each of our previous catch,
Returned them to the water with quiet dispatch.

Back at the campsite, we were asked;
'Where're the fish? ' To which Dave replied,
'They weren't bittin'
The wrong bait, we must've been using'.

Without a doubt, the snapping turtle
Is one of the most prehistoric
Appearing of all creatures that
Crawl or swim on this earth.

It is also a survivor that exist
In some of the most hostile environments.
The plains of the Midwest, swamps of Georgia
Or rivers and lakes of most everywhere else.

I don't know if the rest of the World
Has an equivalent, but if they do I am sure
It has the same nasty disposition,
And ugly appearance that not even a mother could love.

The snapping turtle goes by a variety of names
Dependent on the area it inhabits
And the observations of the natives.
In Florida and throughout the South,
He (or she, if you can tell the difference)
The name, 'alligator' is applied.

An old 'wive's' tale
Is that if the Snapper gets you,
It wont let go until it thunders!

If you separate the turtle's head
From the body,
It will continue to 'snap.'
And will latch onto anything
Thrust into it's sight
For hours afterward.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Juneteenth

Celebrate little children

For the time is nigh, soon to become 'what might have been.'

It's time for marching and dancing in the streets

As you have been promised many public treats.

The reason for the occasion

Is hardly cause for celebration

As escape from bondage by a few

Has entrapped mankind in a fetid stew.

With Government now playing a heavy hand

Let no one escape; children, woman or man

'Tis the season when change is in the air

Time for joy (so they say) , and not despair.

But wait – there's more, much more

For there is no escape from their lore

That promotes freedom at any cost

(While removing it from all, by the Mighty host.)

So while 'slaves' in Texas were made free

Some two years late, in jubilee

All who came after have become enmeshed

In a web of Government; 'freedom' blessed.

Now black, white and all colours of the spectrum

Have no place to turn or run

For their lives once again they owe

To the regulation 'store' from which they cannot flee.

Celebrate Juneteenth one more time

But remember, Socialism is, in itself a crime*

*crime - Any grave offense against morality or social order. (Webster)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Kahlbaum

Catatonic

(In memory of Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum)

Ludwig had a cat, whose name was simply, 'Cat.'
That did mostly what
A cat does best
That is, spending most of his time at rest.

But the good doctor
Who studied man's behavior
Spoke often to his cat
About the workings of the mind, and this and that.

So in 1874, Karl Ludwig sat
Staring at his cat
Wondering what scientific discovery
Yet awaited his uncovering.

Seems all the great and renown
Had already placed their markers down
And there was little to be found
In plowing the psychic's hallowed ground.

Came first Aristotle
And others of lesser mettle
Who professed to understand
What was 'melancholy' of man.

Burton in his tome did write
Long and wide
Of the essence of melancholy
and its folly.

In his poem about pain and pleasure
He took far flung measure
Of what it constitutes
And how the mind pollutes.

Then along came Darwin (not the elder)
Who attempted to attribute to love and hunger
The forces of melancholy's strains
That caused to patients their many pains.

Freud, who read Darwin,
Claimed his bit of fame
Expanding on Sex
As it did man, perplex.

Kahlbaum thought it best to let be
What the 'Alienest' could not see.
So, in his records, Kahlbaum did note
Much about his cat, when he wrote.

For 'twas described by Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum
A state experienced by some.
And surely the lay public would know quite well
The nature of the cat and how in it did dwell.

Stupor is now called by some, 'Cat-alepsy'
Which is nothing more or less
Than the state of mind with which the cat is blessed
When spending most of his (or her) time at rest.

For no external stimuli
Could arouse Cat from the bed in which it did lie
All (or almost all) motor activity is suppressed
When the cat is in this state of blissful rest.

Even when it appears that Cat's awake
And both eyes wide open to partake
Of events that are going on
There is no awareness that he's at home.

In this state of consciousness the animal's rigid
And if not frozen, in a word, torpid.
Permitting the cat to remain in a fixed position
Unmoving, regardless of external condition.

'Eureka, there's more.' He cried,
For another characteristic he'd spied.

When Cat was wide awake,
The tail was in motion for nothing's sake.
A swishing, and a twitching back and forth
As if moved by some mysterious force.

'I see yet another characteristic, '
Sometimes it can be limp as a wick,
And carried about like a purse
Relaxed as if dead or worse.

But what shall I call my observations
So my reputation will be known to all Nations?
Something that will ensure that Kahlbaum
Will trip from other's tongue.

'I have it, ' he did exclaim,
'It will bring me everlasting fame.'
It's the state
To which all can relate!

Alas, as time has passed,
Karl Ludwig's name is not recognized,
But his cat has world renown
Living the condition for which it's well known.

Cat-atonic is the state
to which all can now relate
For humans (and cats too)
Do what animals do.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Katrina - Katrina (An Answer)

Katrina was a blessing in disguise
Providing no way of compromise.
Freeing New Orleans' residents from imprisonment
In hovels of substandard tenement(s) .
Ending generations of being dependent
On the public dole for subsistence.

In New Orleans we became aware
Of politics capturing prisoners in the snare;
Worse than any slave owner's intent
To bind in shackles and families rent.
Keeping dependents on the monthly dole
Destroying body and soul.

Now as butterflies emerging from cocoon
Trying wings, tragedy's boon.
Discovering life and freedom as they soar
Will they return? Nevermore!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Kittens

The trouble with kittens
Is they become cats.
The trouble with girls
Is they become women.

The trouble with boys
Is they don't become men.
And the trouble with Al Gore
Is he's become a penguin.

After Ogden Nash

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Knot - I

There it lies deep within
Near the bottom
Hidden from prying eyes
Put there for a reason

Note how the fingers explore
digging deeply within,
searching for this
mysterious spot

That ties together
what was intended
by the maker

The folds conceal
The tightly bound knot
All of the same color
yet the light catches and plays
on the different textures.

Feel for the knot
For the eye cannot easily
find it within

Using the forefinger
Run it slowly
Over the area
Until the knot is discovered

Now look and see.
Is it there? Perhaps,
It can be grasped between
The thumb and forefinger
And exposed.

Pull gently
As if trying to lift a
fragile pearl from its
Resting place

Now it is standing upright
perhaps one hand can
spread the folds
giving better light to the area

It is time to do
what you intended
Tease the knot
raise it higher

And now carefully
twist and turn
Seeking to find a way
In which it responds

The area
Does not permit
Observation.
Wet the fingers
And thrust again

There is a yielding
A coming apart
As it were

Until finally the knot
shrinks to nothingness
And only a thread of
Its structure remains

Now pull gently
and the sweater's
wool yields and it
can be unknitted.

If you think there is hidden meaning in this subject
I refer you to one even more suspect.
Lisa Randall by name
Is one of Harvard University fame.

Lisa is said to be
Concerned more that you and me
About Knots
In a Piece of String.
Even gave the topic a name
Which is even more strange.

The Glam theory we are told
Explores things in a manner most bold.
For this I refer you
To her work: Knots II

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Knots In Piece Of String (Or Knot -Ii)

Knots -II

Sometimes the imagination gets ahead of reality in
Untying the Knots in a Piece of String

When modern physicist begin their tale,
Of mysteries so small, they're beyond the pale,
Seeking out a forth dimension,
As tho it never existed before; in imagination.

There are dimensions, more that one,
To be counted on fingers and the thumb.
First comes the easy ones if you please,
Described as x and y and z.

Next the senses, not to be outdone,
Touch, sight, sound with smell and taste rolled into one.
That adds up to seven by my count,
And there are more to add to the amount.

Consult us now the Rev. Dodgson,
For a treatise on illumination.
Silvered glass came into play
As he amused his wards on a sunny day.

The Children admired themselves in a reflecting source.
It was a mirror image that amused them; of course.
When illuminated from all around,
Their images did rebound.

But from a single, point source of light
There's no reflection. Only their shadow is in sight.
They've lost their third dimension.
Sense you now the rising tension?

Approaching very near the mirror's face,
Their shadows disappeared without a trace.
Did their shadows emerge on the other side?
Leading, images as they grow tall, fat and wide.

Into another world, of the looking glass,
Is it possible they did pass?
A mystery land of new dimension(s)
With new sounds, smells and feels to mention.

Consider first a sound that's emitted,
Passing through, absorbed or just reflected?
The smell of rose and garlic pure.
Passed through, reflected or trapped, I'm not so sure.

Consider next temperatures; both hot and cold.
Touch the surface if you're bold.
That's a dimension which brings to mind,
Maxwell's Demon in like kind.

Perhaps in the mirror he does dwell,
Passing those who meet his challenge, very well.
He lives in that Lilliputian world and all,
That's envisioned by String Theory Physicists.

Use your Hadron Collider as a measuring stick.
Adjust mirrors and magnifying glasses, that's the trick.
But remember the science of the elite and renown,
Must pass before the likes of Sam Butler and Thomas Browne.

In Butler's writing(2) , he does relate,
How a little one doomed the fate,
Of Scientist large and small,
Who reasoned not so well at all.

They took to heart and put to paper,
What they did imagine to be most proper.
T'was a beast of great dimension,
That moved about, without suspension.

Marvels of observations they had made,
Things unimagined by de Sade.
Describing what they did behold,
To be published in Transactions we are told.

But, Footboys (now known as grad students or post-doc) ,

Around the scientific instrument did flock,
And found that with proper magnification,
Things looked small or great, depending upon position.

Then came Sir Thomas Browne(3) .
Took to task those of renown.
Pointed out for all to see,
The fallacies of that, which was "assumed" to be.

Geese that from trees were born,
Animals most forlorn,
Creatures large and small, and we might add,
Noses growing on a shoulder pad.

All these and more, Sir Thomas put to rout,
When true knowledge came about.
Which brings us back to this very day,
The glam theory in physics may have its sway(?)

But when you toy with a piece of string
Spending great sums for the results you bring.
Measuring gravity's force on particles small
It's possible that Dodgson was right after all.

So dear Mathematicians and Scientist, Let us reflect,
(No pun intended) but as you suspect,
Dimensions of more than three,
Do exist, if only in the minds of such as wee.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Laidby

The skimpy morning dew had long since evaporated.
The Texas sun bore down with an intensity
that meant that it was mid-June
and no rain was in sight.

No clouds, no wind, and yet
dust-devils danced across the bare spots
in the field where the crop
had failed to take hold.
Even the grasshoppers seemed to be lethargic,
just barely avoiding the oncoming team of horses
as they slowly pulled the middle-buster
down the rows of knee high corn.
Looking across the field,
a shimmer of heat waves bent the light
and distorted the long rows.
By afternoon, the corn leaves would begin to curl
in a desperate attempt to conserve
what little moisture remained.
It had not rained since the middle of May.

The team had been in the field since about five thirty and
there was to be no break until this field was laid by.
By local standards, this six acre plot
was hardly worthy of the time or the expense
to see it done in a proper manner.
But it was pride that drove the old man
to make the most of it.

This was the last row.
As he clucked to the team,
Maude continued to push against the collar carrying the load,
but John having set his pace accordingly,
walked easily in his traces.
The only sound was the occasional jangle
of the single tree as it banged against John's shanks.
John as if indifferent to the task,
occasional reached forward
and down to take a nip of green.

Sometimes, the old man would scold him,
but mostly they continued in their agreed to pattern.

The middle buster running shallow
but throwing a wave of sandy loam
toward the corn stalks,
cut easily through the dry dirt.
No moisture was evident in the track of the plow
and the twelve inch plane
made easy walking for the old man.
The plow's bottom and wings were polished
bright by the scouring action,
and would remain shinny until the next rain,
which might not come before the first of August.

Now they were nearing the half way point in this final row
and the old man rested the lines on the plows handles
and made an easy loop around the left handle,
not to control the horses but to prevent the lines
from falling into the furrow.
The plow was so well balanced
that it continued in the furrow
without the slightest touch,
much like a sailboat that has the jib and mast properly set
so that no pressure is required
on the tiller to maintain the set course.

With his right hand he drew his pouch of tobacco
from the bib of his overalls,
and with the left fingered open the Bull Durham sack,
then pulled a single sheet of paper from the sheath.
As he walked, he formed a trough
for the tobacco with the fingers of his left hand,
using the middle finger to form the depression.
He held the paper lightly.
Then, the bag in his right hand
was tilted over the paper,
and with almost a caress,
he caused the rough cut tobacco
to slowly dropp into the paper.
Now the pile was judged adequate
and raising the bag to his mouth,

caught the dangling string between his teeth
and pulling away with his right hand,
drew the purse string tight.
The bag now went back into the bib pocket,
its role having been completed.

Still in the left hand,
the open paper with its charge of tobacco
was held steady.
In what appeared to be a single movement,
the tobacco was spread the length of the paper
with his right forefinger
and the paper was transferred to his right hand.
Raising the paper to his lips,
a swipe of the tongue moistened the near paper's edge,
and with a smooth motion,
the paper was reformed into a cylinder
around the load of tobacco.
Some are able to do this with a single hand
but the old man used the fingers of his left hand
to press the paper's edges together.
He once again raised the now cylindrical form
to his lips and moistened the now joined edges.
Some twist the ends to achieve a 'smoke' but he did not.
While his cigarette was not perfect,
it closely resembled a store bought cigarette.
All this while he continued to walk the corn rows.

He placed the unlit cigarette in his lips
in anticipation of ending the laying by.
Both hands now returned to the plows handles,
the left hand also holding the lines against the worn wood.

As the team reached the end of the rows
and as the plow just passed the last standing stalks,
the old man pushed down on the handles
and in response, the plow point emerged from the soil
and the plow now skidded along on the plow's bottom.
For the first time he spoke to the team.
With a clicking sound, they were made aware
that he expected some sort of action.
The wagon was parked along the fence

and with a gentle 'haw' the team knew to turn to the right.
It being only a matter of twenty yards or so,
the old man skidded the plow on its bottom
until it was just behind and along side the wagon.
Now, 'whoa'. And the team stopped.

John shifted his weight to his right hind leg
in apparent anticipation of a prolonged rest.
He was right.

The old man now leaned against the plow for support,
took a box of penny matches from his pocket,
and with economy of effort,
removed a single match from the box,
struck it against his thumb nail,
noted the fiery flash and the acrid brimstone smell,
raised it to the cigarette and with a deep draw,
caused the tobacco to ignite.
A flick of the wrist, the match was out
and it was dropped to the ground.
As a precaution, he ground it into the dirt.
Back into the pocket went the matches,
and for the first time, since the cigarette had been formed,
raised his hand and removed it from his mouth.
For what seemed an interminable time,
he was motionless. Nor did he exhale.
Finally, a puff of smoke from his mouth
and you could be sure he was alive. T
his simple pleasure continued as he prolonged the smoke,
just drawing on the cigarette to encourage it to smolder
and not too strong, otherwise it would burn too quickly.
The cigarette was now less than a single finger width
away from his lips as he took a puff.
As he removed the cigarette from his mouth,
he pinched the paper's side between his thumb
and forefinger to get a secure grip on it
and then he hastened to take a final draw.
The now completely exhausted weed
was dropped and he ground it
alongside the match into the dirt.

He exhaled deeply and seemingly for the first time, he looked around.

Walking forward of the plow,
he released the traces from the single trees
and hooked them on the haimes.
This took a little time as the inside traces had to be dropped
and then recovered by pulling them forward
from between the waiting team.
Neither horse showed the slightest interest
and with the exception of John
who now shifted his weight to his left hind leg,
there was no movement.

Back to the plow the old man walked,
unwound the lines from the plow handle
and with a cluck to the horses moved them forward.
Now along side and in front of the wagon,
and with the lines pulled firmly
so they rested against the horse's left hindquarters,
he directed them back and to his right.
This was a well rehearsed maneuver
and John stepped easily over the wagon's tongue
and aligned himself with the tongue in front of the wagon.
Maude followed in close synchrony.
The only word spoken was the single command; 'back'.
When pressure on the lines was released,
the horses stopped in perfect position.

The old man took the lines,
raised them to the wagon front
where a worn oak stick of wood
that had too many times
been used for the purpose
was engaged with a single wrap of the lines
about the post.
He stepped around Maude,
and raised the wagons tongue
and hitched it between the two horses.
Now he took the traces
and hooked them to the wagon's tree
and the team was ready for home.

Loading the middle buster

became the old man's next project.
As it was alongside
but slightly to the rear of the wagon,
it would be an easy task
to pivot it on its bottom
and position it for lifting into the bed.
But first he had to pull the clevis pin
and drop the double tree and single trees.
These he lifted over the side of the wagon
and let them fall with a bang. This
was probably the most noise
that came from the field that day.

Once the plow was pivoted
and positioned behind the wagon,
the old man lifted the metal shank
which caused the handles to touch the ground.
With a tug, the front of the plow was made to rest
on the very end of the wagon's bed.
Slowly, he walked to the handle end
and with a single lift raised the handles.
Now the plow was suspended between the wagon
and the old man's outstretched arms.
He stepped to his right,
and raised the handles well over his head,
and pushed the plow forward into the wagon bed.
The well polished plow sole
rested on the bed and slid easily
over the worn oak boards.
With a twist, the plow was made to lean
against the wagon's side boards
in such a manner that the handles
were protected against stress.

The exertion seemed too much for the old man
and he paused for a moment.
He walked to the left front wheel.
Placed his right foot on the hub
and with a grunt, pulled himself into the wagon.
For what may have been the last time,
he looked back over his corn patch.
The rows were straight,

the field was weed free and with God's blessings,
there would be more than a few nubbins
to be saved come October.

The corn was 'laid by'.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Life Is Beautiful, Death Sublime

An artist before his canvas sat
Considering the beginning, and yet
How to embrace the art,
Of melding, canvas, brush and pot.

Dipping his brush and with a stroke so fine,
He began to construct what was in his mind.
It mattered not the color of his choice
For in a single dimension, all was lost.

Again he took the brush in hand
For now in mind, a simple plan.
Turning the brush to creat a stroke so bold
He added color in a radiant dimension to behold.

Alas, on canvas, no matter what
The bold, nor simple did not stand out.
Until a third dimension came into play
For depth, light and shadows held the day.

Finished - He stood from afar to see what he had wrought.
His efforts had not come to naught.
There was beauty in what he saw,
Yet another dimension held him in awe.

Oh Wow, Oh Wow, Oh Wow, -

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Lol

Lots of Luck the warden said
As he turned the key in the lock
And left the inmate that he'd lead.
Into the prison's worst block.

For you have to meet your companions
One by loving one,
And they'll treat you to horrors
Unknown to some.

That's the price you must pay
For having transgressed
In such a spiteful way
The price is a sometimes only a kiss.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Lope De Vega

Lope Felix De Vega Carpio

Lope Felix De Vega Carpio (November 25,1562 -August 27,1635) was called by Cervantes, 'the Monster of Nature.' And surely he was as he produced more than any author before or since. His work dominated the theatrical world of Spain with both his prose and poetry. Cervantes like other writers of the day felt the pressure wrought by De Vega and was unable to compete and lived in poverty. If this is not enough, it is thought by some that the spurious Part Two of Don Quixote was the product of De Vega's mind and certainly his knowledge of the Church would have permitted him to write under the pen name of Alonso Fernandez de Avellanda in a detail that would have been difficult for Cervantes. Avellanda, the author, remains unknown.

But there is more to Lope De Vega; his plays intertwined morality, humor, the risqué, criticism and great entertainment value. They did and do. The following excerpts from a translation of his play, A Certainty for a Doubt are just a sampling of what the casual reader, or other, has in store. And translations of his poem To the Night as well as the Sonnet on Sonnets wraps up this brief introduction to Lope De Vega Carpio (as he signed his name) and his poetry.

On Silence

...The use of speech is taught
To men and birds alike; but silence yet
It never has been taught. And what a pity!
It is a great mistake to open schools
To teach us how to talk, and not have one
That can teach us to be still! If I were King
I would set up forthwith and patronize
Whole chairs of Silence!

(From the dialogue of Ramiro to Dona Juana in A Certainty for Doubt, Act 1)

On Woman

There never yet was prudent woman found
Who would refuse to set upon her brow
The crown that once was proffered on the ground.

(From the dialogue of the Master to Dona Juana in A Certainty of Doubt, Act 1)

On Clocks (and Time)

I curse the inventor,
Curse the pivots and wheels;
Cursed face may it blast him,
Cursed chain clamp his heels.
Its hands may they crush him,
Its springs spring him off;
Untimely in striking,
A harsh, strident cough,
May its bells ring his passing
When least he shall brook
Because he constructed
By hook and by crook
A portable trap
To play havoc with time,
Point the hour of decease,
Cut life to its chime,
A spy on pleasure,
Counting every mouthful out
Taken to his measure.

(From the dialogue of Don Enrique to Dona Juana in A Certainty of Doubt, Act 1)

Sonnet on a Sonnet

Violante sends to me to make a sonnet.
I never suffered such distress or pain;
A sonnet numbers fourteen lines, that's plain,
And three are gone while I begin upon it,
To shape a rhyme one needs to ponder on it,
Yet here I'm midway in the last quatrain,
And if the foremost tercet I attain
The quatrain's done ere I myself can con it.
In the first tercet I arrive at last
And travel through it with such grace and ease
That with this line it is already past.
I'm in the second now and if you please
The thirteenth verse comes full-grown, tripping fast.
Count if there be fourteen and end with these.

(From The Silver Girl)

Lope De Vega Carpio seems to have passed notice by most who enjoy poetry. Yet here in a sampling his ease at humor, rhyme, rhythm and morality is easily seen why translations of his works offer much. As with all translations, the efforts of the translator are as much on display as the poet himself. As example, the following from a much translated piece, on Night is shown. What was the Lope's intent; the reader must be the judge and perhaps offer a translation of his own.

To the Night

Night, fabricator of dreams
Crazy, imaginative nightmares
In those whom sleep subdues,
You flatten mountains and dry up seas,
Inhabiting the empty brain
Of laborer, scientist and philosophers
Concealing all. Even the lynx cannot see her.
Sounds in the night echo and are terrifyin.

Darkness and fear of death are to you attributed
Prostituting sick and callous poet's way
With the bold hands and feet of a thief.
Half my life is by you played.
If awake at night, I pay the next day,
If asleep, I sense not that I am alive.

Lope de Vega Carpio
translated by Mahtrow2

As de Vega wrote the sonnet:

A la noche

Noche, fabricadora de embelecocos,
loca, imaginativa, quimerista,
que muestras al que en ti su bien conquista
los montes llanos y los mares secos;
habitadora de cerebros huecos,
mecanica, filosofa, alquimista,
encubridora vil, lince sin vista,
espantadiza de tus mismos ecos:
la sombra, el miedo, el mal se te atribuya,
solicita, poeta, enferma, fria,

manos del bravo y pies del fugitivo.
Que vele o duerma, media vida es tuya:
si velo, te lo pago con el dia,
y si duermo, no siento lo que vivo.

Lope de Vega

From a translator at Sweet Briar College:

To the Night

Night, you fabricator of deceptions,
insane, fantastic, and chimerical,
who show those who derive delight from you
the mountains flattened and the seas gone dry;
inhabitor of hollow, empty brains,
mechanic, alchemist, philosopher,
a vile concealer, lynx that cannot see,
you are of your own echoes terrified;
darkness, fear, and evil are your works,
cautious, poetess, infirm and cold,
with ruffian's hands and feet of fugitive
. Whether I sleep or wake, half my life's yours:
if I'm awake, I pay you the next day,
and if I sleep, I sense not what I live.
Alex Inber (Sweet Briar College)

From a computer translation:

To the night

Night, fabricadora of embelecocos,
crazy person, imagination, quimerista,
that samples to which in you its good conquers
level mounts and the dry seas;
habitadora of hollow brains,
mecanica, filosofa, alchemist,
vile concealing, lynx without Vista,
espantadiza of your same echoes:
the shade, the fear, badly is attributed to you,
solicitd, poet, ill, fria,
hands of Bravo and feet of the fugitive one.

That it guards or it sleeps, average life is yours:
if veil, you the payment with the day,
and if I sleep, I do not feel what alive.
Babblefish

Alternative translation by S. J. Mahtrow

To the Night

Night fabricator of deception
Insane, Imaginative and Chimeric
in those who sleep has conquered.
The mountains are flattened
And the seas gone dry without exception.
Empty inhabitant of the brain of worker, chemist, philosopher
Night is an evil covering
Even the lynx is not seeing
Sounds in the night echo and terrify her.

Night; darkness, fear and evil are yours
Awake; my work is cautious bland,
Cold and weak, written with brave hand,
On shifting, futative feet your terror endures.

Whether asleep, or awake, I only survive.
Half my life is yours to play
If awake at night, I pay the next day
If asleep, I sense not that I am alive.

S. J. Mahtrow

And the reader can make a translation as he wishes.

Four Plays by Lope De Vega, (An English version by John Garrett Underhill) ,
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York,1936.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Love Bugs

It started out as a simple experiment
One that an amateur biologist
Could run using castoff equipment
Purchased on ebay.

She (or maybe it was he)
Thought it might be fun to see
If inserting foreign DNA
Was as easy as they say.

Catching the love bugs was
No problem as they were in full amorous pursuit
Flying mated, tail to tail
In the throes of creating yet another generation

And the most easily obtained DNA of all
Was that which made the firefly glow
Luciferase is the name
Given because of the eternal flame
That permitted the bug to glow
When sending a message to lovers below.

A flash of the tail light
And soon there would be other flies in flight.
Mating and then returning to the ground
Where eggs laid were soon to be found.

Now the cleverness of the engineering trick
Was based on a fact known by others, I suspect
For both the Love Bug and Fire Fly
Were known to on rotting vegetation thrive.

So into the caldron containing love bug squishy parts
(Which contained eggs and other works of arts)
A batch of foreign DNA was mixed
To contain the light determining fix.

Patience is required by those practicing this game of lucifer
And the tubes were incubated awaiting the new bug's stir.

But as with much that is to be
Somewhere interest waned as it appeared there was nothing to see.

So one early morn,
All was pitched in the trash for a sojourn
To the dump where all was buried.
An ideal spot for eggs to be incubated.

And there they lay through the cold winter nights
Awaiting spring with its delights.
Until one day in May
There was a stirring, come what may.

Emerging from the waste that had provided
A warm bed in which the larva matured,
Slowly crawled not one bug but many more
For the amateur had been successful by the score.

They flexed their tiny wings
And dried them in the winds of spring
Until they were quite ready to take flight
And soared upward to their delight.

But what is it that a Love Bug does?
Why seek out another to mate of course,
And mate they did as all had done before,
But there was something more.

For as the bugs soared in matrimonial bliss
There was a fusion with that mating kiss
Suddenly the sky lite up like nothing before
As the Luciferase added to the musical score.

Once it was that only a few Fire Flies
Lit up the evening skies
Now Love Bugs light out the great outdoors
And when they splatter on the grill of the oncoming cars and trucks
There amongst their bodies and guts
Coat all with a glowing testament
To that unnamed person with a biological bent.

And Lucifer gets his revenge.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Love's Labour Lost

T'was just a simple wedding
That led to the misunderstanding.
Seems the blade had sparked
The widow's interest on a lark.

Wealthy she was, it was said,
Could buy and sell, many times over the cad.
But it was love he confessed
Not the money, she possessed.

"I believe you not" is what she claimed,
"Then give it to charity, " he exclaimed.
"Never, my husband (ex that he is)
Worked hard to the gold amass
And I shall never be without
Even if you support me, there's no doubt."

Then give the hoard of Midas' gold
To your daughter who is both young and bold.
T'will keep it in the family
As you and I shall see.

And so she did as was suggested
And here the issue could have rested,
Except for a small detail that must be known -
He wed the daughter, not the crone.

This might be the end of this tale of wedded bliss,
But vengeance was hers, whom he never kissed.
Buy a revolver and shoot the two
Was what she intended to do
. . .
But wait, there's a better way
To get revenge, he'll rue the day!

Blessings she showered on them most profuse,
Then packed up her parrot
And moved in with them,
Silly gander and his goose.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Lunch Bucket

Says he; 'I'm just a poor ole working feller,
One who has become sort of mellow
But still one of you -
An' our numbers are gettin' few.

Why, I remember growing up pore
Just like the rest of you, for shore.
Walked these streets with bucket in hand
As I worked for 'the man.'

Now, I've been away for quite a spell
But let me tell you, I remember the hell
Of having to work for a livin.
The man shore wasn't forgivin.

Since I moved away
Much hasn't changed, to this day
So let's all
Get together this fall,
An' change the direction of this country
That seems to be in such misery.

It's cause of those down in Washington town
That have forgotten what it's like to be down,
Those in the White House are to blame
For the woes that have many a name.

They're responsible for all
These hardships you recall.
Just ignore those snide remark you hear
About my being in Congress for thirty an a year.

I've tried heaven knows
To lessen the burdens of those
Who slave under the oppression
Of this peace time administration.

When I get to (back to) Washington D. C.
You all will see

Change – that's what it's all about
When we send the Republicans in a rout.

That old tin lunch bucket you can replace
With a new shinny one, at just a small increase in price
Of course the contents will be quite slim
But most of us can stand bein' more trim.

Not to worry about taxes, too
Cause if you don't have a job there's not much they can take from you.
And your tax burden (that's how we say it in Congress)
Will be shifted to the other feller's chest.

An' there are so many other things we're a planning
They'll require a bunch of government instrumenting
With job security for those
Needed to regulate those laws we'll impose.

Why just to mention a few,
An' there's so much to do.
But, try these on fer size:
Health care, social security, free housing
Food stamps for all and of course a free delousing.
Smaller military and defense
And more environmental regulations make sense.
Why I could go on and on
But we'll remember to throw your pore dog (or family) a bone.

Why, I'm just like all of you.
Part of the lunch bucket mining crew.
Till you vote for me
I'll be Biden my time.'

Anyone notice how 'folksy' Joe Biden has become?

Ignore at your own risk what it was that Lyndon B. said;
'When anyone says he's a country boy, put your hand on your wallet.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mac Cavity's Ten Lives

The Ten Lives of Mac Cavity

Some cats have nine lives, more or less!
So more than others, some are bless'd
They seldom revel their innermost mysteries,
So we are unlikely to discover their private stories.

Such is the case of Mac Cavity,
A most extraordinary cat in our society.
Mac Cavity's lives are here recorded,
Not necessarily in chronological as they were ordered.

Perhaps as he would have preferred them to be,
Taking the good with the bad as you shall see.
The stages can only be guessed at and are listed,
As they would appear through time's eyes are misted.

But first, before discussing the lives of Mac Cavity,
How will you recognize him in his notoriety?
There's no missing his distinctive spotless white
Markings against a sleek black coat, equally bright.

His white forehead is distinctly
Marked symmetrically,
As are his paws although not quite
So well done by his maker in off-white.

In addition, he sports a pure white underside,
Kept that way by attention to cleanliness-pride.
Notice those ears, neatly trimmed by nature,
Not man's scapula for sure.

Ah! what a handsome cat,
And he knows it, if he could only don a top-hat.
And now on to his lives
As we recount his many adventures.

Life Number One - As a kitten

Mac Cavity, a small insignificant fluff, most furry,
Brought home as a gift from a teacher with too many.
Although we had quite enough cats,
To help control the mice and rats.

They numbered some thirty or so,
At different times, during the year (as they go.)
But as a gift from a favorite teacher,
How can you refuse such an appealing creature?

This kitten had no trouble bellying up
To the bar (The food dish that is) for his daily sup.
And eating his fill in competition to the rest,
Which we at that time we were blest.

What name should he bear?
A life-long moniker to wear.
In luck, Cats, was making its round
And due to appear in Memphis town.

And of all cats in the play,
None caught Gregg's fancy that day,
As much as Mac Cavity, star of T. S. Elliot's,
Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats.

Yet there must have been an error,
In the program as the name of the star,
Was Macavity, not Mac Cavity,
As he was of obvious Scottish ancestry.

Cats do have community responsibilities
Such it is when it comes to health issues.
They have to have their shots.
And of vaccines there are lots.

There is rabies, distemper, feline leukemia
And who knows what the vet's scheme is.
All are recommended in their turn,
But rabies is the one that causes them to squirm.

When you have joined a large farm family,
There is no end to maladies.

With shots as a yearly event,
Not necessarily Heaven sent.

With the large number of Mac Cavity's friends
Efficiencies the word to make trips end.
But, making 37 trips to the vet,
Tries one's patience, you can bet.

Fortunate for us all
Was when Dr. Billy Butler gave a call.
He had a couple of large wire cages
Which he loaned for just such occasions.

His solution; put a 'bunch' of cats in each
Simple but there was a catch.
It's easy to catch a single cat
And put him/her in. Old hat.

It's not that difficult to catch another,
And put him/her in the cage with his brother.
But there is a major row,
When one tries to enter a third in tow.

Each time the door is opened wide,
At least one will try to escape from inside.
Biting and scratching is their pleasure
Keeping score on your arms for good measure.

It's decided that two's enough in each cage
To control damage and their rage.
Ten trips to the vet was the way,
Delivering cats and cages in one day.

Perhaps a couple of cats went to town,
Two or more times, while others were never found.
Of course, Mac Cavity made the trip to be assured
His long life would be insured.

Having passed this milestone in his life,
He lived on with little strife.
Living the life of a normal tom cat,
Eating, sleeping; eating, sleeping, eating, sleeping and all that.

"O thou most happy mortal upon earth."
Said he,
'How sweet is thy repose;
Envied by none,
And envying no man's greatness,

Secure thou sleepest,
Thy soul composed and calm;
No power of magic persecutes thee,
Nor are thy thoughts affrighted by enchantments!

Sleep on, sleep on, a hundred times sleep on.
Those jealous cares that break a lover's heart
Do not extend to thee:
Neither the dread of craving creditors,

Nor the dismal foresight of inevitable want,
Or care of finding bread for a helpless family,
Keep thee waking.
Ambition does not make thee uneasy,

The pomp and vanity of this world,
Do not perplex thy mind:
For all thy care's extend
Reaches but to thy ass.

Thy person and thy welfare,
Thou hast committed to my charge,
A burden imposed on masters,
By nature and custom,

To weigh and counterpoise,
The offices of servants.
Which is the greatest slave?
The servant's business,

Is performed by a few manual duties,
Which only reconcile him more to rest,
And make him sleep more sound;
While the anxious master,

Has not leisure to close his eyes,
But must labor day and night,
To make provision for the subsistence,
Of his servant;

Not only in time of abundance,
But even when the heavens,
Deny those kindly showers,
That must supply this want.'

Spoken by Don Quixote when considering,
The slumbers of his squire, Sancho.

Chapter LIX, An account of Rich Camacho's Wedding.

Note: All living beings are mortals. And, Mac Cavity surely had an understanding of Spanish literature and the writings of Cervantes.

Life Number Two - Rogue

In his father's image; an old lecher,
As described by Gregg's teacher,
Mac Cavity should have been a tyrant,
Roaming the country side, a miscreant.

Despoiler of virgins, barroom fighter
And ne'er-do-well seeking pleasure,
Spending his every night out.
Simply put, a lout.

Mac Cavity tried to do justice to his genetics,
But alas, his heart just wasn't in it we suspects.
It was so much better to spend the night
And day as well, closed up in the house; tight.

With friend Charlie, the dog-cat,
(Charlie quite properly thought he was a cat) ,
Since the whole household it seemed,
To revolve about cats and their means.

They got the best food, the freshest water,
The warmest bed, etc., maybe not in that order.
So, why shouldn't Charlie be a cat.

They accepted him and he them, that was that.

It is for this reason, I suppose,
With curly coat and coal black nose.
That when Charlie by his full name, Charlie-dog,
Was called, it was to remind him of his ancestral log.

As an aside, we must digress,
For you see Charlie came to live as a guest.
With Don, Wendy, Gregg by accident,
Or was it fate, heaven sent.

As we all remember quite well,
During a Summer dry spell.
We were on the way to a fish fry
At Henry Cannon's, by and by.

The Hatchie river cabin is among cypress trees.
On ancestral lands once Indian lands, if you please.
Named by them Hatchie which means river.
So now we call it; river-river(?)

As we passed a roadside ditch along the way,
A puppy emerged from the grass; perhaps a stray?
We stopped the car, and to everyone's delight,
There were four gleaming black puppies in the lights.

.
A farm house was only a short distance away.
Perhaps their mother had let them stray.
We gathered the pups together
And took them to the neighbor.

No - the pups were not theirs.
The old couple said through tears.
Their dog of many years had died,
A companion that they missed so; they cried.

It was God-sent, that these bundles of fur,
Were being delivered to their door at this hour.
They wanted them all, so we wished them well,
The puppies and their new owners in a spell.

We continued on to the fish fry at Henry's,
Forgetting about the lost puppies.
The food was great, the socializing fun
And it was late at night before we were done.

Time to end a great stay
So homeward we went, ending the day.
We slowed as we passed the home
Of the lost puppies. Wishing we had just one.

As we neared the spot where the pups had been
We looked hard to see if there was a remaining kin.
And there in the headlights glare,
A pair of bright eyes did stare.

A poor lost puppy separated from his litter mates.
Stood there perhaps us, he did await.
That's Charlie! All alone,
And what a dog he was to become.

A two-story house, to Charlie was given.
An 'A' frame, protecting him from elements driven.
Lower living quarters, just for him reserved,
And the upper quarters, for the cats conserved.

The cats private entrance was there to please
And provide a passage of a nice summer breeze.
'For The Cats. There was no need for a sign.
Obvious to all this was their place, and fine.

A back-stairs entrance hidden from view
Was accessible to only a few.
Who might pass through Charlie's apartment.
No one knew which way they went.

Of course, Mac Cavity knew immediately that this,
Was his own private suite, to be enjoyed in bliss.
He seldom shared these quarters with another cat.
As this was his, without a spat.'

The only time that there was a dispute
Was when the two yellow toms (of good repute,)

Became involved in a quarrel that led to a tussle.
One was getting the worst of it, and thought he should hussle.

The loser turned tail and ran.
It's better to retain dignity when one can.
(We never could tell them apart, and who knows,
Perhaps on another day the odds shifted when they came to blows.

Tom number two, was pursued by number one,
Or whatever; as one escaped on a dead run.)
No tree in sight, the escaping tom,
Was desperate to find relief, at least some.

He leaped for the entrance upstairs,
To Charlie's house. And in midair,
Turned to face his opponent,
Who chose to call a halt to the tournament.

The Tom gracefully landed as cats do,
Prepared to fight in the space for few.
Fortunate for all concerned Mac Cavity
Was not at home to greet his anguished company.

So Mac Cavity spent his second life as friend
And companion to Charlie without amend.
Much to the chagrin of his father,
I suppose. As fighting wasn't worth the bother.

However, he did one spring day
Decide to express himself in a special way.
He attempted to climb the leg of his mistress.
This assertion cost Mac Cavity dearly to his distress.

The veterinarian can tell you, if you inquire,
That surgery is a means of diverting desire.
Mac Cavity became mac cavity,
If you get my meaning of lower case activity.

Life Number Three – A slumbering Giant

It was after he moved to Baltimore
mac cavity discovered the big city and more.

For comfort he slept on his owner's chest,
Legs outstretched all embracing, he found best.

While there are many pleasures in the city renown,
The safest and warmest place of all in town,
Was in the big king-sized bed.
Where one had no enemy or terrors to dread.

Perhaps It was just a matter of time,
Before he discovered the comforts, so fine.
Rhythmic movement of his owner's chest
Was so much like being rocked in a cradle at its best.

Where else to sleep in such heavenly bliss,
No woes besieged him, no fears of meals missed.
Perhaps the snoring was annoying to the senses,
But what the heck, one has to make some sacrifices.

With the many moves; first from the farm,
Then to Memphis (where the vet did him great harm.)
Onward to Columbia and Ellicott City in Maryland,
The cat population shrank to four, which you could count on either hand.

Only Henryetta and one of her kittens;
October and Mac Cavity remained (no poem here about mittens.)
Charlie-dog also departed.
Almost as soon as the moving started.

When others might have given up the ghost,
mac cavity adapted much better than most,
He became faithful companion to the family
In these time with the fewest cats in memory.

Life Number Four -Friend to all-

Friend, mr. possum invited himself to sup.
With 37 cats and a Charlie-dog pup.
What's one more for dinner?
First at the bowl is the winner.

Wendy (Gregg's sister, our daughter of course)

Offered up dinner without remorse,
To those seeking a hearty meal.
Cat food of course was the daily deal.

She couldn't resist the temptation to stop and pet,
Henrietta and her begats.
One night, as she was caressing each and every one
(Charlie included) as she had always done,

She noticed that one of the family
Had an unusually coarse coat, very distinctly.
Almost bristle like she thought, as she stroked its back
And the 'kitten' hissed at her, taking her aback.

Behold, mr possum had come for dinner,
Obviously not the first time, as he was a joiner;
Continuing to eat, and nosing the cats away,
From the choicest tidbits that fell where they may.

The cats (and Charlie too) gave no ground,
Treats are to be eaten where they were found.
And all continued to eat side by side,
Food was swallowed along with their pride.

When mac cavity moved to Maryland,
He was short of cat friends in hand.
And as a social animal,
Decided to adopt humans as his pals.

In particular, the Sheltons of Elicott city,
Had a small daughter and dog on which he took pity
Befriend them he did and saw no reason,
Why not take walks together in season.

So he joined in the parade with tail held most high,
Mr. Shelton, girl, dog and mac cavity close by.
In a line as they walked, looking for and finding,
Only what a small child, dog and cat were minding.

mac cavity had many companions and friends,
As he dealt with life's unexpected bends.
Taking a poor hand and making the best

For a poor cat with a black and white chest.

Life Number Five - Tourist, extraordinary

mac cavity traveled wide,
Journeying over the country side.
From farm to city and small town,
In all he was renown.

Only when events are in prespective.
Does this properly qualify as one of his lives,
But when one's memory grows dim,
It is good to reflect on the many events that happened to him.

Of course he would consider these travels,
As that of a tourist and his travails.
It was not about taking residence,
Because home was always the Farm in a sense.

Now somewhere on a fine day,
October (called Toby by Wendy) ,
Or Halloween by a friend,
Joined the family, and her new life began.

October had a most unpleasant disposition (and then some)
Probably because she had never had a proper home,
Until she became 'Wendy's cat'.
At any rate, October was accepted and that was that.

She was permitted all the usual privileges.
That is, until it came time to move the kitties,
From Tennessee to Maryland
Which was the plan.

The problem was, four cats to carry,
But two cat carriers, so everybody would have to share.
Who was going to have to share space.
And at the same time save face?

mac cavity and Henryetta were good friends
And sociable animals to the end,
So was Magellan's lot to face,

October in a close space.
Good ole Magellan's fate
Was to accommodate
October with her disposition
In a space without emotion.

Well they all made it even in 100 degree heat
In the shipping area of the airplane beneath our seat.
This was mac cavity's one and only airplane ride,
And that was just fine with him, to spare his pride.

Each year that we had the pleasure,
Of their company, we shall treasure.
We should take pause to appreciate it.
And thanks be to God to remit.

When it came time to move to our South Dakota home,
mac cavity and October were the ones making the trip alone.
It is sad to report that a cats' life,
Is not an easy one in the city strife.

It's a very long trip for humans indeed,
And for animals when traveling by car at highway speed..
So in anticipation of nature's items
Arrangements were made to accommodate them.

Both cats were fitted with fine harnesses
And accompanying leashes,
So that they could take brief walks,
And attend to their business in the parks.

Came the fateful day
The car was packed in such a way,
That the cat carriers were in a prominent position
Within the car, so the cats would have unobstructed vision.

Several times along the way
We stopped to let them stretch their legs and do what may.
But like a perfect gentleman and lady friend
Neither showed interest in making their nature calls public.

When we arrived for overnight (in Chicago) ,

This is just about as far as they wanted to go.
Both were quite interested in Don's apartment
And spent the evening exploring the new environment.

As there were two cats that called this place home,
It was expected an argument about rights and some.
Might emerge in a territorial display
Wrong. To no one's dismay.

mac cavity and October
After using the guest 'sand-box' wondered what next was in order,
First share a meal and drink of Chicago's best water, and then
Return to their carriers, for a night sleeping in.

So it was on to Gregg's home on the Plains
Which he shared with three cats, let me explain:
Po was the mother of kittens, quite large
Who had run of the house without umbrage.

Yellow cat without doubt,
Was the most relaxed,
Trusting, faithful cat
Ever known to mankind.

Required little for comfort, He was a minimalist,
One day (in the living room) to prove this,
He was as usual, sleeping peacefully,
On a pile of concrete blocks comfortably.

They were stacked in the center of the living room floor
(as a budding artist can explain, we assure) .
Yellow cat in his slumber,
Simply fell (slid) off the blocks of cinder.

Did this disturb him? Not at all,
Just picked himself up, and stretched so tall,
Then went to check the food dish.
To see if anything was amiss.

Then there was Black and White, or Gasket,
As was sometimes called, the female pet.
Who pursuing a squirrel in a tree

Injured her back and discovered gravity.

Gregg also acquired a puppy when quite small
Named him MoJo, was the call.
(Yellow cat, his best friend
Where ever Yellow cat went,
MoJo was sure to follow.

One day, yellow cat decided it was time to go outside,
For a bit of cat business, we suppose
Fortunately, there was a passage way in the screen door,
Just cat-sized so that he and the others could go as they pleased.

Out went Yellow cat.
MoJo seeing his friend depart
Saw no reason not to go as well.
And he did.

Now it is important to note
There is a difference between a 'door',
Designed for passage of a ten pound cat
And one for a hundred pound dog.

Nevertheless, MoJo somehow did exit,
Through that cat door(?)
With no damage to either the door
Or MoJo.)

Someday MoJo will be a dog,
But now he is only three years old,
And weighs about 115 pounds,
So is still regarded as a growing boy.

Of course mac cavity and October,
Once in Vermillion,
Immediately made themselves,
Quite at home.

Vermillion, South Dakota, is as fine a home as any cat could imagine.
Warm house, gentle breezes, ample food and best of all,
At least from October's point of view,
The house was just across from the Post Office.

Within a week, October had established
Her territory to include the sloping walkway
Usually reserved for those who needed assistance,
In entering this most proper Federal Building.

Here in the sun, a cat could stretch and toast one side
And then the other, as she awaited, the chance passing of small children.
More than once she was left to attend to a child
While the parent went inside for business. She became the post office cat.

As the house was across the street from the Post Office
There was always a risk that a car, or most likely a farm truck,
Would not see a small cat. so, it was only appropriate,
That a yellow 'cat-crossing' sign, should be erected.

In short order, all of the community recognized that this,
Was the crossing for the very important 'Post Office Cat.'

One day, A fierce South Dakota wind took the sign away from its mounting,
And it was gone. Not to worry, the 'Insurance Lady'
Came by the next day with a catalog, that had cat crossing signs in it.
So October's sign could be replaced.

Nice place,
Vermillion!

Life Number Six - Farm Cat - master in residence.

mac cavity would be quick to point out the many joyful experiences, of farm life.
Quick as a wink or a slow cat's yawn,
He would tell you of the day, Henryetta took him hunting
And the only thing to be found was the two old nags
(actually fine jumpers belonging to the Prehlers) .

To exhibit the masterful role of cats in the animal kingdom,
Henryetta first approached Dudley and leisurely raised herself to her full height
So that she could scratch Dudley's front leg,
Much as any self respecting cat would scratch a tree, or a piece of fine furniture.

Kneading the skin of this mighty horse and sharpening her claws, oh the wonders
of it all.

mac cavity thought that it was mighty curious that
Dudley never flinched or moved,
But it was because of Henryetta's masterful control.

And then Henryetta moved to Viking who was by far the best jumper.
He was know to have cleared a six foot corral with lots of space to spare.
Henryetta quite simply climbed up Viking's leg and sat on his back.
He didn't seem to mind, or was it that he knew when he was under the master's
(or in this case, the mistress's) control.

And then there was the matter of Henryetta's kittens.
As you were told you earlier, there was 37 or more cats and kittens,
On the farm at most any counting.
Henryetta was mother-domo in residence.

Henryetta always chose the best places for her birthing.
Under a wood pile where there would be great smells,
A handy snack of mice or whatever,
And of course protection from the elements.

But, she discovered the best place of all, quite by accident.
The Rube Goldberg contraption, sitting by the roadside, is called a combine.
Now this weird motorized combination of things that go clank, bang, bump,
Slam, shake, rattle, screech and thump,
Was designed to harvest soybeans, corn, wheat and the like.

Each year when harvest was finished, a thick bed of straw remained, deep in the
interior,
An accumulation which would not be cleaned out, until the following season.
Imagine Henryetta's delight, when she discovered the soft bed,
Warmed by the summer sun, safe and high and dry.

Of course this was just the place,
For her soon to arrive kittens.
And one day, there they were,
Deep in the bowels of this mighty machine.

As you might guess,
Timing is everything,
And these kittens were born
On the 15th day of September.

Well the first beans of the year, need to come out of the field, about mid-month,
Not only to get the best price, but also since the fall season is unpredictable.
As Eugene Haines once said;
'It was time to save the crop'.

What to do?

There was Henryetta and the kittens, safe and secure.
The beans were ready to harvest.
And, time was getting short.
No Problem.

Why you just wait for Henryetta
And the kittens to emerge,
Which they did in their own good time -
About the first of October.

Now this is important, usually the mother cat
Will keep the kittens well hidden for at least three weeks
(remember they spend the first week to 10 days with their eyes closed,
And need another 15 days or so go to get their legs under them) .

But did Henryetta, the problem know (?) ,
Anyway, she emerged with kittens in tow,
At least a week early just then,
For kittens. Just so the harvest could begin.

And then there is the matter of practical jokes.
When you live in the country,
You have to make your own fun.
Donald and his friend the Haines boy,

Mac Cavity forgets his name,
Franklin I do believe,
Decided that to best enjoy the great outdoors,
They should camp out.

Their idea of toughing it,
Was to set up tent about a
Quarter mile from home,
That way if the weather turned sour.

Or they ran out of marshmallows,

Or if nature called,
The house was only a short run away.
Now the matter of making a safe campfire,

Is important in farm country.
An out of control fire is a frightening thing,
That simply destroys everything in its path.
(Usually when the fire department is called,
It means that total destruction is inevitable.

The reputation of one neighbor, it is told
Had a problem with fires getting out of control,
In his 'well-insured' houses, sheds and barn
David Evens said; 'He could burn up a stove made of cast iron.'

With this in mind,
And I am sure with Mac Cavity's help,
A safe place for a fire was selected
And while the boys gathered wood for the fire,

Don's father carefully concealed a number,
Of firecrackers well in the depths,
Of the growing pile of wood.
Imagine the effect when

About 30 minutes,
Into the marshmallows
And hot dogs,
The fire finally burned down to the level,

Of the firecrackers
And they began to explode.
Mac Cavity surely commented;
'they ran like a bunch of scared cats'.
(Of course Mac Cavity was not there.)

Now as you might guess,
Henryetta was Mac Cavity's
Best friend and confidant.
As she continued on her mission,
To populate the world,

She often met with those
Who just didn't get it.
Having taken up residence in Germantown city
(Along with Magellan, Charlie and mac cavity,)
She decided that this was the place to be,
It was really the good life, as you shall see.

Alas, like so many city residents,
Her girth began to expand in a sizable sense.
Wendy measured her and reported with some alarm,
That she was 32 inches around, and growing firm.

Could she have a tumor,
Perhaps some over-eating disease. Or?
Of course a trip to the veterinarian,
Was to be scheduled as quickly as we can.

The doctor who had little experience
With cats of Henryetta's type and sense
Was quite concerned and pronounced
That she had an acites tumor inside.

Now this is quite serious as you might know
For the cancer cells continue to grow
And the body cavity fills
With liquid and the cells.

He made a number of needle probes to the abdomen full
In an attempt to withdraw fluid, but he was unsuccessful
And admitted, Henryette's problem
Baffled him.

He suggested she be put to sleep,
Or we could take her home to keep.
And make her comfortable, in may ways
To live out her few remaining days.

Henryetta was mac cavity's closest companion,
So the thought of leaving her without her friend,
At the vets was an unthinkable end.
So home she went to family and friend.

Henryetta seemed to be getting along quite well,
Her appetite, never small, like her belly continued to swell.
Like all cats, she spent most of her day,
Asleep in a secret place out of the way.

We consigned ourselves to await the inevitable.
Cats have a way of wanting to be alone,
When they have a problem, are injured,
Sick or know that death is approaching

So we were not surprised when one morning
Henryetta was no were to be found.
Two days passed and no Henryetta.
And then, it was Friday I believe,

Henryetta appeared at the back door.
A much shrunken Henryetta,
Almost with here girlish figure,
And she showed signs of having nursed kittens.

Gregg followed her back,
To the most private part of the garage
And there were eleven of the most beautiful kittens, Every seen.
One of which was Magellan.

So much for the wisdom of 'city' Veterinarians!

Life Number Seven - Outdoorsman and climber par excellence -

Mac Cavity was proficient
In climbing down the side
of tall buildings,
taking the nose down approach.

With each step,
he discovered that the only way
to maintain control was to
take the next step faster.

This worked fine until
he was going down
the side of the building

as fast as he could run -

and then, he would jump.
Unfortunately, the ground arrived
just when it would appear
that he was in full control.

While he practiced and
practiced this maneuver,
he never mastered it
although he did try it

from the garage in Germantown (Tennessee) ,
the second floor porch in Ellicott City (Maryland)
and the roof over Michael's porch
(Michael is a good friend who has an old three story town house next door in
downtown Baltimore.)

Martha (the Mistress mentioned earlier)
claimed that this form of entertainment
must have had an effect on his brain (Mac Cavity's, not Michael's) –
the sudden stops and all.

He was not an outdoorsman by choice,
An overnight camping expedition
for mac cavity resulted in more
than he had bargained for.

Now mac cavity looks sort of strange,
or is it distinctive.
It seems that his ears
are not quite what you would expect
a cat's ears to look like.

In fact they lack the characteristic tips,
as though they were surgically altered,
much like some dogs ears.
Not so, mac cavity's ears were modified by God.
One cold night in a particularly bad storm,
mac cavity chose to stay outside
denying himself the warmth of the hearth.

Why, we just don't know,
but in the morning
he was there for breakfast
with all the other cats.

It was several weeks later when we discovered
what he most surely already knew,
his ears had been somewhat changed
in a most uncharacteristic way.

This gave him a certain distinction,
you know.

He never complained
(at least to our knowledge.)

Life Number Eight -Vocal advocate

About the time mac cavity lost
the tips of his ears we thought,
it strange that he never seemed to
mew, purr, or make comments of any type.

I guess we believed there was
something wrong
with his vocal cords
and he was speechless.

It was only after we had moved to Maryland,
that mac cavity found his voice.
Probably when he finally had something to
complain about.

With his new found voice
he became quite the vocalist.
Often pointing out the need for
fresh water in the bowl,
more food or perhaps just to make sure
that no one took him for granted.

And purr, some might mistake
his purrs for snoring, they were that loud.
What a nice reward he bestowed on us

or was it a complement for a job well done?

Life Number Nine - Engineer

mac cavity discovered the science
of ergonomics long before it
became popular
with the computer trade.

One of the particularly difficult times
for mac cavity was his arrival in Maryland.
And, I think this is one reason he had little love
for the state and its people.

mac cavity had to go to the veterinarian
for surgery and because cats
are very clean animals
they simply will not let a cut or wound alone.

Accordingly, a Victorian like collar
is fitted so they
are unable to lick
their affected parts.

It is not only undignified for a cat
to wear a piece of jewelry,
but it is particularly troublesome
when the collar interferes with the cat's business.

At the time, mac cavity lived in quite nice two story house
Off the kitchen was a balcony with a wrought iron railing
Easily, a cat could easily pass through the bars
when it was desired to jump to the ground below.

But wait, the new collar was at least twelve inches wide,
a sort of round cone-shaped plastic thing
and certainly not going to pass through
a four inch space between the railing standards.

What was Mac Cavity to do?
It took only a few minutes to see
that a head on approach

would simply not work.

So with typical cunning, mac cavity turned his head to one side,
passed the edge of the collar through the opening,
rotated his head until the other edge was safely passed
and then mac cavity could easily go through the opening.

There was one problem tho,
there was no going back.
But no problem, the purpose of this exercise
was to get out not to get back in.

So off to other adventures
mac cavity went,
plunging head first down from the porch,
collar and all.

He repeated this maneuver many times each day when the mood moved him.
However, for him to perform this feat,
it was necessary to answer his call at the front door,
demanding to be let in so the game could continue.

I might add that perhaps mac cavity discovered
a practical way of employing one of Physicist theorems,
he proved that it was possible for a mass (atom or the like)
to be on both sides of a container without passing through the walls(?) .

So perhaps he shares with Einstein
an understanding of the Universe
that remains beyond us all.

Life Number Ten - Well maybe, maybe not.

Mac cavity was last seen in South Dakota
presumably looking for a place where the sun forever shines,
a cool breeze blows and
there is a full food dish on every porch.

But whatever,
and with apologies
to T. S. Elliot,
mac cavity's not here.

Cats have at least nine lives, or maybe more. We humans just don't pay enough attention, as mac cavity would like for us all to understand.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Manhole Covers

It lies there
Surrounded by metal, as its own
Encased in concrete
Long hardened and dark with age.

But below,
A hidden kingdom
Where elves play
Emitting foul aromas
That keep mankind away.

And in these dark recesses
Lurks a time capsule of the past
When man walked upright
And shouldered his burdens
But, alas, no more.

The manhole cover, Covers.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Man's Best Friend

Dogs seem to understand
Better, the acts of man..
And what went before
It's best to just ignore
For man's a fickle one
That forgets and forgives all along.

All it takes is for the dog
To show attention, as is due
And wag the tail and bark
To return from the edge of life's dark.
For the dog's a man's best friend,
(Forgiving the place of cats in the the household den)

As both man and dog move together
Along the path to the hereafter.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Marianne Moore's Twist Of Sour Lemon

A toad in an imaginary garden lurks there
To surprise trespassers entering without a care
Marianne Moore's been there
With a twist of sour lemon, she wrote to share.

For Ms. Moore wrote poetry that truly matters
Not just words on pages that splatter
And leave no image to behold
Of the message to be told.

In her garden, green and blooming
Was a touch of reality looming,
Hiding there for the uninitiated
To become at once, fixated.

A piece of earth unprotected by a fence
Into which one by happen-chance
Can enter and become aware
That Marianne Moore's been there.

Poetry is real when it shows
That in the world, nothing goes
Perfect, and without blemish
From Life's rough and tumble, from start to finish.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mass Extinction

They studied the records that had been found
Carved on marble slabs in the burial ground.
The slabs turned and broken with the passage of time
Provided a glimpse of history in a scripted line.

Most had a name long lost, forgotten
With dates that must surely have been of significance,
Perhaps a birth and death for most where there?
Then the cryptographer discovered that in fact they were.

Maybe a verse in a long lost tongue
Words of wisdom, perhaps to some.
But mostly just a depression in the ground
Was all that remained where they were found.

A burial site set aside to revere the lost one
That for the moment lived, then was gone.
Yet no clue to the where and why did it occur
And yet, it seemed that after one year, never more.

Something must have swept the civilization away
As surely as the coming of the break of day.
Perhaps this explained the jumble of bones
That existed in what may have been their homes.

The DNA evidence seemed to point to a mutant strain
That ran rampant through out the land.
A bit of code that perhaps was inserted
In such a way that nature's defenses were thwarted.

An epidemic of mass extinction surely swept the land
In the short life of this early man
A civilization, if that is what it was called
Had grown protective of one and all.

And must have thought that saving a life
Was worth endangering all to unknown strife.
Some must have been spared at great expense
Risking others; it made no sense.

Yet there was the record of the scientist's call
Preserved in the stone of the graveyard's pall.
An epidemic spread far and wide
There was no place for man to hide.
Old and young of all the sexes
Perished from this new nexus.
The mutant strain of DNA
With a sister plague ruled the day.

Tuberculous, the culprit, as evidenced in preserved lungs
The killer that spared no daughters; no sons,
And swept through the populous like a tsunami
In this, a brief moment of infamy.

Now monuments of rusted steel
And concrete, with a stone like feel
Remain to testify
That all had to die.

From the misbegotten ideas of scientist few
Who assured all, they knew what to do.
Alas, they perished with the rest,
Going to their false gods without protest.

Now the archeologist turned away,
Knowing what had ended civilization in that day.
And in her notes, carefully written,
Committed to paper, thoughts often forbidden.

'Trust me, I know what I am doing.
Must have been their undoing,
As they played god in their own way
Not knowing what the other God might say.

And politicians knew not or didn't care,
Time in the sun, they didn't want to share.
And journalist (if that is what they were called) with no knowledge
Were ensnared in this bit of poisoned porridge.

The slate wiped clean in the extinction
Perhaps was of another God's invention.

Permitting the race to rise again

With more wisdom, or will it happen, once again? '

Note: AIDS as it sweeps the world carries with it a far greater threat, a mutant form of TB that is antibiotic resistant.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Master Of The Three Syllable Word

He's at it again
Wowing the adults and children
Using words too big to understand
Professing to be leader of his fellow man.

Claimed by his followers to be brilliant
As evidenced by his use of words and cant
Which he delivers so fervently
To all - it's his diatribe daily.

This three syllable man.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Matthew Prior's Sphinx Riddle - Legs?

Sphinx was a monster that would eat
Whatever stranger she could get:
Unless his ready with disclos'd
The subtle Riddle she propos'd.

Oedipus was resolv'd to go,
And try what strength of parts would do.
Says Sphinx, on this depends your fate;
Tell me what animal is that,
Which has four feet at morning bright,
Has two at noon, and three at night?
'Tis man, said he, who weak by nature,
At first creeps, like his fellow creature,
Upon all four; as years accrue,
With sturdy steps he walks on two;
In age, at length, grows weak and sick,
For his third leg adopts a stick.

Now, in your turn, 'tis just methinks,
You should resolve me, Madam Sphinx.
What greater stranger yet is he.
Who has four legs, then two, then three;
Then loses one, then gets two more,
And runs away at last on four?

(To which Matthew Prior provided no answer in the poem which was published in 1710. So, Joseph Addison in the first issue of the magazine, Whig Examiner. proposed an answer which was as follows:

Riddle my riddle
My Ree,
What is this?
Two legs sat upon three legs,
And held one leg in her hand;
In came four legs,
And snatched away one leg;
Up started two legs,
And flung three legs at four legs,
And brought one leg back again.

One leg, was of mutton
Held by two legs of mistress; she
Siting on a three legged stool
When a dog came
And snatched the leg
And ran away
The miss in the riddle jumped up on her two legs
Threw the stool at the dog
And recovered the leg of mutton.

So in answer to Prior's (Oedipus') riddle:

Then loses one, then gets two more,
And runs away at last on four?

Addison proposed:

That the person in the riddle was a great man who
Crawled before he could walk
Then walked upon two legs until old age
When he was forced to use a cane.
Alas, he falls, losing the cane,
Regains his footing (on two legs)
And rides away on a horse.

Addison thought the line "gains two more" was introduced to throw the reader off
and was not a necessary part of the riddle.

I think not, and have added: Regains his footing (on two legs)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Meadow Muffins

Plop, Plop, Plop - -
As they drop,
Meadow Muffins by another name
Brings one's vocabulary to shame.

Product of an ungulate's digestion
Four stomachs and then some is the suggestion,
From the cud-chewing quadruped
Wild, tame or in-between, instead.

Meadow Muffins have a character all their own
As they pile up like some English scone
At first warm, fragrant and smooth to touch
Then when dried; nothing much.

Sometimes when the grass is new
They in a line are outward spewed,
Other times when the grass is dry
Hard to see how they are passed by.

Favorite home for flies and such
Which makes, for birds, an easy touch,
When the maggots arise.
Then it's a feast before their eyes.

Tumble bugs, as they are called,
Harvest the muffin in a ball,
Roll it up and away
To save it for another day.

But for those unaware,
It's best to take especial care,
On the shoe is no place for it to be,
For the nose to smell and the eye to see.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mehitabel's Tail

she brushes against your leg
insisting, or should we say beg
to go out as the sun goes down
for another jaunt on th' town

her tail, her most precious asset
raised in the air to assert
that she is ready for what ever
she can discover

archy would say
mehitabel's just that way
tail in the air
she thinks - it's so debonaire

while we all know
that it's just for show
to attract attention
to parts we are to modest to mention

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Men Have Ovaries

There hidden in the abdomen
Are two glands in men
Poised along side the urinary tract
Located in the lower back
Never noticed until old age
Then difficulties engage
First one discovers that the passing
Of a bit of urine, called micturing
Comes a bit slow and with pain for some
As the glands enlarge and become troublesome.
Women have their own complaints
Hot flashes and ants in their pants
While men just suffer through
The aging process that's due.

The prostrate was proposed by Darwin
To be the ovaries twin
Glands that have by Nature been discarded
When Sex it self was started
Now another function comes to mind
To enrich Doctors and the pharmaceutical kind
Who find ways to address
The daily and nocturnal stress
If pills don't work then the scalpel slash
Will remove the problem in a flash.
Some propose to let the issue lie
For sooner or later you will die.
So men and women if you please
Blame Mother Nature for the 'disease'
Maybe Darwin was a bit incorrect
But why quibble? What the heck
He put his finger on the source
Of man's incontinence.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mick At Th' Med (After C. J. Dennis)

Cobber Mick tol how him get cut on th block
He wz quik to say bout an to talk.
Wuz in a fight?
Sez he, No, not on my life.
At the med bout my brokn arm
Git it whn I do be usn my best charm.
Wuz this jane, a bit of a fluff, on which had nothn to lose
Giv me a crock on th block when I giv her a snooze.
Arm all set proper, in cast of plaster
Itchd to high heven caus the heat and wethr.
So she sz to me, th's bonzer peach all dresd in whit,
"walk this way, " down the hall went she in mi site.
I watchd her go, just stud thr cause wsnt sure
That I be up to folown her.
best as I cud, I tried
With arm in sling hangn by my sid
Up on my tippytoe and walkd sort of lik
She' d done with skirt too tight.
Mov'n my hips like two pigs in a poke
Wrestln to get free wz the way I did walk.
She stood ther jest a moment, thn she threw
Th board with me paprs, which struck the blew
Near dotted me eye, this crock landed
As she just sort of like exploded.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mighty Mersey

Water is our future
And if protected will secure
A place for all to dwell
If not it will be a living Hell!
But to blame all industries for those few
Who knowing or not, create a deadly stew.

As a chemist who reads of centuries past
I am reminded of man whose lot was cast
In providing the daily sustenance
Short sighted, but of necessity, not by chance.
Mad Hatters who beaver pressed with mercury
Never knowing; they became, soon history.
Or chimney sweeps that developed testicular cancer
From the hydrocarbons in the carbon they did not spurn.

And even now, the sewage that we spew
Contains toxins, quite a few,
Yet the treated waste is spread as reclaimed water
Where man (women and child as well as pets) do wander.
Such it is that Man is truly a dirty animal as some declare
That spoils the land, water and the air.

There is no easy answer for unless Man no longer exist
The problem (or problems) will persist.
Sad to say,
Population explosion will rule the day.
And as man demands more, more, more
The past gives us a hint of what is in store.

Second stanza:

So we see the Mighty Mersey flowing past
Cleansing the land of toxic waste,
And in flowing out to sea
Diminishes the burden on land for you and me.
But water is the element of which we speak
And protecting it is a mission we must all keep.

The Mersey river has a God given task
To cleanse the soil of unwanted trash.
Trash left behind by Nature and Man
The residues of death and life, a it began.

The mighty Mersey sweeps all before it
As it carries the waste, rather than let land store it.
Sweeping the debris along as tides change
Rearranging man's detritus of all that remain.

Excrement for which there are other words
Produced by man; simple or Lords,
Has a preordained fate,
To be converted, as we wait.

Nature can and will provide
The cleansing with each changing tide.
The Mighty Mersey and others of like kind
Serves God (and perhaps mankind.)

It's not industry that is at fault
But Man's demand for all that industry wrought.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Minnie The Moocher

Standing at the deli counter of the grocery store
Waiting for the order, adding just a slice more.
Alongside stands a lady who seems hesitant to choose
Which of the temptations, which will lose?

Ask me what the hard salami is,
I offer her a sample, which the market freely gives.
Tasty is her reply as it's gone in a flash
But perhaps, the cost is too much cash.

Now the slicing attendant starts on the first cut pastrami
'That looks so good' she says, 'I wonder if they'll give a sample to me? '
'Take a sample of mine' I say. I think it's better than the round
Spices and salty brine add something, profound.'

'I like it, ' she says, wiping her chin
'Do you make sandwiches, thick or thin.'
'Add swiss cheese and on thick slices of bread
Toast them until the cheese is melted and flavors wed.'

'My what a treat that is for you
And for your family too? '
'No it's just me alone.
Got to be going. So long.'

Then I made a turn around the store
And returned to spy on her standing there.
She'd joined another in conversation
And soon was given a sample of another taste sensation.

Minnie the Moocher was in her element
The free food was Heaven sent.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Miroslava's Sophia

Sophia the psychic
Was perhaps slow, now quick
To surmise that along this road, so clear,
Were those who did not want to hear
That what had happened many times before
Was just a prelude for what was in store.

For man never learns that he cannot change
The inner workings of another's brain
And all will suffer as in times past
For that is the lesson that history cast.

As we all progress(?) down the road.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mirror Of Fools (Speculum Stultorum)

Nigellus Wierker wrote a satire of the workings of the Catholic Church
Not much has changed from when he penned the works
Describing the foibles of the hierarchy in Latin rhyme
Using a "simple ass" as his messenger at the time.

So it is that "The Book of Daun Burnel the Ass" as some have it called
Has been translated in several languages, great and small.
But the "Mirror" available to the English reader today
Are two noted works by Regenos and Mozley.

While at the time, the satire was composed in two line couplets
Which (in Latin of the day) makes rhyme a bit of a test,
So it is that both Regenos and Mozley did their best
To make sense of the past.

Mozley did attempt at rhyme
But left out some of the more salacious lines
While Regenos made no attempt to put the endings in place
So that there would be a metric pace.

Accordingly, (and not having the ability to read Latin
Especially that of days of yore, as it was written)
I have here recorded my rendition of the above cited? poems?
With revision, so that the poetry rhymes

And here I begin, not as the author addressed in his prologue
But with a brief introduction of the events to follow (hopefully to help you) .
Brunellus, the ass provides an insight into wisdom
Wisdom, once gained is quickly lost to not a few (call it some)

Hopefully, others seeing the act of fools
Set about addressing the foibles
And put their own house in order
(At least to avoid the coming odor.)

So it is that we find Brunel (as some call him)
Having broken free from his master's binding
Goes seeking a longer tail to match his ears.
And discouragement is all he hear.

Even when told a tale about two cows where foolish action by one
Lead to grief in times to come
Of course, he ignores the advice of the professional (a doctor)
And begins a quest for magic potions to cure

Burnel having money (from whence the author tells us not)
Spends it foolishly in gaining the contents of vials, which is what he was about.
But alas, being attacked by dogs, he loses what tail he has
And the vials are broken as well for they are made of glass

By intimidation he causes the dogs owner to fear
That recompensation is near.
Who plots to do Burnellus in
But fates turn and he into waters is pushed and drowned.

Then another fable unfolds of past hurts,
Never to be forgotten, are a reminder of need for forgiveness.
Even when the penalty is severe
The fable meaning here is unclear.

Seeing a need for education, the ass
Goes to Paris to join an education class.
But after years of study, he chooses to leave
Although remembering how to bray, cannot remember the name of the city.

Reflecting on the disorder of the churches houses and their people
Burnellus decides to found an order of his own in which he will be leader
exemplar.
However, on viewing the state of the Church and its strife.
He pauses to listen to the stories of birds who relate the essence of life.

Whereupon he seeks to enlist his old doctor
In joining him in his new beginning of the hour.
Using example with moral overtones
He relates stories taught by his mother in rhymes.

As he finishes his discourse on nature
A sudden nose bleed foretells the future
For all are to meet with an end
No escape is available from evil's hand.

And sure enough as the story end nears, his master does appear.
Giving a mighty thrashing to Burnellus rear
Then although he no longer has a tail,
His master removes his ears as well!

A final judgement of good and evil awaits
For a story is related of man's fickle fates
Where one who has not honored his words
Is cast into a decision between loss of life and rewards.

Good triumphs!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mister Sparkles

Standing there
Regarding those in his care,
Some more asleep
Than others in his keep,
But all that can be roused
To once again be surprised
By his introduction
Of a bit of mal-instruction
Intended to inspire
Even those most dire
In need of a bit
Of stimulus to fit
Into their otherwise
Mindless lifeless guise
As students in his keep
Wading in the deep
End of the pool
Of dare I say it? School.

Think he says
As he plays
With their mind
In an attempt of another kind
Where in that bit
Of calcified fit
Of a skull
Covering a mind so dull
That is hard as a rock
Some would provoke
To show how
It's impossible to stow
Even a small message
To massage
The ego and cause to grow
As he wishes to bestow
A thought, even a small one
That will be a light shown
Into the darkest space
In this case,

A mind uncluttered
By knowledge pitted
Against the modern
Cares and woes
Of those who indulge
In a bit of daydreaming
As they doze.

Asleep in the presence of
Mr. Sparkles, how can it be
When they are the focus
Of his intensity
So to arouse them from
Their slumber,
He strikes with a ruler
To interrupt what may have been
Escape from reality just then.

The crashing blow of the wood
Upon the wooden desk
Is enough to raise the dead
From their cask(et)
And send them into another state
Where who knows what may await.

And others about
Laugh at his antics and shout(s)
To bring back from another place
The wayward one in disgrace
Then focus on the issues of the day
More work and less play.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mole Crickets

Never did God devise such a critter
One that creates, like man, a disaster
For the cricket for all its life
Mines the soil and causes strife.

Ugly is too kind a word
For this one of the under world
That feeds on roots and all
Destroying life in the virgin soil.

But the cricket will meet its fate
For there are pesticides developed of late
That will end its burrowing neath the surface
And end its life on the global place.

Yet there is a better solution to be found
For there are nematodes in the ground
That enter into the wicked insect and -
Bring a cadre of bacteria to the fiend.

Soon the cricket will die, which is an insects fate
And the nematode will reproduce before its too late,
Releasing yet another family of juveniles
Who destroy crickets around for miles and miles.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Moon Arising

In the early morn
A sighting of the moon is born
Caught in the radiance of the sun
A near eclipse on the wane.

Tomorrow on the distant horizon
Away from the sun's blazing
The moon will reappear
As Winter's cold grows near.

But on this day, like no other can
Shed light on the Myakka plain
As earth in its shadow
Is caught in th' orange glow.

The crescent is a promise
That life will not be amiss
To rise like moon and sun,
A new day has begun! .

On sighting the crescent moon on October 4,2010 as it bathed the earth in an orange glow, not unlike that produced by sun as it followed at 6: 00 Eastern time..

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Moon Pies, R C's And Tom's Peanuts

Enter the half-dark gloom
Of Riddlesperger's store
And adjust your eyes.

If your nose is a-twitching,
From this exercise,
Perhaps you'll come to notice the musky odor
From the old ice box on the sidewall.
The center-hinged, double door on top
Means you can open either side,
And like as not the RC
You're seeking is hiding on the other side.

Those floating chunks of ice
Have created an environment
All their own and the pleasant smell
Is one that years later can be recalled.

Cold, my God, that ice water is cold.
One doesn't go bobbing for apples
In it and the bottles tend to just sort of float
Around until the one you want comes into view.

Years ago the drip pan underneath
The box became just too much of a problem,
So the only solution was drill a hole
In the pine floor and let the water go where it pleased.

Don't look, the drip pan may still be there
Holding its charge of water,
And who knows what stray mouse
May have fallen in as well.

Take your RC to the counter,
Fetch a bag of Tom's peanuts
From the jar and ask for a moon pie.
None of those new ones
With artificial strawberry flavor –
They don't taste like strawberry anyhow.

Pull out your quarter and get some change,
A good solid nickel;
Don't sound like much until you think,
That's bout what you earn for half-hours' work.

Open the Rarra-C with the opener on your knife,
(The handy beer-can opener that's there for free)
Or perhaps the pull on the side of the ice box
From which the RC was chilled to near freezing.
Now go out and get a place on the wooden bench
Where everyone sits and spits and whittles.
(Maybe you'll be lucky enough to find a spot.)

First the RC.
Just enough bubbly to suggest a properly aged champagne,
Acid as provided by the carbonation
With a trace of sulfuric or phosphoric acid,
Sweet but not as sweet
As Coke and Pepsi with their
16 or so percent sugar contents.

A generous serving
Larger than Dr. Pepper,
Orange Crush or whatever,
And in a clear bottle with RC boldly displayed.

Ah! Raise the bottle
And let the liquid cascade down you throat.
It's good.

Now that you have been tempted,
You are ready for yet another culinary delight.
That same RC has a companion.
The bag of Tom's peanuts
Which you bought for just one nickel
Beacons you.

Tearing into the bag is just as difficult
As opening a moon pie but when you succeed,
Caution is necessary to avoid spilling a single nut.
Sample one.

They're just as tasty
As when they emerged from the oven
And with just the right amount of salt.

With that first draught from the big RC
You have made way for the peanuts.
Pour the whole bag into the waiting opening
And quickly cover with your thumb.
Shake the bottle to give a good mix
Of the peanuts in that cold liquid.

Quickly bring the pressured bottle to your mouth.
The charged container provides its own motive force
And the cold liquid spews forth –
Hopefully into your waiting mouth.
Now set the bottle aside,
Keeping a close eye on it to be sure that it doesn't,
With a mind of its own, erupt again.

Time to open the moon-pie.
The cellophane wrap doesn't give up easily.
Best to grasp it with your teeth and start a tear.
Once begun it's no problem.
If you expect to get the smell of dark chocolate and truffles,
You'll be disappointed.

This treat is one where the combinations
Are for the tongue, not the nose.
Smooth texture of the chocolate
Wrapped fully around this sandwich
Yields up a pleasant mouth feel
By holding the layers of graham cracker like crispness
At the proper moisture level.
The marshmallow center with just the right
Sweetness and sponginess completes the orgy.

It doesn't get any better than this
And for twenty cents,
It's more than just a meal,
It's a Southern delight.
One hasn't experienced
The best that life has to offer

Unless treated to a cold bottle of Royal Crown Cola,
A bag of Tom's peanuts
And a cellophane wrapped,
Chocolate covered,
Marshmallow-centered sandwich!

They may not meet the nutritional requirements
Specified by the current class of dietary gurus
But they do something else instead.
They satisfy.

Now kick back, relax and watch the cars go by.

sjm

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Moon Rise On The Myakka Prairie

In the early morn
A sighting of the moon was born
Caught in the radiance of the sun
A near eclipse on the wane.

Tomorrow on the distant horizon
Away from the sun `s blazing
The moon will reappear
As harvest grows ever near.

But on this day like no other can
The moon glow sheds light on man.
And to earth, in its shadow
A warm orange glow bestowed.

The crescent is a promise
That life will not be amiss -
A rise like the moon and sun
Embrace the future as one.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Morning

Sometimes at this time of year
I get up to go to the bathroom
When you're 77 almost 78
Nature calls and you answer.

On the Myakka Prairie
It's never really dark
So light, some nights
You can see colors.

I look out the inside window
Across the equipment in the barn
Out across the field, to my neighbor
Half-mile to the East.

If it's still dark at their house
I know it's not four in the morning
Otherwise you'll see lights
Often as not, the television is on.

Work, that's what it's all about
Because every day
Sometime about four
They are getting ready to go to work.

But when you are old,
Old to the point where
You don't have a "Real Job"
As neighbor, Eugene Haynes like to say,

You trek to the bathroom.
If it's after four,
Feel for the heat
From the cast iron stove.

Turn on the lights
Add a couple small logs
And a piece of fat wood
And go to the refrigerator.

On the bottom shelf
Is a coffee can where you put grease.
Grease from the frying pan
Poured in on top of pieces of paper towel.

Selecting one,
Not one in particular
But one that is heavy with grease
You return to the stove.

A flash of light and fire
From the propane lighter
Is enough to start the burn
And the grease quickly starts.

Close the stove's door,
There's no need to check it further
For soon the blaze from the grease
Ignites the fat wood (lighter) .

The lighter
Fuels the burn of the oak wood.
The wood refuses to start
But within ten minutes you have Fire.

Back to bed or maybe the computer.
The computer is always on.
Waiting, waiting
The screen is dark but awakens.

And you think.
Think of others
Who are awake
And those who are asleep.

Real people
Who don't have cows
To worry about
Or to feed.

But have other worries

That crowd out their interest
They can't see the moon glow
On the Myakka Prairie.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mother's Day

I don't know why it's so hard to find
A 'greeting' card of a different kind.□
One that is simple, yet so direct
That is tasteful and not suspect.

A card that says, 'It's Mother's Day'
Time for the sun to come out and for us to play.
That reminds us to be thankful for all we share
And give hugs to the one for which we so much care.

No cutesy endearing rhyme
That doesn't apply most of the time.
Or cartoons attempting to be humorous
Or else those that simply disgust.

Then there are those with siruppy sentiment
That you wonder the day after what they meant.
With bouquets of flowers and perhaps a bit of prose
And a perfume smell to tweak your nose.

Well this is one that's different you should know
It's simply just a poem from Joe.
Telling you I love you in so many ways,
And thankful for all the happy days.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mr. Goldstone Don'T Live Here Anymore

Remember when
He and his wife moved in.
Into the condo on the fifteenth floor
Who could ask for more.

Sold out to their son
(Graduate of Harvard!) in Boston
Who took charge of the enterprise
That the family had managed from the first sun rise.

Seemed they could money mint
And ventured into practices heaven sent
That were designed to yield returns
That certainly no one spurns.

Sometimes thirty percent and more
And that's a month, that came through the door.
Assured that this and that could not fail
As if son and partners had found the holy grail.

Friends and neighbors from the Bronx
Found heaven on earth with salmon and lox
Far to the south in Miami or the environs
And soon Mr. Goldstone and wife were there with their sons.

It was the place to be
So, Goldstone and wife were soon free
Of the work in New York town
As they turned it all over to their first born.

Settling into a life of luxury
They live high on the hog, so it seemed to be,
But an itch for a better life soon moved the Mrs.
To want to be free of the husband pest.

Seems she had a taste for the West Coast
Where movie stars were the town's toast
And in a surprising move,
She got into a new groove.

Ditched Mr. Goldstone in the blink of an eye
And was into botox, tummy tucks, and hair dye.
Soon was making the round(s)
With the new love(s) she had found.

While back in the Florida scene
On the mister's arm was candy ala creme.
Never did they look back
As the son assured them that all was on track.

The money flowed like the best of imported wine
And when they needed more, it was on the line.
Some said that they found a new line to be played
Cocaine was the substance so they said.

Never the less all was good in the land of endless fun
And they lived the life (supported by their son)
Who found ways to invest in derivatives and the sort
Insured by the Government as last resort.

Several houses in all sorts of places
Were investments that had so many faces.
Flip one here and flip one there
The bankers looked the other way and didn't care.

Until that fatal day
When it came time to pay
A simple mortgage that was due
And the son forgot what to do.

All that was necessary was to borrow some more cash
And promise to pay from the stock market stash.
But it was the Holy Days and all
Who would expect a margin call?

The bank showed lack of understanding
And money they were demanding,
Filed papers in the court
That caused all the financing to abort.

Notices came thick and furious

Arousing the interest of the curious.
Were the Goldstones as rich as they declared?
If so how did all they owned, disappear into thin air.

The knock came as a surprise,
The movers were there with boxes and other supplies
Asking where they were to deliver the load
Of hoarded treasures untold.

A vacant house on an unnamed street
Known by others as where the dead beat
Ones who had no future were assembled
Like so many in cattle-cars, huddled.

And posted on the door of the condo up in the sky,
Were words to remember him by.
'Mr. Goldstone, ' according to lore
'Don't live here any more.'

'Have an egg-roll, Mister Goldstone.'
Rose intoned.

'There are good stones and bad stones
and curbstones and gladstones
and touchstones and such stones as them.' Herbie
There are big stones and small stones
and grind stones and gall stones.' Rose

From Gypsy.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mr. Slithers

Lying quietly by the fire
Mr. Slithers showed no care
Warm and cosy was he
With no concerns about eternity.

Once he had made a big mistake when
He emerged too early from his den
And lay out on the warm tamarack
Straight as an arrow was his back.

The sun's heat was enough to cause
Him to sleep and forget Nature's laws.
For when the sun went down
So did his temperature without a sound.

And there he lay
Till next day
When Ben happened by
And found Mr. Slithers in death's grip nigh.

Picking him up by his tail
Ben deposited him in the pail
That he used to take trash outside
This time he had something of value to bring inside.

For Mr. Slithers was well known
As a black snake that would be just at home
Living in a warm house all his days
Crawling about in snake-like ways.

As he warmed and slowly moved about there
He began to wonder what food was here.
And he discovered that Ben had provided
(But not to his intention it should be noted.)
A bountiful supply of mice and rats
Who live here with Ben and his dog and cats.

So Mr. Slithers took on the task
That would ensure the rodents would see their last

And he helped to rid the house then and there
Of those interlopers that did dare
To invade the house on the country lane
Where Ben lived in comfort, though quite plain.

Of course ridding the house of these pest
Would seem to mean that future meals would be less
But Nature provides an endless supply
Of rodents that come in from outside on the sly.
So Mr. Slithers was assured that his next meal
Was going to be there from the cotton field.

But Mr. Slithers had another
Job which he was expected to shoulder.
For you see Ben's house was without
Locks on the doors to keep intruders out.
So he was expected to provide
Security against those who tried
To steal into Ben's home and take away
Things that Ben saved for another day.

Soon it became known country wide
That within the house a snake was known to hide
And that was quite enough to ensure
That no one entered who had thoughts impure.
(At least when Ben and his dog were away.)

So if you should happen to see
A large black snake merrily
Racing across the yard,
Perhaps its Mr. Slithers on guard.
Or one of his offspring
Who reappear with spring.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mud Babies From Biloxi

The southern clay is fit for turning
So this artist commence the fires to burning.
Now pottery was a dime a dozen in the store
Which meant that there had to be quality and more.

As he milled the clay to the proper texture,
He cast pots to his exacture,
A few came away, distorted, twisted and fallen
Others would have been dismayed, he saw it as a calling.

Why not make something of the sow's ear
A silk purse that others might call dear.
So the next few pots looked mighty queer.
Misshapen, intentionally it was clear.

Put them on the shelf with the others
To see what the tourist trade would shoulder.
But like children of every man, he valued them so
And could not bear to see his 'mud-babies' go.

Now the kids and wife too,
Turned the wheel like no others could do,
From his kiln came pot, vase, plate and whatever,
(including brothel coins for the stews)
Designs certainly not like any other.

Became known for miles around,
As the Mad Potter in Biloxi town.
Soon his fame spread from coast to coast,
Yet no one competed to see who could buy the most.

Now, books (Abbeville Press, Inc.) praise his trait
Of making something of what others see as fate.
Unique 'art' it is now recognized,
But to him was potter's craft in disguise.

'Pieces' now are collected by museums as their part
To be displayed to impress others of their support of art.
But it all began as a simple wish by a simple man

Keep food on the table; enjoy life anyway you can!

So when you see a piece of clay
Shaped with edges twisted in a certain way.
Folded and thin like no other,
Perhaps you've seen a bit of the vision of Biloxi's Mad Potter.

Or as George E. Ohr did inscribe on one of his creations:
The Somebody (that used to be) that
'made this Pot' Was born at Biloxi,
Miss – July 12,1857 (on Sunday
sharp and is and was
G. E. Ohr'...
This Pot is here, ' and I am the
Potter Who was
G. E. Ohr

(Died, April 7,1918, at 8: 10
with his mud babies buried
silent in their crate.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Musth

It's that time of year
When they come out with nothing to fear
Acting as if they are "king of the hill"
Knowing not the way to pass a bill.

In their passion for gratification (some seek sex) while in season
Abandoning all hope or semblance of reason
As they uproot the trees and lay bare the earth
A peculiar way of measuring worth.

It's said a secretion from a gland near their eyes
Blinds them, causing them to emit odor, attracting flies
But it's really just the surge of hormones in play
That causes them to act this way.

And they prance around
Seeking an opposite to be compromised if found
One that is willing, as they say
"To take a roll in the legislative hay."

Alas, there is no old one here,
One that is the "adult in the room" to hear
For all have abandoned their learned ways
And are locked in a convoluted maze.

Yoked together in two party groups
Acting as if it really doesn't matter which way they took
They're like elephants (and asses too) chained to a stump
Where spirits, soon to be broke, never knowing which end's up.

Needing a sage one to call down
"Enough, enough, you petty clown(s) ."
But in their Rut, they're all excited
As if they can move mountains, united.

Soon they'll recover and quietly go away
Having destroyed crops, leaving a swath of decay.
What they've created will take years to recover
As voters will soon discover.

(Rogue elephants (and asses too) can be of either sex or of no sex what-so-ever.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Mutilation, Aggrandization Or Is It Enhancement?

No part of the body is immune:
From the practitioners of the art
To reshape the clay
That birth did impart.

From the top, there's hair dye
And if that's not enough, hair implants for the guy.
Or a hank of someone else's hair woven
To make it appear to be your own.

The eye brows plucked
Or dyed,
Or maybe just a line painted finely
Where they should be.

Of course the eye itself is a target too
With implants of lense or a cut here (or two)
In nature's lense to bend light there
Or, Contact lense for those who don't dare.
Glasses no longer for service but fashion too.
Provide a mystique for those who
Have the funds and the desire
To alter the appearance if they care.

Those ears that only a mule could adore,
A sculptor of a doctor can tame them for sure.
Then there is the matter of hearing aids for the impaired
Or cochlea implants if you have money enough to share.

While the nose does impose a lot
With a bit of plastic surgery, it need not.
Bulbous it will not be
Simply pay the asked for fee,
The Doc's will render it more apropos
For you a very fitting nose.

Those rosy cheeks so soft and smooth
Brought to you by the injection of Botox
While intended to kill by paralysis

Its action on underlying muscles suffice.

Collagen implants here and there
Makes wrinkles disappear
Or if the skin droops like a dawg
A few judicious cuts and tucks will please them all.

Lips so sweet and tender to kiss
May not be what nature intended for the miss,
But implants swell them to be ripe and full
Then painted to emphasized is the drill.

Don't forget the teeth so white
Not an unsightly sight
Produced by an oxidizing chemical
That takes away the stains and, yikes, the enamel.

Or perhaps a few caps here and there
Will fill the gaps to give a winning smile.
The old method of a whole mouth full
Of teeth replaced by false ones was the call
But now they can be glued in place one and all
Not like old times when they clinked about.
Implants are the other way to go
George W was said to have had ones of wood
Implanted in his jaw. No termites here, it's understood.

Now we come to the chin that protrudes,
Knife and saw correct it in a flash,
And for that one that is recessed,
Same approach but different problem addressed.

Flabby necks need not be
As long as cosmetic surgery is next to free
And just below in case you wonder
Natures provisions for nutrition
Can be adjusted just so
Large or small as the order goes.

Then the belly so wide and round
And the area that is behind are both found
To yield to liposuction on demand

Fats gone; a splash in the pan.

Circumcision practiced by the Jews
Now promoted to control AIDS for all of you.
Tube tying, litigation
It's called. Renders one incapable of procreating.

Then the legs we are assured
Carry weight to be endured
But unsightly veins need not be
As they can be surgically removed, but not for free.

Feet also get their due
Nails trimmed and painted a nice hue.

Did we mention depilatory action.
Hair removal is a scary notion.
Soft wax melted on the spot,
Then yank it off, ready or not.
This from areas that pride wants hair not to show
When wearing revealing clothes or no.

Of course we left out the pins which are an issue.
That can be inserted in most every tissue
Decorations with jewels, metals or what have you.
And then there are tatoos that reveal
The intermost interest of the wearer
Bold and bright or small and obscure
In places all; they will endure.

Inside the body is yet another issue
Organs of others, replace and are like new tissue.
Or, surgical removal of those growths that offend
Makes it possible to life extend.
Transplants, explants, surgical corrections,
Every thing in God's creation.
Is now available to you,
Step right up, you'll be attractive too.
All it takes is a bit of imagination
And good Insurance for satisfaction.

If we missed a few body parts,

Not to worry, the profession is known as the Medical Arts.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

My Banker

Was at the bank making a deposit
Didn't have my checkbook
She said, 'No problem.'
Your driver's license please.

In a flash she'd filled in the blanks
Stamped, For Deposit Only
On the check's back
And presented it to the teller.

Whisk; through the machine
reading numbers and verifying
The amount and bank source
From which it came.

Done; and she handed me
A thermal print receipt
'Is this all I get,
Not even a lollypop.'

My banker friend
Reached across the counter
Took two in colored wrappers
From the display.

'Take these, ' she said, 'They're quite good.
And when next time you come,
Call in advance I'll have
A Turkish treat prepared for you.

Do you like chickpeas.? '

Eat your heart out
All those that use
The drive-up window
Direct deposit or the ATM.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

My Favorite Poet

Who can it be?
One with a message, certainly.
But wait, perhaps a bit of poignant thought
Or maybe memory overwrought.

No, that's not what I put highest on the list
Instead it's a story about never-been-kissed,
Or of the one that got away
Blissfully remembered to this day.

Yet when I reflect on the poets
Young and old that persist
In memory of their rhymes
None make the mental bells chime.

Maybe about a favorite animal they share
With loving touch and care
For the way they displayed
An element of nature as they played.

Or sadness expressed at a loss
Of a dear one whose stars were crossed.
Or joyful memory of those days
When things happened in certain ways.

Even anger toward those of a different view
That seemed to have nothing new
To offer but a glimpse into the inner works
Of a distressed life that provokes.

Perhaps a whimsey that makes you smile
Even when the tale is longer by a mile
And the twist and turns that provoke
To finally lead to the end; a joke.

Yes, I've got it finally,
There is one that always is there to see,
A poet above all the others for sure
Whose writing is sure to endure.

One who with pen to paper
Or is it keyboard on which they caper,
Regardless, it's for sure to be,
The one and only, ME.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Nancy And Harry's Maginot Line

Digging deeper into debt
With no plans to end it yet
They only see spending.
That's the hand they're playing.

Their supporters with hands properly greased
Will pull the levers in home districts as progressive's please.
Returning them to office once more
To continue raiding of the company store.

But the line, as France's old warriors found
Was but a trench line in the ground
When clever foes
Bypassed them, as history shows.

The current day Maginot Line
Has dug deeper, we find
Providing programs that are costly to keep,
While consuming vast amounts of money as we sleep.

While unemployment grows by leaps and bounds
The progressives offer no solutions for the homeward bound.
Like gamblers seeking another thrill
Ignoring the table's odds, a bitter pill.

Will the game be over or will it continue
Until there is no other venue?
The problem demands sacrifices by all
Not just the those that are weak and small.

Delaying paying of one's bills
Can no longer be the solution to the Nation's ills.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Nantucket

Met a lady from Nantucket
Who kept all her dreams in a bucket.
When I asked where she was going,
Said, "Away from this place, it's so boring."

And, for those here, a raised finger a showing.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Nevermore

that poe fellow made much
of the raven of which he wrote a bunch
turns out he and nevermore the first
were frequent visitors quenching thirst

in a tavern in gotham city
where the barmaid took no pity
on these two who were despoilers of the grounds
drinking carrying on and making rude sounds

seems the lady we ll call her such
of them she d had too much
katy was her name as history records
with a history of dising wayward bards

saw them a coming up the walk
making sounds how that crow could talk
knew soon the bar they d be in
cursing pinching fouling drinkin

a pry bar she took in hand and jammed
it twixt the door s two handles securely placed
locked them out in the cold and wet
edgar allen poe and his pet

the pry bar secured nevermore s place in fame
it s called a crow bar by name
and the maid we remember for
quote katy bar the door

archy2 the cockroach
a bit of archeomythlogy
according to marquis and mathrow

Based on a story in the Corvi Chronicle, the putative journal of the American Society of Crows and Ravens, which is published infrequently by the society at the Kaw River Valley Roost, Box 1423, Lawrence KS 66044-8423. Membership is free, contributions (money, prose and poetry) readily accepted.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

News That's Fit To Print

Words and pictures on paper appear
To shape the sense of pending fear
Rather than report happenings as they occurred
Writers politicize with many a twisted word.

Such it is in the world of tabloids
A half-pint page, transparently filled with voids.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Nose Picking Nerds

Some fingers have a special place
In which they often race
As only one can be
In the opening you cannot see.

Which reminds me of another rhyme
About fingers and time:
You can pick your friends
And you can pick your nose
But you can't (I hope)
Pick your friend's nose.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Not All Hogs Are The Same

As we approach this Christmas season
It's time to take time, and reason
That on the table will appear
A feast for all to share.

In the center midst the fowl and fish
You'll find quite another dish
From our friend the porker who can't be here
For there's a ham (not volunteered) .

Given up, (we trust)
With the thought that we must
Enjoy the best the larder can offer
This smoked and salted leg, sans trotter.

Yet there is another, Ivor Hogg comes to mind,
Whose poetry you will find,
Gracing the pages of the Internet
On topics you haven't discovered yet.

Spreading the word that fact or fiction
Is only the matter of one's own opinion.
So as you approach this holiday
Read and enjoy what he has to say!

(As you push back from the Christmas table.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Nutgrass

Looking across the verdant green
Grass growing everywhere it seems
Just emerging from winter's sleep
Soon to be ankles and knees deep.

But something's wrong with the picture
For Nature's certainly a trickster
Fooling the eye and the environment
With a disaster not Heaven sent.

It's nutgrass or by scientific name called,
Cyperus esculentus, which means "edible";
To those so gustatory enthralled
For snacks, drinks and medicinal tea.

But to the farmer, rancher
Or those others who grow grass
Nutgrass, nutsedge, Cyperus esculentus, etc.,
It's a Royal pain in the ass.

For it is an invasive species known world wide
That soon replaces other grasses in sun and shade. (Doesn't rhyme?)
For with seeds, rhizomes, tubers and such
It over competes, much.

How to answer Nature's spawn
And keep a decent lawn?
Pigs and chickens have been suggestions
But would never pass neighborhood ordinances.

Herbicides are possible but consider
Nut grass is there for several years pestilence
With its reproductive habits
No simple solution, there by chance.

The answer lies just before your eyes
It's an edible ground nut in disguise
Harvest them and sell to the natural health food market
And retire to a place where your profits can be kept.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

October The Post Office Cat

Some thought she was a stray
That had come for scraps along the way
That might be left from the lunch
Of the post office staff; a kindly bunch.
But others knew her for what she was,
October the Post Office Cat.

She had a duty like any employee
To be on time and serve the public daily
And as any other as all know,
Had an official position just so.
October the Post Office Cat.

As soon as the walks were swept
And the doors were opened for the daily visits,
She found her space upon the walk
A bit removed so that none would balk
As they came to do their task or mail whatever.
October the Post Office Cat.

She often times was given the duty
Of minding some child whose custodian
Had business to attend
In dealing with the letters or packages within,
So she laid there carefully in the sun
Till end of day when her work was done.
October the Post Office Cat.

She was known by all who came along that way
Parking carefully throughout the day
Making sure that she was not disturbed
As she, her duties did perform.
Watching and listening to the sounds of pleasure
That only can be bestowed on one to treasure.
Yet adults knew not how to measure.
October the Post Office Cat.

On the post across the way
A yellow sign was placed on display

By the lady who ran the insurance office
Who wanted to be sure that others notice
That this was the path taken each day
As the cat came to begin her official stay.
October the Post Office Cat.

There came a time when she did not appear
And it was certainly a time to fear
That something had befallen this special one
Who worked so hard to please everyone
And the sign was removed so that all would know
That she wouldn't be there anymore.
October the Post Office Cat.

Then mysteriously the sign reappeared
On the post for all to read
Which proclaimed that this was the crossing
Reserved for the cat that all were missing.
And it's said that she comes each day
Although never seen by adults on their way
But the children know that she is there.
October the Post Office Cat.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Buzzard (Or Why I'D Love To Be A Buzzard)

Watch a buzzard soar
Moving without effort.
Just a flick of the wing and a turn to the left or right
Takes nothing to remain in flight.
Maybe a shifting of the wind
Causes a slight movement and then
The black one who is above it all
Changes course and is again righted
To continue the balancing act
Which permits them to look where they like.

Maybe it's in search for food
Or perhaps only to go from point to point
Only God knows.

Some point out the taste that overwhelms
But on consideration, humans don't have better it seems
No over ripe cheese or fermented cabbage
Would be on the buzzards choice of tableage
Road kill perhaps is on the menu
Either fresh or aged in their view
For a feast is all they desire
Regardless of the imprint of a Goodyear tire

Then there's the lack of shelter from the cold
But Buzzards migrate from North to South it's told
Arriving with human like precision in the fall
And departing with the first warm day known to all.

What I envy most you should know
Is they require no glasses on their nose.
Sight is attuned to seeing what's below
Whether it's a hundred feet or more.

Then with a twitch of the feathers
They descend to see what to us would only be a blur.
Joining their brethren for a feast
At long last, nothing's left.

Sharing sometimes with a possum
Or other species that enjoy what repulses some,
Then with a hop-hop they again are airborne
To resume their flight in early morn.

So we end this ode to:
The Buzzard that's due
Recognition as Nature's own efficient device
For removing garbage, clean and nice.
Then soaring above it all
Through Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Comma

THE LOWLY COMMA OR A PICKLE FOR THE KNOWING ONES
(or why use a comma?)

Lord Timothy Dexter anticipated the Danes,
By more than a century, in taking pains,
To ensure that those who read and write,
Could find a way if they might.

To inser punctuation, as they please,
Into the written word without a wheeze.
His solution was just and wisely decided,
A stroke of wisdom with a bit of humor provided.

Reacting to complaints that his book did lack,
The elements that educator and hack,
Insisted were essential if one was to understand,
The Writer's intent to a man.

He added a page at the end,
Not intended to offend,
But filled with commas, periods and such,
To be added to text by the reader's touch.

A review of Lord Dexter's 'Pickle' serves us well,
As reported in (not in html)
When in a stroke of genius with many a stroke,
'a pickle for the knowing ones' he wrote.

He reminds us that while proper language is no joke,
Rules of grammarians and pedants are a heavy yoke.
And with Government regulation,
There will be no sure-fire salvation.

, , , , ,? ? ? ! ! ! !

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Computer

There it sits glaring back
As if on a mindless tack
Doing its own bidding
When it's moved to responding.

Mostly it sleeps
When no motion demands its keep
Then when awakened from its silent keeping
There is no way to recover what it's been thinking.

No keys or mouse movement can recover
Whatever was in some program or other.
So one has to capitulate
Unless inclined to wait.

Perhaps at some point in time
The electrons will fall in line
And with a flash in a perfect storm
Then in the beast a life anew is born.

So do you sit silently and wait
For that appointed transistor gate
That permits the electrons to flow
Then, Oh so slow.

Abandon all hope
All that enter
Here is home for saint and sinner
Where patience is not a virtue
As the computer commands what is due.

Maybe a lost password will be required
To pass into the never world so rarified
Where Bill Gates and his crowd
Figure what will be allowed.

You have violated some principle
That to them seems so simple
But to the ordinary soul

There is no way forward to go.

Perhaps a new computer is the answer
But before you leap consider if this one you can romancer
One more time try to get it to do your bidding
Before to the curbside its committing.

Turn it off and let it rest
Then if you are by the god's blessed,
You'll hear the notes of music, so rare
Then be greeted with a screen so fair.

Just enter the magic password and you can start
To enter the kingdom of subatomic parts
Alas, either you have forgotten
Or perhaps the computer's logic is rotten.

And it shakes its head to say
Try another one to go this way.
In desperation you call
A serviceman who knows it all.

Sad it is to learn that your warrantee
Has expired and service is no longer free.
Gotcha comes to mind
As credit card numbers are read over the line.

Telling this foreign sounding voice
What happened when you tried to gain a choice
Is an experience not for the weak of heart
As he (or she) tries to take your problem apart.

It does appear
Is the conclusion you are wont to hear,
But it can be resolved says the voice
Hold down the alt key and rejoice
For your computer will start at once
(At least it happened to another dunce.)

Perhaps it's time for you to consider
Buying another
Computer that has anew

Problems and programs, not few
May solve the emergency you face
(Sorry, it's better to give up in disgrace.)

Now as you sit staring at the blank screen
Through you mind courses thoughts, Oh so mean.
Perhaps the computer could be placed
In Gate's dark personal place.

So to the Apple store you go
Credit card in hand to shell out lots of dough.
There you are amazed to find
Others faced with the problems of your kind.

Homeward you go with the promise
That this will give you eternal bliss.
Plug it in and the bells and whistles sound
(How do you turn off or turn it down?)

All that data which you had so thoughtfully backed up on an external drive
Is there for you the make your computer come alive.
It works and now you find
That a new learning curve will stretch your mind.

The promise of compatibility
Seems to be a stretch of reality
For the Bill Gates crew
Wants not to help you.

Nevertheless as you progress
Although much slower than the rest,
You come to realize that you could have written
All this faster in pencil or pen.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Flea

There you be
Hard to find, or to see.
Happy 'mongst the wool and flannel
Like so many of Wilkin's cattle.

Having supped on a meal so rich
Provided by the cat or bitch.
Now not even a hip-hop do you give
As you laze in the folded linen rive.
You're no credit to your ancestors
Who for generations have been infestors.

A mindless critter such as you
Is due no recompense; it's true.
Living the good life in comfort
Never worrying who'll provide support.
You live the Communist life style,
Taking all the while.
Taxing other's ability to pay,
Never mind in which way.
Then, it's according to the need,
Of like minded bloodsuckers, to bleed.

But now I've caught you some of flea
And your end is certain to be.
As betwixt two thumb nails you find
Yourself at the end of your generation's line.
A bit of pressure, applied just so,
And pop goes your exoskeleton, and away you go.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Horse

The smell of sweat
The creak of leather
The muscles ache
A friendly nicker
Oh, for another day.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Louse

On Reedin Ur Pome in the Pap'rs Printn

Agin, I caut ye, ye crawlin' critter!
Back an fro ya go, I know not whither.
In black and white ya strut your pizen
Fed by pymehts from your cussins.

Ye ugly, aged thing tha be
Somethg that natur for sure set free.
How dare ya see fit to writ
In a fine public forum such as it.

St. Louie's long past squattle
From thence y' came and now y' prattle.
Wi kindred, bumblin fools
Ya pen the twist'd memory of Mo's mules.

Me thinks that havin ya out'er sight
Beneth the scope of man's senses, tis right.
For to awak'n memories of drugs and ill got pashion
Seems now's the thing to test our reason.

Yet here ya be on th' noble pate
O're the printer's ink you spread your hate.
My sooth; right bauld ye set your nose in
Twist'n facts of which y're not certin.

In other print, I'd not be su'prize
But on this great lady, tis not wise.
Haps the educat'd ones will `preciate
Yore tempts to spread not love but hate.
But on Miss's fine wood'n pap'r
How daur ye do't.

What cursed speed does such a crawlin' ferlie do,
O'vr the blessed span, twixt salty shores and icy mews
Inked and `livered most working days
T' spred the wonders of busn's that pays.

Tis not the louse that causes distress
It's the respect given to his false dress.
O wad to be seen as it should be,
A critter, crawl'n in the scum of darkness, sightless yet free.

To pizen thoughts of unknown souls
Who seek knowledge untainted by gaouls.
Inst'd r treated to a burst of gory
From Old Sixty and Five who tells no story.

With apologies to Robert Burns, but not Frederick Seidel.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Pencil

Sharp on one end
Rubber on th' other
Useful for writing
Like no other.

Not a quill and ink
For parchment or papers
Nor a scribe for stone
On which to chase Itr's.

Graphite or dyes, not lead
Are th' reasons
A mark survives
In all seasons.

But the rubber end serves
Us most well
When errors imparted
'R not permitted to dwell.

Use of pencils (or pen and ink)
And sundry supplied
Are here to stay as words
To paper are best applied.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Realtor

Oh to be a realtor!
When times are good
I got a condo, trips and car
And all that I knew I would.

But times are tough
With sellers underwater (they tell me)
So there's lots of 'diamonds in the rough'
I can take you to see.

But alas, my clients and friend(s)
Have abandoned me
And stay up wind
As though I'm a polecat up a tree.

So, I'll just muddle along
Singing my little song
Knowing that all will change
(At least that's the popular refrain.)

While I stand in the welfare line
Waiting for the phone to ring.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Yellow Butterfly

The Yellow Butterfly

The butterfly rested on the ground
Near the spot of water it had found
A place where a refreshing bit
Of moisture would surely be
Necessary for this flight of fantasy
A flight over many miles
Of deserts, mountains, and steamy tracks
To be passed beneath it on its way
For a date with others in Nature's sway.

With a flutter of the wings
A pumping action begins
That moves the refreshing dip
To recharge the butterfly for the trip.
Then once again the process begins
With a drum roll of spreading wings
The coiled proboscis carefully put in place
And six legs touching earth in a final embrace,
Waiting for a gentle breeze
To lift him above the trees
And off to places yet unknown
The yellow butterfly goes alone.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Yellow Cat

Yellow cats
Aren't the brightest lights
Climbing high in a tree
Seeking to flee
A dog or some other
Animal bother.

There they'll stay
Through night and day
And wont come down
Regardless of what's around.

They're dependent on their human savior
Awaiting some morsel or other favor
To reward them for climbing skills
Regardless of the risk and thrills.

Sooner or later they'll come down
Finding it's better on the ground
Where they'll get their just reward
With all sorts of praise and accord.
Home at last they will be
Safe and comfortable (not like in a tree) .

Maybe it isn't the yellow cat that's so dumb
Perhaps it's the owner who's one brick short of a full hod.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To A Zipper

What it is that makes one appear
To challenge the meshing forces of a zipper
That come together as one
When a bit of force comes along.

Caught up in the fabric
And unwilling to wait
The shaped charges embrace
When brought face to face.

Yet a single piece of unwanted thread
Causes the tangle that all dread
When between the maws of the opening
There remains no single way of coping.

Struggle as one may like
Soon disaster is about to strike
For a forced separation can cause
Destruction by Nature's laws.

What else to do?
When solutions are so few.
Trying to gain freedom and release
When one only wants some peace.

The tension of the organ within
Continues to demand some end
Of the problem which has assumed
Monumental proportions for that entombed.

Finally with a struggle
That ends the tussle
Freedom at last is at hand
With a final pull on the extended tab.

Relief once short lived
Now must face the fact that violence gives
A new problem to be solved.
How to reunite that which was just parted?

(Perhaps this isn't about a zipper at all?)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To An Artificial Christmas Tree

Evening –

To some its beautiful
Standing there
A mass of twisted wire
Embracing plastic needles
Long since going bare.

Pulled from the attic
In its well worn box
Assembled carefully
From bottom to top
Until it looks quite like
A real pine tree.
(At least that's what
Its meant to be.)

Graced with strings
Of lights and garland,
Without end,
Carefully strung
With clips to suspend.

A bit of tinsel from years past
Kept straight and true
In a paper clasp
Now strewn
A handful at a time
Until the tree
Begins to shine.

With careful planning
The tree is placed
In a protected place
So that nothing can
Cause it to be displaced.

Morning –

Something's amiss
About the Christmas tree
There's something
In the branches
That wasn't meant to be.

Nestled carefully
Amongst branches far
From the floor
Is a present
That wasn't there before.

A bit of black fur
Close to the trunk
Clinging there
As if Santa had
Come and hidden it there.

While gifts
Carefully packaged
Are underneath
The old plastic tree
This is something
Else to see.

Magellan has once again
Discovered HIS tree
And claimed a spot
Just like in years before
When he came to see
Christmas as a time
When family gathered round.
There in the boughs was
His place to be found.

When you look
You'll find him there
Nestled amongst the branches
Without a care.

But like all things
That have long since gone,

So is Magellan
Who has passed along
Still, memory
Serves to reward
Those who have
His Christmas shared.

In the Artificial Christmas Tree.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To Old Blue

At the honky-tonk outside of town
A bit off the gravel driveway
You see Old Blue hangin round
Just standing there, thata way.

Old Blue was hard, you got the feel.
When you first saw her
You thought of cold blue steel.
She had a heavy rear end, yes-sir.
And when you got her loaded to the gills
She could be a half ton of pure go, an' in a blur.

Easy is the way some describe Ol' Blue
But tough and with no regrets.
Walk all over her if you dared too
She never bent, never broke and life left few dents.

More than a few teenagers
Got their first ride in her bed
And nobody complained of the danger
Least of all Old Blue; it's said.

Sometimes you got hot
Cause she'd give you the air
Other times cold, like as not,
My God she could be cold; but to be fair.
If you knew what it's about,
You could get her going without a care.

One day, a feller made a proposition
That couldn't be refused.
And, Old Blue fell prey to another's infatuation.
To my lifelong regret an' others to.
They don't build `em with a constitution
Like Old Blue's anymore, it's true.

Who Was Old Blue?

Inside, Old Blue wasn't much to see.
A bench seat of some material
that was next to being indestructible
stretched from door to door
and four could sit there in a pinch.

Behind the seat was a gun rack,
some put a shotgun or rifle on the arms
but mostly it was handy for a cane or a hotshot,
or even fishing poles and rods (if they came apart) .

On the steering wheel was a spinner
that made it easy to turn the wheel with one hand,
no power steering needed.
This was particularly good when backing a trailer.

She had three on the tree,
not four on the floor
and sometimes the shifter would stick
and she just didn't want to go,
so you had to get under her bonnet,
give her levers a jiggle
when they were locked up,
jiggle the arms a bit and
she was ready to go.

Old Blue had six-cylinders
on the rails with points and plugs.
And the carburetor with air filter
was right there on top
so you could easily pour
in a bit of gas if need be.
Old Blue wasn't particular about gas,
distillate right out of the ground in Texas (about 80 octane) ,
or tractor gas and
of course regular if you had the money.

This was before air pollution control devices,
so she was easy to work on.
Old blue started smoking
when she was six,
and it only got worse.

Seemed the only way she could get along
was a pick-me-upper in the morning.
A quart or so.

The long wheel base
and stepside made her stand out
around the square.
The heavy sheet metal all around
meant that if you brushed up against something,
like as not that something came out second best.
You could actually stand on the hood or cab roof
and not put a dent in them. (Try that with trucks today.)

The custom rear bumper
was put together in a welding shop
and looked good but tough.
Best of all she could be turned
'round in a short radius.

Many a nail
we put in the wooden floor
to fix the cargo,
no ropes or chains were necessary.
We hauled a piano once
by just wedging 2X4's up close
and nailing them down.

And the rack on the back
was Georgia pine,
reinforced with angle iron and designed
so that with a double deck,
as many as twenty calves
could be hauled at once.
(Try that with the new trucks.)
Old Blue, built in 1972 by
Chevrolet served us well.

Other's appreciated Old Blue

When Old Blue turned the corner
about half mile from home,

Springy, Miss Cow and the rest
headed for the house.
They knew that feed was on the way
and all fell into their place in the parade
as they raced for the top of the hill.
Usually the disinterested bull
would be there with the rest,
running with two front feet together
with the hind ones getting by the best they could,
as he gained speed,
sometimes giving a buck
that would rival the best of the rodeo bulls.
A gallop I suppose you could call it
but regardless,
it seemed to get him to the front of the line.
The cows with heavy udders
swinging like pendulums
had a pace of left foot forward,
followed by the right,
which seemed to have an easy rhythm
that kept them in the race,
while the calves cavorting around,
first in the front then in the rear,
mindlessly running for they knew not what
since the hay had little appeal
as long as milk flowed freely.

What was the distinctive sound of Old Blue?
We never knew,
but it was enough to get the herd started.
Of course their clock was set
for feeding at about six
so they were probably more attuned to sounds.
And certainly if an outlook
had spotted the blue truck,
that would have triggered their stampede,
but since they were often
deep in the wood-pasture,
it is unlikely they had one posted for sighting.
No, it was some distinctive sound
from the six cylinder
that to the human ear

was well muffled and without any sound at all
from more than a hundred feet or so.
But to the cow's well tuned ear,
they picked it up and were on their way.
And they never made a mistake.
All sorts of other cars and trucks passed by
and never did they show the smallest bit of interest
and start the mad rush for the house.

They must have surely loved Old Blue.
After-all she was responsible
for their winter feed of hay and cotton seed,
and often for a bit of pellets from a sack
at other times of the year.
So, when they found her standing in the field unattended,
what to do was quickly answered,
as they gave her a good licking
not unlike that which a cow
gives her new borne calf
or maybe one that just needed
a good tongue washing.
You might think that
it could have been the antifreeze
with its sweet taste, but no,
they washed everything,
headlights, windshield, doors, windows, hood,
anything they could get their tongues on.
One would think that an owner of Old Blue
would be appreciative
but when you get behind the wheel,
fire up the truck and discover
you can't see out of the windshield
because of dried 'cow-juice',
and as likely as not
the windshield washer bottle would be empty,
you had other thoughts.
Make the best of it,
hang your head out the window if you can
and drive the worn path to the house
and wash her down.
I might add,
the cows had not the slightest interest

in following the truck to the top of the hill,
they just went about their business and ignored Old Blue.

Now Springy had a particular fondness for Old Blue.
Maybe it was because she had the pleasure
of riding in the double deck rack
with some thirteen other calves
all the way from Lake City, Florida to Brighton, Tennessee.
(Along with a bunch of chickens
that had the favored position of riding in the cab,
while the calves had to make do
with the hay padded long bed.)
And, Springy and the others
got another ride from Brighton
to the pasture in Brownsville.
At any rate anytime the truck was in the pasture,
they would investigate a
nd as I said before, give it a good tongue-licking.
However one day
when the truck was parked under a tree
down by the corral,
I had left the tail gate down
(supposedly that reduced air friction
and gave you better gas mileage,
a supposition that to my way of thinking
was never proven or disproven)
and I was doing something,
I don't remember what,
and when I returned to the truck,
there in the bed
standing there like a cat
who had caught the mouse,
was Springy.
At this time, she'd calved a couple of times
and was showing the mark of her genetics
with a heavy pendulous udder
and how she got in the truck is still a mystery.
The truck bed is at least
a couple feet off the ground
and the metal of the tailgate
is slick as glass.
Did she jump in?

That's my guess because the kids had
named her 'Springy' for a reason.
Well so much for how she got in,
now how to get her out.
She was facing forward
and much too big to easily turn around
(The bed's about four feet wide,
except between the wheel wells) ,
and Springy was a good eight hundred pounds
with a distance between front and rear legs
of some four feet or more.
Obviously, she wasn't going to turn around,
after all she was ready to go for a ride
and wanted to see where she was going.
Backing her out was possible
but having her step off the tailgate and
break a leg wasn't a good idea.
So what to do?
I decided that she got in
and she could just get out on her own.
So I cautiously drove the truck
over to the bank of the tank
(that's what we call dug ponds in Texas,
and I never could think of a better name
for the one on the farm.)
Then I backed up against the bank
so the tailgate was jammed against the dirt
and that's where I left the truck til the next day.
When I went down the next day
the cows had moved to another pasture,
Springy with them.
Don't know how she finally got out
but that's her story, not mine.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To Orlando Belo

Orlando Belo is a poet
That's for sure
He writes from the heart
And imagination pure!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To Robert Edgar Burns

You sir, have a talent
In relating many a most memorable event.
Did they happen only yesterday?
Perhaps in memory they'll stay.

But as your mind twist and turns
To the paper, sometimes words it spurns
Till you find that special way
To relate what you have to say.

Recording for all readers to view
Life as you see it, anew.

Write On!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To Shoppers Everywhere

Shopping's a pleasure
Says the local ad
To ensure
That in parting with your cash – you'll be glad.

So it was the other day
When I was picking my way
Amongst the bags and cans
And jars of assorted brands
That I looked up to see
Coming straight for me
A lady (that's what we call them)
Riding a motorized shopping pram.

So intent was she
That I hardly had time to flee
Escape was what I intended
Otherwise my life would have surely ended
For not only was she intent on shopping pleasures
But had in tow a full size cart to hold her treasures.

With items heaped high.
There was surely no sense of others nearby
Intent and passionately she came on
Taking only a moment to select and then was gone.

Gone was she to regions of the store,
I know not where, or wanted any more
Of the terrors that perhaps lurk
Around every twist and turn

So I hastened to the check out
Forgetting what other items I was without
Glad to seek the safety of the street
Where with cars and trucks I'll gladly compete.

s

Ode To The Crippled Cow

Red arrived in a trailer with the other heifers
But somehow fell and was trampled down
She painfully stood and hobbled off
Her left hip damaged, painful to see.

Would she recover
Or be doomed for life
Maybe a trip to the auction
Was the best way.

But still, a big heifer
With good breeding
And after all she'd been exposed
To a good bull.

We kept her hoping she'd get better
But she didn't.
Everyday when she walked
Her pain was evident.

What to do,
Wait to see how her calf
Turned out then decide.
Keep her, or off to the auction?

Her bag became full
And she began to dilate
The calf would probably come
On the next front.

Watching and waiting
Everyday seemed to be the one
Until finally heavy rain.
Red was nowhere to be found.

Like all cows she chose to be alone
But where,
And with the gimpy leg
Would she make it?

Other cows with better odds
Develop a spinal blockage
And are unable to stand
Their fate assured.

As soon as the storm passed
The search began.
Of course she's in
The last place you look.

Approached from the distance
Looping around to see
Was a new calf there?
Or was she still waiting?

There in the deep grass
A brown lump
With our approach
Movement - a twitching of the ears.

Silence, Red stood guard.
Best to leave them alone,
Looking back, she stood alongside
Her calf.

The next morning
The cows moved
To the West pasture,
A slow moving herd.

No evidence of Red and her calf
As they moved.
Then just before sundown
They headed back East.

The herd stopped at the spring fed pond.
Calves dropped to the ground
Others cried out for their moms
And a few cows looked for their own.

There amongst them all

Was Red
And there on the ground was
Her brownish lump.

The lump stirred, stood and stretched
And addressed his dam.
But someone had moved the tits
They seemed to be on the other end.

Finally with a bit of encouragement by Red
The calf hooked up
And froze Red in her tracks
Taking the milk in a steady stream.

The other cows moved out
But Red stood still
Then she painfully hobbled
To follow the others.

Her calf first behind but soon
At her side,
Then ahead, then behind.
They moved.

Both were going to make it!
Red had paid her dues.
Life would not be easy
But her reward was obvious to see.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To The Hog

The hog as some know well
Is meant to devour all sorts of things from hell
It stands quiet for so long and then
When something is offered digs riight in.

Doesn't take much to feed it
And if you neglect, it'll just sit
Until something comes along that is the right size
Then the open maw grabs whatever passes by.

Known to devour bits of metal and stone
Whatever it passes, it gives a might moan
Then sometiimes coughs up the foreign matter
As though it wasn't fit for its platter.

Sooner or later the hog must die,
For as time passes by
It grows a bit irritable and malcontent
Refusing that which is offered it.

One day when guest are expected and all is in readiness
The Hog coughs up yesterday's contents
Of meals and such that were offered before
For it just can't handle life any more.

So call the House Doctor that will say,
Your Garbage Disposer has had its day.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To The Oysters Of Apalachicola

These ugly looking lumps of calcium carbonate,
Unlike their cousins that collectors take.
Have a name known far and wide
As Apalach Oysters. 'Tis said with pride.

No other Oysters hold a candle,
To those grown in Florida's panhandle.
The Bay's are large 'n sweet;
Known at the Bar as Nature's treat.

Growing in clusters in the shallow, briny sea,
God's gift to man is not too difficult to see.
They're close-by, not too far from shore,
Waiting to be harvested in quantities, galore.

Produced each summer by hermaphrodites true,
Spat are produced by millions, on cue.
To find some structure for support and protection,
Another lump of Oysters is the best selection.

Salt water and fresh in just the right blend,
Gives a unique taste to the liquid within.
Brackish water is the best Oyster environment,
Which yields a flavor, Heaven sent.

Temperature's important, but Oysters don't mind,
If it gets cold in the North you'll find.
Oyster lovers raving 'bout the fruit of the sea,
Oysters do quite nicely, as salt water don't freeze.

Unlike fish, whose gills must have an active flow,
Of water, for Oysters it's just not so.
Llong as they're wet, they'll manage,
Too deep and at high tide, they're at disadvantage.

Tho' above water they can survive;
It's clearly best if the bed in which they're alive,
Is below the surface at high tidal flows,
Only unusual tides n' winds, are they exposed.

A supply of sunshine is required to grow rampant,
As Oysters feed on water borne, minuscule plants.
And other nutrients must be found,
For the Oyster t' grow and abound.

Located in the bend of Florida, Apalach bay's,
Rich waters flow by night and by day.
Bathing the Oyster in just the right combination,
To yield one of God's delights, since creation.

The Oyster beds weren't discovered by chance,
Indians long knew of the abundance.
Great heaps of shells remain,
Where they were tossed in joyous refrain.

Settlers added to the piles, with annual migrations,
From Georgia of families and other minions.
Coming during the summer months to feast,
Upon smoked fish, Oysters and other beast.

Yes, the Oysters an ugly lump of shell(s) ,
But inside's shiny pearl on which it dwells.
Until tasting Apalach Oysters, you don't realize,
Shell fish, like all plants and animals specialize.

Oysters, live snugly, in beds `neath the water.
Where they're located does really matter.
Beds known locally as bars, they are named,
By the locals, then regulated by Fish and Game.

Oyster beds are just a pile made of shell,
Loosely glued together as they dwell.
Older Oysters of course are deep within the pile,
And spat and settle on top after a while.

With time they all grow above the clay and sand,
Some Oysters may be bigger than your hand.
That's the Oyster, not the shell,
In which the Oyster him/herself does dwell.

The way Oysters are taken in Apalachicola Bay,

Requires a flat bottomed boat poled by day,
Over the water above the Oysters,
Where they reside in building clusters.

Tongs like garden rakes on steroids, joined in sets,
With oak handles as long as man can gets,
Hinged, teeth facing. You can open their incisors,
They work like closing a pair of scissors.

Wooden handles as long as ten feet or twelve,
Gives a good reach to probe and delve.
The handles actually are to apply leverage,
As well as search in the bay's briny beverage.

Close the handle together, and 'walk' them up,
Haul out the oysters, in their toothen cup.
The handles help balance th' Oysters.
As you struggle to get them from th' moisture.

Aboard the boat, Oysters are dumped in a heap,
The tongs being returned to the briny deep.
For another feeling and sounding,
There's no telling what you'll be finding.

Clumps of oysters are struck with sharp blows,
Separating them from their traveling fellows.
Object is to break the cluster pell-mell,
Without shattering the hard, ugly shell.

A bit of iron of most any description,
Is used to meet the boatman's prescription.
Perhaps rebar from a construction site,
Or a fabricated one 's the man's delight.

Sorting Oysters is quick and ease.
Hand size; keep it if it please ye.
Toss it in th' waiting croaker sack
A tow-sack for Oysters, in which to pack.

The sack's hung over a drywall-bucket's top,
Efficiency's the word in this floating shop.
The bucket has holes in its bott'm,

Water drains out, that for certain.

When the sack's full, heave it out.
A wire tie's then twisted about.
That's about a ha' bushel,
Not too bad for a few minutes tussle.

It may contain ten dozen or so,
And sells for perhaps ten dollars, or mo.
A bushel will sell for forty dollars, at best,
Depends on the season and the harvest.

State law says there must be on each bag,
Where-from the Oysters, a special tag.
Tags look like those on sacks of livestock feed,
Are printed in town when there's a need.

Th' shops about a block from the bay,
Tags are printed for a long time just this way,
Letters cast and type's set as it was turn of centur,
No place for progress in this man's adventure.

The printer grudgingly gives a demonstration,
That is; print a tag for your education.
You know it interferes with his friendly group,
Of locals assembled; for the bull which to shoot.

But, back to the Oysters from the briny soup,
Why do Oyster 'fishermen' do-it?
Some make fifty - seventy thousand on the fly.
For others it's a hobby to just get by.

Never will you mistake an eastern Oyster batch,
For a scissor-bill or a fantail from Apalatch.
Scissor-bill's best for cooking, while for slurpin',
Fantail's fat, juicy and just good lookin'.

No need to mention the Western shell-fish,
Or, th' Chesapeake ones served on a dish.
They're best for stew, where spices and potatoes,
As they're inferior, best kept `em in the shadows.

Oysters are best right from the bay,
But if they must, they can be kept in an icy way,
For weeks before they go 'fresh' to the letter.
Remember, fresher's definitely not better.

Respectable places that offer Oysters will,
Open them on the spot for your stomach to fill.
If served on those fancy china plates or pewter,
Send them back, tastebud's deserve much better.

Likely came from a house for Oyster shuckin',
When put in little plastic tubs. There's no tellin',
They're good for turkey stuffing maybe,
But for slurpin, leave them be.

Ingenious Indians smoked Oysters to preserve her,
And were probably among the first to discover,
The Oyster shell 'pops' open when heated,
It's easier to get at the tasty Oyster therein seated.

Not everyone can break an Oyster open,
By twisting with a knife, or other weapon.
But those who know the tricks of opening em,
Can shuck faster than ten people can eat them.

With a swoop of the left hand,
A prime Oyster is pulled from the pan,
And against a lead block it's firmly backed, .
As the 'opener' is about to begin the attack.

A short, thick bladed knife with rounded point,
Is aimed at a spot not far from the joint.
Positioned just next to the hinge,
Enters a bit and with a twist; the Oyster opens.

Where to put the point experience makes.
No wasted motion or effort it takes.
A swoop across bottom and top is the drill,
Being careful those precious juices, not to spill.

From the still unopened Oyster,
Saving every bit of moisture.

The blade having cut the muscles inside,
Then the top shell can be tossed aside.

It takes about five seconds when all is right!
In juices rich in salt and other gustatory delights,
Shines the Oyster plump and bright,
Like a good egg, yoke rising above the white.

It swims in juice of its own making.
The shell to the mouth is ready for takin',
With a quick noisy slurp, Oyster and sauce,
Disappear. Remaining is a half-shell to be tossed.

Some munch on crackers, which they call a sled,
Other with hot sauce or horseradish they wed.
Or eat hard-boiled eggs, I know not th' reason,
Oysters are all you need when they're in season.

What of the story of oysters in season and out.
It was before refrigeration that this came about.
Much better to keep them cool and safe,
Otherwise they're fresh and there goes the taste.

It's true that the Oyster changes with the season,
And here's my explanation or reason.
Reproduction causes changes in their interior,
But by no means is the Oyster's inferior.

Spat as the free swimming Oysters are known,
Iinterferes, not, in swallowing them down.
Other times they're a bit thin in the inside sauce,
That's when the spat's gone, no great loss.

Red tide's death to fish, that don't have nine lives,
But the Oyster just hunkers down and survives.
The reason for closing Oyster beds to harvestin',
Is to benefit the consumer, not Oyster and kin.

On eating Oysters, everyone get a massive dose,
Of misinformation up close.
Restaurants on doors, windows and menus too,
Warn against Oysters, if its your life you value.

Never mind that the warning is intended,
For some whose pleasures suspended.
Disorders of liver, stomach or blood,
For diabetics and others raw Oysters ain't good..

O.K., they've been told, Oysters not to eat,
But must others be denied this briny treat?
And really, do we have to tell them over and over,
If afflicted, they may not recover.

Why terrorize the public against a safe foodstuff?
If a restaurant failed to post this advertising puff.
And someone gets sick, here come the lawyers.
They'll get there before the pall bearers.

It's a bit like the peanut scare.
One shouldn't eat peanuts in public if they care.
Someone allergic to peanuts might dropp dead,
How would you like that as a price on your head?

For that one or two 'potential' fatalities,
Some three hundred million have responsibilities.
Those allergic to oysters r'on their best behavior.
You're not to be their savior.

John Lawson, wrote in Seventeen O one,
The Oysters as being best as ate alone.
'very good Shell-Fish, and so large, half a dozen,
enow to satisfy an hungry Stomach.' of a denizen.

Further evidence of the delights of Oyster eat'n,
Is in Hudibras by Samuel Butler writin'.

'In Moore's Travels into the inland parts of Africa, page fifty four,
We read: 'This evening, December 18,1730, (And there's more)
I supped upon Oysters which grew upon trees,
Down the river (Gambia) where the water is salt, and near the sea.

The river is bounded with trees called mangroves,
Whose leaves being long and heavy weigh the boughs,
Into the water. To these leaves,

The young Oysters fasten in great quantities.

Where they grow till they are very large; (as they pleas')
And then you cannot separate them from the tree,
But are obliged to cut off the boughs (as you would bunions):
The Oysters hanging on them resemble a rope of onions.'

So Whether you gather your fruit from bar or tree,
Harvesting Oysters is whatever you wish it to be.
Traveling, far an wide or just to Apalachicola
Depends on just what your life goals are.

But if it's eatin', you have in mind,
Then Plump Apalach's you should find.
For you see, raw Oysters are a treat any day,
Just belly up to the bar, enjoy and stay!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ode To Timmie Geithner

Don't say "We", unless you have a toad in your pocket
For you'll soon find something amiss under the blanket
That you so carefully share with the toads that put us where
The financial system is challenged everywhere.

'Twas Dodd and especially Barney Frank
That put the housing industry in the tank.
Marching to a drummer that would have all who quested
A mansion, if they only financing requested.

Freddie and Fanny opened up their arms
To the wissom boyinsh charms
Of Barnie who could not be assailed
For reasons that cannot be told.

And of course the head haunchoee (plural)
Left with a purse full of monetary rewards
Having watched over the burdegeoning mess
They quietly retired without redress.

On second thought, you have chosen the correct form,
"We" is the best to describe the apple's worm(s) .

(In response to an article in the Wall Street Journal (op-ed, July,20 2011))

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Of Welsh Rabbit - It Loveth Tenebrosity

(Anonymous, 1847, Pseudodoxia Epidemica: Of Welsh Rabbits, A Parody)

The common opinion of the Welsh Rabbit
conceits that it is a species of Cuniculus (habit)
indigenous unto Wales; of which Assertion,
if Prescription of time and Numerosity of assertors (promotion)
were a sufficient Demonstration,
we might sit down herein (with a token)
as an orthodoxial Truth (without dissension,)
nor should there need ulterior Disquisition.

Pliny discourseth of it under the Head of De Animalibus WalliÆ.
Seneca describeth it as an exosseous Animal (that wants to be) ,
or one of the invertebrated or boneless kinde
Claudian saith that it delighteth (for man to find)
to burrow underground in Coal Holes
and Cyder Cellars (not unliken to unseeing moles) .
Scaliger affirmeth it to be like to the HyÆna,
incapable of Domitation or taming, (in the minima)
for the cause that he never heard of one (so much)
(as) being domesticated in a Hutch.

Sarenius Sammonicus determineth it
to be like unto the Salamander, (a tasty bit)
moist in the third degre,
and to have a mucous Humidity
above and under the Epidermis or outer skin,
by virtue whereof it endureth the Fire for a time (within) .
Nor are such conceits
held by Humane authors only (as to how it treats) ,
for the holy Fathers of the Church (in doctrines created)
have likewise similarly opinionated.

Austin declareth it to be an unclean Animal;
insomuch that like to the Polecat it is Graveolent, (terminal)
emitting a strong Murine or Micy Effluvium.
Beda averreth that it is Noctiparent(ium) ,
as the Bat or Owl (of the barne) ,
and seldom quitteth its Warrene

until Midnight, for food; for the reason
being that being Coecigneous, or possessing no organs of Vision,
it loveth Tenebrosity.

All which notwithstanding (able) ,
upon strict inquiry, we find the Matter controvertible.
Diodorus, in his Eleventh Book,
affirmeth the Welsh Rabbit (to a cook)
to be a creature of Figment, (and the flagon)
like unto the Sphinx and Snap-Dragon.
Mathiolus, in his Comment on Dioscorides,
treateth it not as an Animal, (as he please)
but as a Lark.
(For truth we must further embark.)

Sextius, a Physitian, sayeth
that having well digested the matter, (he prayeth)
he was compelled to reject it;
(By his natural sanatiary habit)
whilst Salmuth the Commentator of Pancirollus,
averreth that one Podocaterus,
a Cyprian, kept one for Months in a Cage,
without ever having attained (knowledge)
(of) the sight of the remotest
Manifestation of Vitality. (blest)

Now, besides Authority against it, Experience
doth in no way confirm the existence
of the Welsh Rabbit
as an Animant Entity (to-wit) .
But, contrariwise, the principles of Sense and Reason
conspire to asseverate it to be, like unto the Myths of Paganism,
an Inanimate Body, vivificated (to the end)
by the Ignoration and Superstitiosity of Men.

For had they but inquired into the Etymon,
or true meaning of the name of the Entity in question,
they would have experienced that it was originally merely a Synonyme
for a British Dainty, or Cymric Scitamentum;
insomuch as it was primitively appellated,
The Welsh Tid, or Rare-Bit; which by elision becoming Metamorphosed
into Ra'bit, (in the colony)

was, from its Homophony,
vulgarly supposed to have respect to the Cuniculus(m)
rather than to the (Wales) Scitamentum.

Againe, the Doctrine of the Existency
of the Welsh Rabbit as a Vivous Entity
doth in nowise accord with the three definitive
Confirmators and Tests of things dubious (narative)
: to wit, Experiment, Analysis, and Synthesis.
(By noted scientist known to Samuel Butler and his miss)
And first by Experiment For if we send to Wales
for one of the Rabbits vernacular to the Prinicipality,
we shall discriminate on the attainment of it,
no Difformity in its Organism
from that of the Cuniculi vulgar
to other Countryies.

And if we then proceed to discoriate
and exossate the Animal thus attained,
or to deprive it of both its Skin and Bones, and
after to macerate the residuary Muscular Fibre
into a papparious Pulp, we shall experience,
upon diffusing the same on an Offula tosta
or thin slice of toast,
that so far from the concoction
partaking in the least of the delectable Sapor
of the Welsh Scitamentum,
it will in no way titillate the lingual PapillÆ;
but, contrariwise, offer inordinate
Offence to the Gust.

And, secondly, by Analysis.
If, in the stead of sending to Wales,
we betake ourselves to any Hostelrie
or place of Coenatory Resort,
vicine to Covent Garden (whereanent they be celebrious
for the concoction of such like Comestibles,
for the Deipnophagi (or eater of Suppers) ,
and thence provide ourselves with one of the Welsh Rarebits or Scitamenta,
whereof we are treating,
we shall discriminate
upon the Dissolution or Discerption of its Part,

that it consisteth not of any Carnal Substance,
but simply of a Superstratum of some flavous
and adipose Edible, which, to the Sense of Vision,
seemeth like unto the Unguent denominated Basilicon,
or the Emplastrum appellated Diachylon;
whilest to the Sense of Olfaction
it beareth an Odour that hath an inviting
Caseous or Cheesy Fragor,
and fulfilleth all the conditions and PrÆdicaments
of caseous matter or Cheese,
which hath undergone the process of Torrefaction;
whereof, indeed,
if we submit a portion to the Test of Gust,
we shall, from the peculiar Sapor
appertinent thereto, without Dubitation
determine it to consist.

And thirdly and lastly, by Synthesis.

If we provide ourselves with about a Selibra
or half pound of the Cheese,
entitulated Duplex Glocestrius,
or Double Gloucester;
and then go on to cut the
intrinsic caseous Matter into tenuous Segments
or LaminÆ; and, positing such Segments
within the coquinary commodity
distinguished by Culinarians
as the Furnus BataviÆ or Dutch Oven,
submit the same to the Fire,
until by the action of the Caloric
they become mollified unto Semiliquidity:
whereupon, if we diffuse the caseous fluid
on an Offula of Bread,
the Superfices whereof hath been previously torrefied,
and then Season the same with a slight aspersion of the Sinapine,
Piperine, and Saline Condiments, or with Mustard, Pepper, and Salt,
we shall find that the Sapor and Fragor
thereof differ in no wise from the Gust and Odour of the Edible
we had prÆ-attained from the Covent Garden Coenatorium;
and consequentially that the Welsh Rabbit is not,
as the Vulgar Pseudodox conceiteth,
a species of Cuniculus vernacular to Wales,

but as was before predicated, simply a Savoury
and Redolent Scitamentum or Rarebit,
which is much existimated by the Cymri or
Welsh people, who, from time prÆetermemorial,
have been cognized as a Philocaseous
or Cheese-loving Nation.

Sir Thomas Browne (1646; 6th ed.,1672) *Pseudodoxia, Epidemica*. The source
of this information is derived from a page maintained at the University of
Chicago by James Eason, who welcomes comments, criticism, and suggestions.
Anonymous,1847, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: Of Welsh Rabbits, A Parody*

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Old Man Smell

The Nose Knows

In the elevator in the midst of winter
One doesn't expect the smell to linger
But there it is for all to sense
The presence of a chemical essence.

As the young lady entered there
Her aroma was one to share
A bit of nutmeg or other spice
By some standards; sure smelled nice.

Then the man just past his teens
Dressed in sandals and torn-kneed jeans
An earthy smell is what you discovered
Probably from sleeping with another.

An elderly lady entered next
With a string of pearls about her neck.
Gloves covered her hands and a prim hat upon her head,
But most distinguishing was the floral bouquet her entry lead.

Next came one who must sell cars or insurance
For the ever presence old-spice fragrance.
Surely said to one and all
This one's a promoter, without gall.

And the mother carrying her bundle of joy and toil
With the too wet diaper beginning to spoil.
The trace of ammonia in the air
Means there will soon be diaper rash on the bottom there.

What is this the smell of unwashed feet
Seems to come from the professor dressed complete
With rumpled shirt, tweedy coat and English-school tie
Distinguished for sure, I cannot lie.

Standing at attention, commanding the door
Is a soldier, probably home for leave, or more.

Not a hint of essence of perfume
A man's man, in this small square room.

There stands a petite one, most proper
That for appearance is for sure a stopper.
Wearing the latest fashions of those that know,
And her perfume, warmed by her body glow
Gently adds to the fragrance noticed there.
No cologne or "toilet water" used without care.

Wait, is something amiss, could it be
What in olden days a bag called aspidia.
Suspended around the neck of the one who
Desired to be protected from pestilence, one or two.
(And also rumored if garlic, to protect the wearer
Against vampires, werewolves and the evil eye.
Not to mention diseases like the plague or whatever.)

Some complain of air poisoned by the smoker
But their presence is not noticed in this car,
Surely a pipe smoker with his fragrant briar
Would if lighted fill the air,
And a cigar smoker with his stogie alit and aglow
Would let us all be aware and in the know.
Cigarettes once carried into the elevator with care
Protected against brushing in another's hair,
But now all are banished from the environment
A Government given reprieve in any event.

But what is it that I sense as the door slides shut,
Something that has been described as indifferent - but.
A smell that comes from the one in the corner
Rank and distinct it is described by another,
Yet can't be identified by the nose
It's "old-man smell", I suppose.
(And if you will care to venture a guess,
It well could be the "old-lady" just passing gas.)

As the elevator comes to a sudden stop
And all emerge to work or shop,
We're reminded that the "smells" about us
Are there for pleasure, or to disgust,

For the nose knows no bounds on what it senses
As the air passes through the violated sinuses.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Old Shaky

He's famous for miles around,
The only barber in this town.
Gives haircuts to men and boys
Sometimes even to those other-wise.

Has a method that few can match
As he stands by his chair, and hair attacks.
With two pair of clippers he joins the battle
Shearing heads like so many cattle.

Strange he never ask the way
You'd like it done. As if to say,
'I know just how you like it.'
Then he gets about it.

Cutting here and there
Clippers buzzing in the ear.
Then as quick as he started,
With a brush and comb the hair's parted.

A flick of the sheet that serves so well
To protect the customer from the hair that fell.
Trimmings piled high on the flour
Later, to be swept out the door.

Shaky's finished with you
And others are waiting too.
So it's time to pay
And be on your way.

It's only after your timely visit,
You wonder how is it,
That he cuts your's and other's hair
Without a thought or care.

Then as you pass down the street,
And if by chance are to meet,
Another one from his emporium
You discover your style, is on another's cranium.

All are alike in the 'Shaky' style
That stays with you for quite a while,
Until you're ready for another visit
To the tonsorial shearing pit.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Old Umbrella Tail

Old Umbrella Tail
Doesn't wail,
He just claws
At the covers
Getting recognition
For attention
To go outside -
If the doors opened wide.

Then pausing to consider,
Or perhaps to remember
Why it is he's there
For a jaunt in the midnight air.

Holding back for a moment
Until a message's sent
From the sleepy master above -
A gentle, but persistent shove.

Out you go into wet and foul
Perhaps to into garbage prowl,
Regardless, be gone -
For I've a bed to warm.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Omar And The Courtesan

We have Japanese prints hanging on the wall.
They're there to be enjoyed by one and all,
And with furniture placement dear,
It was decided to place the sewing cabinet near.
A safe place for the furniture
And the top was just right for vases, sure.
Until one day Omar decided that this would be a fine place
To give himself a bath, washing all, including his face,
As the vases were in danger of a move unintended
That would send them to disaster from which they couldn't be mended,
They were moved to a safer spot
Away from the pictures and the cabinet top.

This was fine for Omar in his leisure,
As he discovered something else for his pleasure.
There in one particular Japanese print was something seen
In a background with shades of orange and green.
He was sure that it was put there for a purpose
And so sat himself down for a while to see
Whatever was there that interested him (Omar is a he.)
The courtesan with her robe spread just so
Presented an enticing picture, you should know,
And there Omar sat that day and stared
As the lady's modesty prevent her limbs be bared.

Well and good we thought that was the end
Omar's attention span we could not comprehend
For he sat there very patiently
Waiting for perhaps the show of a graceful knee.
Time did pass and finally Omar decided that enough was enough
And after all she would never be in the buff,
So down he hopped and to places only he knows to go
For he must have decided twas the end of the show.

Alas, the next evening just as before,
Omar returned to his spot, not to be ignored.
And watched the picture most carefully
To see if perhaps something else might be shown for free.
Just as before, he sat there and waited

Until the evening was far abated
Then away he went to other places,
As a cat does when he has good graces.

And the next day as to be expected,
There was Omar in his place, he watched and waited.
So we asked a Japanese friend
What was it that Omar's interest seemed to suspend,
And perhaps he had a clue what it could be
That held Omar's interest so devotedly.

"A So! " he exclaimed when he understood.
And explained in such a way as only an Oriental could.
"It's not his reflection, it's the fine lady (perhaps it was a man in woman's
clothes)
That held his interest, as we had supposed.
One must read the words printed, oh so carefully
The Cat had read the script, which states most clearly:

"If one will view the picture and let your mind be free
More will be revealed as there is much to see! ""

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Omar's Syndrome

There's another one, over there
See how he's acting, oh so queer.
Seems confused and not so sure
Can't decide which way to turn or...

Lately there have been a number found
Out on a lark or stumbling round.
Mindless of what they should do
As if they're in a perfect stew.

They've had too much to drink
Is what some people think,
But the reason is more deep set than that,
It is in their DNA that the patterns set.

It's recently been diagnosed by scientist
At a meeting of social specialist.
Omar's Disease is what it's called
Named after the famous one you may recall.

At first he was the only one affected
But lately it's found to be all sex directed.
Appears at an early age as the victim
Just can't seem to get their bearing.

More likely than not, the one diagnosed
Seems to be the wrong star crossed.
Although in the lap of plenty,
Just wanders about willy-ninny.

Both the EPA and CDC
Have issued an alert for such as he.
Leave them alone so they don't become violent
Give them what they want in any event.

No need to call the police or nine-one-one.
By the time they arrive the symptoms gone.
Then they will answer so correct and clear
That it's you that will appear to be queer.

The Disease is caused by a disruption in their brain you see
That results from overloaded circuitry.
A single cell is the cause
Of the distress against nature's laws.

In fact it has been observed by MRI and more
That in that mass of gray matter we all store,
There is a single cell acting peculiarly
(For them there is only one cell with electric activity.

All other cells have died and been replaced
By gobs of fat in their place.)
Just like Omar who was the first to be observed
Acting with no intelligence, or reason in reserve.

Functioning on a single cell
As he goes about his life style; pell-mell.
His testosterone level's been reduced by the surgeon's knife.
But those about us with his disease, have another reason for their strife.

Societies pressures bring on the affliction
That is a non-life threatening condition
Just like Omar the cat
The professional's will tell you, 'That's that.'

So what to do when the disease is found?
Best to show patience all around,
And hope a cure's forth coming
For those affected by miswired neuron plumbing.

Humor them is the best policy
As they are all around you and me.
Meanwhile, they'll keep the learned-ones all a twitter
With research and mindless chatter.

And if it turns out that the disease is catching
Best to avoid going where the germs are hatching,
Stay away from public places
And only venture out in desperate cases.
Cause if to Omar's disease you fall prey
You'll spend the rest of your life in 'society.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Beauty As Seen By Dee

Sing out loud and long
For the praise is put where it does belong
On a subject that I profess
Is one about which I know less.

But if you believe as you surely do
That Beauty is all about You
Then I applaud your vision and taste
For you have made a very poetic case.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Being Frank

Pompous Ass
Giving directions
Without moral compass.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Being Gay

How I wish others would not say;
And misuse the word, gay
For in other times and places
Gay had the meaning of happiness.

Now for some reason unknown
It's to lift the darkness and let light be shown
On others who have passions
With sexual overtones.

So dance to a different drummer if you like
But call it what it is, (is another word a dike?)

No offense is intended for we all must do what we must do
But please leave joy, happiness and gay as the best of old and new.
And be vivacious, lively, sprightly, animated, merry, blithe, and other whims
Such as jocular, jovial, jolly, playful, frolicsome, and sportive (to quote Webster's
synonyms.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Being There*

The senses awaken,
Six in all to be taken.
In the first burst of light
On the screen; dim then bright
A pattern, at first lost in the maze
Escapes as from a hidden cave.
Sound emerges, then drives
The artist's inner muses.

A kaleidoscope of color,
As on silent water,
A dropp of oil spreads to catch
The light and reflect the maker's touch
Shifting and intensifying hues
In their chromatic due.

Touch, man's febrile attempt to control
Tactile, with electric enhancement bold
Arranges the electrons
That command the show.

Smell and taste are interlinked
Emerge and stimulate the audience.
Pheromones masked by man's imperfect attempts
Are there but only if the senses dare.

But what of the sixth sense; thought?
Which depends on involvement or is for naught.
You are entering into the solitary place of the artist
Where in Quixotic quest he searches in the mist.

Hanging perfectly on the wall
Lines parallel and perpendicular, all
Images appear ghost like to be suspended
In a world of computer animation.

From whence comes the illuminating light
Upward; look for the source, in sight
On platforms dark and well placed

So images are formed, embraced.
Then projected for all to see
Interfaces and illusions set free.
The art world of Roberto Bocci.

*On viewing the art of Roberto Bocci, in an invited artist show at Florida Southern College, Lakeland, October 2005.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Considering Lew Webster's Old Age

Seasons of the year
Make one's memory clear
Of events favorable in the past
While sorrow's are but trying ghost.

Welcome the coming season
With "come what may", within reason
For as sure as the sun arrises
We'll have some surprises
And welcome with open arms
Nature, as she displays her many charms.

When the ravages of old age
Extracts a physical and mental wage
Even then we'll toast by the winter fire
And savor the chestnuts of yore.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Criticism Of Poets By Other Poets

Critics of other's poetry need be reminded
That it is not a new sport intended,
But one practiced years before
When the other's ox, they intend to gore.
Such it is when Alexander Barclay took pen in hand
And reminded the reader of an unkind man
Who while named 'Poet Laureate'
Was lacking in what would be termed 'eclat'
And so we revisit Barclay of old
As he denounces M. Skelton as a scold.

'Another thing yet is greatly more damnable,
Of rascolde poetes yet is a shamfull rable,
Which voyde of wisdomes presumeth to indite,
Though they haue scantly the cunning of a snite:
And to what vices that princes moste intende,
Those dare these fooles solemnize and commende.
Then is he decked as Poete laureate,
When stinking Thais made him her graduate.
When Muses rested, she did her season note,
And she with Bacchus her camous did promote:
Such rascolde drames, promoted by Thais,
Bacchus, Licoris, or yet by Testalis,
Or by suche other newe forged Muses nine
Thinke in their mindes for to haue wit diuine.
They laude their verses, they boast, they vaunt and iet,
Though all their cunning be scantly worth a pet.
If they haue smelled the artes triuiall, (instead of trivial, triniiall in original -
probably typesetter's error in placing u upside down.)
They count them Poetes hye and heroicall.
Such is their foly, so foolishly they dote,
Thinking that none can their playne error note:
Yet be they foolishe, auoyde of honestie,
Nothing seasoned with spice of grauitie,
Auoyde of pleasure, auoyde of eloquence,
With many wordes, and fruitlesse of sentence.
Unapt to learne, disdayning to be taught,
Their priuate pleasure in snare hath them so caught:
And worst yet of all, they count them excellent,

Though they be fruitlesse, rashe and improuident.
To such ambages who doth their minde incline,
They count all other as priuate of doctrine,
And that the faultes which be in them alone,
And be common in other men eche one.
Thus bide good poetes oft time rebuke and blame,
Because of other which haue despised name.
And thus for the bad the good be cleane abject (abiect) .
Their art and poeme counted of none effect.
Who wanteth reason good to discern from ill
Doth worthy writers interprete at his will:
So both the laudes of good and not laudable
For lacke of knowledge become vituperable.'

As spoken by Minalcas to Codrus, pp 34/35 in treating the behaviour of rich men against poets. Minalcas had just described the riches of Midas and how ravens think stinking things sweet.

Certayne Egloges by Alexander Barclay, 1570 (the Forth Egloge)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Fugitive Poems

A fugitive poem is like being rescued
By a fireman from a house
When there is no fire
And when there is no house.

Or, being saved when tied
To the railroad tracks
When there are no tracks
And there is no train.

Such it is when someone speaks of a 'fugitive poem.'
It does not exist,
If it has never before been published.
And cannot possibly be 'fugitive poetry.'

What then are fugitive poems?
They seem not to have been widely known
But remain in the minds of those
Who have seen them once; before they're gone.

Nowhere in the literature of the works of poets
Is a description what constitutes 'fugitive' (as I know it.)
Something as explanation of the products of paper and pen
Even those written famous and lesser men.

Look you world and wide
To books in print and other wise,
You'll find not a word as what or when
This title for poetry did begin.

The best that can be determined
In 'Webster's Dictionary of the English Language'
Published in 1840 (with many a revision.)
In which not only for poetry but all composition
Is given the 'fugitive' name and classification.

For you see Noah, most wise
Was great in defining terms, unknown otherwise.
So it is that he recorded for us to understand

What was meant by the term 'fugitive composition'
Of which he wrote, 'such as are short and occasional
And so published that they quickly escape notice,
As in a newspaper.'

And to Noah we now ascribe,
The definition of this Poetry known worldwide,
As 'fugitive' when it appears.
And then quickly disappears.

But what of that 'fugitive poetry' about which we write
It was written by Poe 'in a bleak December' night
When called upon he was
By a wise crow with a cause.

One who was most learned and who
Answered questions due
When the poet upon a midnight dreary,
While he pondered weak and weary.

For the crow (raven preferred by some)
Was none other than the one
Who came to be known as Nevermore.
When he came tapping at Poe's door.

A fugitive poem, I think not
As Poe wrote this poem that is not soon forgot
Although it most certainly did appear
In a Rag published for daily use, the New York Evening Mirror.
(Which itself was soon to disappear.)

What makes the story of its publication most interesting
Was the editor's prefacing
That the poem was to appear
In the 'American Review' sometime near.
He wrote that the poem was the 'most effective single
Example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country...'

Now, I ask, could this be a fugitive,
If it had not yet been printed for the public to see,
It therefore had not been used as bird cage liner,
And destined to be forgotten by the paper's reader.

So even some hundred fifty years or so in history,
It does appear, that editors, compounded the mystery
As they didn't know what constituted
Fugitive Poetry (or composition if it mattered.)

Noah shall have his say
And tell us that 'fugitive' once seen, has had it's day.
But let it be said,
That 'fugitive poetry' once before the public laid
Can be recalled, to be seen again.
The question is, by whom and when?

IF you recall a poem, so much the better
To pay homage to the poet who put to the letter
With paper and pen
From beginning to end.

But a new breed of fugitive has arisen
In this century of man's invention.
Look about and you will see
Writing erased from history.

With the invention of chemical pulping
Paper came cheap but there was lurking
The residue of sulfur in the fibers
That slowly leads to the paper's demise.

And political correctness raises its wrath
Ensuring old writing doesn't deviate from the path.
Thus avoiding hurt feelings of those
Who might be offended, I suppose.

And then there are the old 78's
That spun on turntables gone of late.
Along with their companions 45's and 33's
Have all gone to their place in successive histories..

Some may remember the beta version
Of recordings that VHS did spurn.
Now both are victims of progress
Destined to the trash heap; they pass.

Even newspapers (if that is what they be rightly called)
Are going away, fastest of all.
As stockholder and publishers fear
Readers silently disappear.

Which brings us to the encrypted words
Offered to appease computer nerds.
They disappear into the void of space
(Never mind if issued too much in haste.)

Those electrons residing there
On bits of silicon or other elements, rare.
Are destined to return to their peaceful state
Erasing all that they encompassed; that's their fate.

All will become 'fugitive' compositions
That's a fearful premonition.
As words lose their meaning, as before,
'Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.' '

Please reference the Works of Edgar Allen Poe, page 251(Volume 5, published 1903, P. F. Collier and Son) where in the notes, is described the way in which 'The Raven' published in January 1845, came to the reader's attention. Excerpts occur frequently on the Internet.

As further proof of 'fugitive compositions', the word pokerishness appears in the Mirror's editors screed of 'The Raven'. However, the term is unknown to the current reader.

Buried in the Internet is a composition, a thesis where the author defines pokerishness as spooky or 'spookyness'. I think not, it is more likely that Hawthorne's description of a visitor as pokerishness as being uncompromising or with a stiffness. (The Raven exhibited this when he uttered the word 'nevermore' to all questions.)

The composition on Goggle does not give the author or title and only by contacting the librarian at Florida International University was I able to find the thesis written by James Gray Kane at Florida International University in 2002.

The thesis has much to say about Poe's Raven and the musical nature of the poem. It appears that Kane was a student at Florida International University

who was awarded his Masters, but not much else is known.

This 'fugitive composition' should be revived and revered by Poe fans and the casual reader. Hopefully it will be! It's number in the search for 'pokerishness' is 41 and will probably descend further down the Goggle list as more pages are added to the Internet.

Otherwise, one might reference 'A Musicology for Literary Language' and hope to find Kane's thesis.

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Google Rankings

In days of yore
(Actually two years shy of three score)
Was a family by name of Gore.
Being good citizens of Tennessee
They practiced a 'method' of control, you see.
They had no interest in procreation
Enough was enough, for the nation.

The method was one sanctioned by the Church
That prevented mistakes in a lurch.
But in a moment of fever
Mistakes happen; whatever.
So was born a new son
One destined to remind everyone.

That Algorithms don't work.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Liberated Women

T'is sad, t'is true,
There is really nothing new.
For in Hudibras of old
The use of a bull's pizzle is told*.

Taken by the lady of the hour
Gives her lover, a fair share
Commands him to become her servant
Or much more, for this tyrant.

And for his part, he doth become
A party to the misery of some
That dare not express a whimple
For his case is just that simple.

Let her become the master of the house
And the winner of the daily purse
As she is liberated now
Although working more - some how.

s

Butler's Poetical Works, vol.1, pp162, line 701, Part the second, Canto II.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Life's Simple Pleasures

One need only to experience the event
That is by Nature, the lingering scent
Coming to those near and far
That think only of the tar.

The tar that so much lingers
On the outstretched fingers
Grasping the vehicle that brings
A tranquility to most addicted human beings.

So do like many do
Count the years of pleasure that are few
If you give up all that pleases
To address the plague that never ceases.

Life is full of distressing pains
That one endures it seems
To enjoy those moments of bliss
Which are described as a simple kiss.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Memory

Peanuts in their shells, asleep
For the next harvest so to keep
And in the fall after the tending
Bountiful harvest is intended.

So it is that memories lie uncovered
Until one, suddenly discovered
Reveals the past and perhaps the future
Of each, as with age we mature.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Old Age - A Poem To Ivor Hogg

Once again I stop to think
Is there a reason for all this stink,
And then remember it's the dishes in the sink
That were left when I went to take a wink
And there they lay for too many days
Until the mold grew thick as clay
With green tendrils and red amongst the black
Just because I chose to spend time in the sack.

But when you're seventy six or so
Who's to question what you do?

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Old Age (As Viewed By Hermann Hesse)

Old age is a stage in our lives,
and like all other stages
it has a face of its own,
its own atmosphere and temperature,
its own joys and miseries.

We old white-haired folk,
like all our younger human brothers,
have a part to play
that gives meaning to our lives,
and even someone mortally ill and dying,
who can hardly be reached in his own bed
by a cry from this world,
has his task, has something
important and necessary to accomplish.

Being old is just as beautiful
and holy a task as being young,
learning to die and dying are
just as valuable functions as any other –
assuming that they are carried out
with reverence toward the meaning
and holiness of all life.

A man who hates being very old and gray,
who fears the nearness of death,
is no more worthy a representative
of his stage of life
than a strong young person who hates and tries
to escape his profession and his daily tasks.

To put it briefly,
to fulfill the meaning of age
and to perform its duty
one must be reconciled with old age
and everything it brings with it.
One must say yes to it.
Without this yea,
without submission to what nature demands of us,

the worth and meaning of our days –
whether we are old or young –
are lost and we betray life.

Everyone knows that old age brings with it infirmities
and that at its end stands death.

Year after year one must make sacrifices
and endure renunciations.

One must learn to distrust one's senses and powers.

The road that a short time ago was a short stroll
becomes long and wearisome,
and one day we can no longer walk it.

We have to forgo some of the foods
that all our lives we have so much enjoyed.

Physical joys and pleasures
become rare and must constantly
be paid for at a higher price.

And then all the disabilities and illnesses,
the weakening of the senses,
the flagging of the organs,
the many pains,
so often occurring in the long anxious nights –
all this is not to be denied,
it is bitter reality.

But it would be mean-spirited and sad
simply to resign oneself to this process of decline
and not to see that old age has its good side,
its advantages, its sources of comfort and joy.

When two old people meet each other
they ought not to exchange information
just about their sufferings and annoyances
but also about their more cheerful
and comforting experiences and adventures.
And there are many of them.

In remembering the positive and beautiful side of the life of the aged
and the fact that we ancients have sources of strength,
of patience, of joy that play no role in the life of the young.
I am not competent to discuss the comforts of religion and the Church.
This is the business of the priest.

I can, however, name some of the gifts
that old age bestows on us.
To me the dearest of these gifts is
the treasury of pictures
which after a long life
one carries in one's memory
and to which one turns,
as activity decreases,
with a quite different interest than ever before.

Human figures and faces
that for sixty or seventy years
have no longer existed on earth
go on living within us,
they belong to us,
provide us with company,
look out at us from living eyes.

We see houses, gardens, cities
that have since disappeared
or are wholly changed as they once were,
and distant mountain ranges
and seacoast that we once visited
on journeys decades ago
we find fresh and colorful in our picture book.

Noticing, observing, contemplating
become more and more a habit and exercise,
and imperceptibly the mood and attitude
of the beholder permeate our whole behavior.

We, like the majority of men,
have stormed through our years and decades of living,
driven by wishes, dreams, desires, passions,
impatient, tense, expectant,
highly excited by fulfillment or by disappointment –
and when today we cautiously leaf
through the big picture book of our own lives,
we are surprised at how beautiful and good
it can be to have escaped that chase and pursuit
and to have arrived at the *vita contemplativa*.

Here in the garden of old age
bloom many flowers to whose cultivation
we once barely gave a thought.
Here blooms the flower of patience, a noble blossom.

We become more relaxed, more considerate,
and the fewer our demands for participation
and action become, the greater grows our ability
to contemplate and listen
to the life of nature and of our fellow men,
to let that life stream past us without criticism
and with ever-renewed astonishment at its variety,
sometimes with solicitude and quiet pity,
sometimes with laughter, with sheer joy, with humor.

Recently I was in my garden tending a fire,
which I was feeding with leaves and dried twigs.
Along came an old woman, probably close to eighty,
past the whitethorn hedge;
she stopped and looked at me.

I greeted her and she laughed
and said, 'you're doing quite right with your little fire.
At our age we'd do well to make friends with hell by slow degrees.'
That struck the tone of our conversation,
in which we complained to each other
of all kinds of pains and deprivations
but always in a spirit of merriment.

And at the end of our conversation
we admitted to each other that despite everything
we couldn't really be so frightfully old
and could hardly count as real ancients
so long as the oldest woman
in the village was still alive, at one hundred.

When the very young people,
in the superiority of their strength
and lack of sensitivity,
laugh behind our backs
and find our gait awkward

and straggling white hairs
and scrawny necks comic,
then we remember how we once,
in possession of the same strength
and lack of sensitivity,
also laughed,
and we do not seem to ourselves inferior or defeated,
but rather we rejoice that we have outgrown that stage of life
and have become a shade more shrewd and more patient.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Ray Lucero's Poor Math Skills

Four plus one does not equal five
Of Presidents alive.
This isn't a math quiz but a reality check
Of Ray Lucero who counted four white and one black
And arrived at five so numbered
Forgetting that of those assembled,
Only four were entitled to be called President.

As the president elect has stated many times
We have can have only one President at a time
And his time has yet to come.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Reading Thomas A. Bonnicks Voice In The Wilderness

Like the tree that falls
And no one hears the resounding echos,
Did it actually fall
And was there no sound at all?

Such it is when TAB writes
A poem that cries out for love, not spite
He ask readers to think and share
And yet must wonder, is no one there?

Once upon a mountain bleak and cold
The first days of spring bring forth bold
New plants that will soon be blooming
And a new generation is soon to be.

And the mountain will raise up its head
above the clouds
And say, I've done my best to sweep away the past
and look to the future.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Riding Tigers

When riding a tiger in the hunt
You learn to dismount
Very carefully so that
You don't become the tiger's lunch.

Such it is with Wall Street today
As they continue on their spendthrift way,
With the housing market going flat
The investors are discovering that
Other things are also inflated
And like a tire can be deflated.

Case in point (as tho one is needed)
Is the Blackstone founder; most greedy.
He stands to harvest quite a load of nuts
Regardless of the 'if, ands or buts.'
And like van Winkle rising from his nap
Congress is curious to what is going on about.
Pass a law is their answer to everything
In the absence of thought or reasoning.

Another surprise that is in store
Is the coming pressure on investment house's lore
Till now seemed to be immune from market woes
But alas, along comes Bear Stearns, just one of those.
When there is a money crunch
Not far behind is the lawyer bunch
Who will gather up the fallen nuts from the tree
(Haps, they'll share some of the bounty with you and me?)

So while the smart investor twist and turns
One has to ask if they'll ever learn.

And the tiger grows fat and lazy.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Smoking And Obesity

Some years ago
When one's anxiety was aglow
Would light up a smoke and take puff
Then slowly exhaling, was enough
To release the tensions within
And go on about life's mission of the day,
That's what it was like in yesterday.

But now with the message loud and clear
Smoking will end your life. Is the fear.
And even if you don't appreciate
Your very own fate,
There are other warnings
About the evils of others harming.

So what to do instead of smoking
(And of this, I'm not joking)
Pick up a can of Coke or Pepsi
Or maybe a bit of candy
And stuff your face and ease your quest
For something to reduce anxiety best.

Yet as you see your middle bulge
No association gives your mind a nudge
To see that you have exchanged for free
An early trip to death's door, certainly
With medical problems galore
That's what you have in store.

Some argue that the cost of smoking is so great
That it's something we should eliminate
But ignore the much greater cost that's given
When to additional calories your are driven
Besides oversized clothes and labored breath
Obesity will surely end in an expensive death.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On 'The Calf' A Extemporaneous Poem By Robert Burns

Burns was once challenged to write
A poem on a new object or site
So he began to describe what he in his mind saw
A calf, that grew as he on paper did draw.
It became an image of the one who challenged him
To write a poem of fact or whim.

For Robert (using words with meaning only he knew)
Was at ease in the poem he did pursue,
And he with a twist of wit and a bit of insolence
Described a bullock young and virile
That maybe sought a heifer once in a while.

But as the Stirk (a yearling)
Would grow a noble head of horns amongst other thing (s)
He would become a Bullock strong as a Stot (ox}
With passions to roar and rowte (bellow)
To rank amongst the finest of the Nowte (black cattle)
Testing others religious metal (for the poem was written to Reverend James) .

And in conclusion Burns did write
What would be on the Rev's tombstone bright,
For when he was numbered amongst the dead
And a grassy mound covered his head,

'Here lies a famous Bullock! '

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On The Goodness Of Dry Cured Hams

Pause for a moment and reflect
When was there something more perfect?
This ham moist, but oh so dry
As the perfectionist would decry.

Cry out how good it taste
How just a sliver (more is such a waste)
Placed on the tongue and allowed to evoke
Memories of the hickory smoke.

The sugar sweetness
And the saltiness
Merged into a waltz
Of enduring taste.

The taste buds swell with anticipation
That there would be more of this creation
Releasing a torrent of flow
To caress the ham and to show

How the nutty flavors endure
As the nostrils flare and secure
The aroma of the ham lying there
Giving up its virginal ware.

The exhaled air carries forth the vintage stores
To the senses and cries out 'More, More, More.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On The Public Greed

Some find things before they are lost
Regardless of the owner's cost
Having gained what others have paid for
The value is not worth a penny more.

For as quickly and quietly as they have it possessed
Something more is their every quest
Makes no difference if it is given or stolen
The value is only a moment's token.

And yet, under the sky so blue
Those who labor will earn their due
While others will like the grasshopper of yore
Find an ever depleting store

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On The Shearing Of Cavorting Sheep

Brunel, an ass of note, had a dream
In which he was on a plain
Between the mountains and the sea
Where all lived in great prosperity.

The Beginning –

But something was wrong he thought (remember, he was asleep)
For not all was right with in this 'confusion of sheep'
They seemed to have lost their way
Instead of work all they did was play.

And further yet, as was well known
The 'clashing of rams' had been silenced, then neutered and shorn.
For the 'crook of shepherds' of the flock
Had decided their tails to dock
And with a stroke of the knife
They were altered for life.

Now some would say, all was not so bad
For this 'silence of rams' who had been had
Now could gamble and play
With the 'emasculate of wethers' who'd been altered in the same way.

It was known far and wide
That the 'mortgage of Owners' of the flock had lied
When he had promised nirvana to all
Who answered the 'stench of shepherd's' call.
But the 'cod of wethers' had embarked on a journey
That would not end in their siring progeny.

While the altered ones frolicked in gay abandon
Others were expected to be less wanton
And do the work that must be done
In shouldering burdens in the mid-day sun.

Apparent, it had become
That others were more equal than some
With special privileges of food and drink

As well as things only imagined; wink, wink.

The 'wander of ewes' thought that this was the best of life
When they no longer were to be a 'dominant of ram's' 'ridicule of wife(s) '
And they likewise could dilly-dally as they chose
With not a moment to lose.

The Discovery -

Alas, came shearing time
And all the 'leap of sheep' were herded into line
To lose their coat to the 'debt of Owner's' benefit
And their disposition, was as he saw fit.

The 'green of grass' to which they had become accustomed
Withered and turned brown where they were pastured.
Too little 'cascade of water' was there to drink
And 'a cask of wine', never offered lest you think
That the 'watch of shepherds' would share
His bounty with those in his care.

Now as night and dark descended
The 'worry of sheep' wondered what was intended
For the 'bark of dog' that had been their constant companion
Was thought to be consorting with the 'hunger of wolves' with abandon.

Huddled there as 'follow of sheep' do so
They really had no place to go
And crowded atop one-another
Without concern for their 'kin of brother(s) .'

The Rewards -

And in the form of a 'ray of sun'
Which rose as a new 'winter of days' begun
It was clear to all that trusting to 'an inflation of government(s) '
Had been the cause of this tragic event.

In assuming that the 'lust of Man (men) ' would provide
For protection of their very 'cover of hide(s) '
They made a foolish choice
In listening to the 'lure of siren's' voice

And gave up the 'passion of freedom' they had known
For promises of a 'better of life.' Oh, woe begone.

The 'hunger of wolves' (and 'pack of dogs') did slay
Many a 'panic of sheep' come 'dark of night' before 'break of day'
And the 'carron of crows' and 'soar of turkey buzzards'
Did feast of the remains of the 'tender of shepherd's' wards.

The Consequence -

And the 'cur of dogs' grew fat and lazy feeding on the unsuspecting 'ramble of lambs'

Who seemed not to learn from the tragedy of their 'nurse of dams'
While the 'watch of shepherds' continued to do what 'laze of shepherds' do
That is to work only when their 'threat of master' was in view.

And the 'virile of Man' as he was called
Was not so wise to be appalled
In seeing the declining state
Which portended their well-earned fate.

The 'commute of Man' lived apart from them all
Enjoying life and leisure in 'laze of Summer' and in 'leaves of Fall.'
Until that fateful day
When 'wrath of Mother Nature' had her say.

There no longer was an abundance to share
The 'idyllic of pastures' and 'bounds of fences' fell into disrepair
And there was no peace or tranquility
For the 'ravenousness of wolves' now attacked with impunity.

The 'license of dogs' learned that their brethren the 'stalk of wolves'
Had only their interest in the 'togetherness of droves'
Being driven to slaughter,
And to the 'cowardice of dogs' gave no quarter.

However, in time the 'wild of wolves' faced 'taste of famine'
As the 'graze of sheep' herd was depleted in time
No longer provided their grisly repast
And as had been, in times past.

The 'laze of shepherds' sleeping under the 'cover of tree(s) '

Learned that their charges were not to be
Substituting fine 'spring of lamb' and 'tough of mutton' stew
With hard rock soup, was what they had to do.

The Reckoning –

And on the day of reckoning
When the 'vault of banker's' call came a beaconing
The 'deficit of Man' found that he was short
Of 'equity of stock' to report.
And was forced to give up
His golden cup
And the luxurious place in the sun
For for i a was now in total ruin.

The Awakening –

Such it was that Brunellus did dream
Of such a dreadful thing
And was glad when he awoke
And prayed that it had been a joke
To so portray the influence
That removed any semblance
Of dignity or free will
In exchange for a promise to cure every social ill.

s

Brunel or Brunellus the ass found much to be concerned about in his escaping from his master, seeking a longer tail, have a try at school, sampling the different religious orders, thinking of establishing one of his own, returning to his owner and in parting (from the book: 'grant this be a warning to all men, ... not the sounds of words but what they mean...') Nigel Longcamp or Nigellus Wierker if you prefer, wrote *Speculum stultorum* (Mirror of Fools) in the twelfth-century. Being a priest, he indulged himself in pointing out the bountiful excesses of the Church and its followers in the delightful satire which touches on many of man's weaknesses. The Latin work has been translated by Graydon W. Regenos and more recently by J. H. Mozley. Read either, but I prefer the Regenos version which reflects more the twist, turns and puns of Wierker, aka Longcamp.

James Lipton and his 'An Exaltation of Larks' and the predecessor, 'The Book of St. Albans' is referenced to those who might like to indulge in the 'act' of venery.

Be aware that there are six families: Characteristics (lie of politicians) , Appearance (slick of politicians) , Habitat (den of wolves) , Comment (catch of fish) , Onomatopoeia (associated sounds, i.e. gaggle of geese) , and Error (shoal instead of school of fish) . Indulge!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On The Trail

He stood before us
Idly kicking the sandspurs from his foot
Arms and legs covered with dust
Riinglets circled his neck.

Toenails embedded with a layer of dirt
Broken and cracked
Fingernails worn short
Outlined in black.

Yet it was his smile
That captured us
A gap where teeth once grew
And the crinkling of the eyes.

We knew this person
Who stood before us
As one of our own
One - trust, we must.

A man grow old in years
But a child at heart
One who had seen the world
Grow hostile and mean.

He ask not from us a single thing
But offered instead
Cold water from the spring
In his battered metal cup.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

On Words

For some its rap with its cadence
Others prefer a slow waltz in a flowing sense
But words in joy regardless of the delivery
Are meant to tease and stimulate the hearer.

While spoken in anger words cannot be recovered
For once cast out they are discovered
To be the end, not the beginning
Of expression that is now destroying.

And yet words are the music of creation
When proper choice are man's salvation
Showing the inner spirit and the soul
Of those both young and old.

Merry Christmas!
(Think about it.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Orlando Belo Puts The Squeeze On The Lemon

A lemon's sour,
Not bitter as you exclaim
So the fruit makes you pucker
And for that there is no shame.

When it get a little well chosen aid
From sugar and ice in a glass
It becomes a treat for time spent in the shade
And improving that, I'm afraid, the fruits aren't up to the task.

As for the avocado that's so rich and creamy
It's enhanced by the addition of the lemon
Which makes it a friend not an enemy
So best to enjoy, what we've come to depend on.

Changing the lemon would be a shame.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Oskar Hansen's Bridge Over Troubled Waters

Progressive historians are those
Who forget what they choose
And remember to embellish
What they wish.

They say, 'justice is blind'
But this is just another way to put out of mind
The events that went before
So they select what to ignore?

Mary Jo Kopechne's fame as accident victim
Of Ted Kennedy grows dim
But the events on the 'Bridge over troubled waters'
Will be remembered by otherwise doubters.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ozone

Clothes hanging on the line,
Drying in the sunshine.
A gentle breeze stirs the air.
Clouds drifting by without a care.

Then from a distant cloud,
A flash of light and thunder roll'd
The breeze stills and waits
As Dust-devils begin their dance.

Then drops of rain, large and wet
A flash of light, nearer yet.
Searing sound that tears the air
And an explosive thunder roar.

A vision of daVinci art
Two fingers near but still apart
Electrons dancing in the gap
Returning air; a thunder clap.

The downpour last but a moment
Soaking the clothes; dripping wet.
After the passing storm's rage,
The sun'll retakes center stage.

And in the freshened air
A sharp smell lingers there
Oxygen cleaved in the sky-borne stew
Rearranged as electrons flew.

Oxygen in an energy charged reaction
Yields oxides of nitrogen
Those and the remaining ozone tickles the nose
As it reacts with fragile tissues (and your clothes)
To sanitize dust and matter in a flash
As these unstable compounds don't last.
And are reduced to a steady state
Which as Nature intended is their fate.

The summer storm is past.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pantomime – Red Skelton And His Cat□

The old man comes cautiously down
The stairs to the kitchen.
He takes the last step
That isn't there -
A bone shuddering stop.

Pausing, he searches the dark room
For the dangling light cord,
And moves toward
The center of the room -
Carefully.

It's unfortunate as the cat
Is discovered sitting in the middle of the floor.
As the old man steps on its tail,
It howls it great pain -
Startling the old man.

Finally, after groping the empty air,
He finds the cord.
Pulling it; he is
Blinded by the sudden light -
Causing him to cover his eyes.

Looking about the room.
He sees, in the corner,
The offended cat.
He ask for forgiveness -
Stoops to pet and caress.

He stands, with apparent pain,
Moves to the kitchen counter,
Sees a number of cans,
That must be cat food -
And selects one.

He shows the can to the cat;
Returns to the counter and
Taking a hand-cranked opener

He begins -
To open it with great difficulty. □

Finally opened,
He places the lid on the counter,
Raises the can to his nose,
Smiles appreciately, bends and -
Offers the cat a smell.

Bracing his back he stands.
Takes a spoon,
From the counter,
And bends over the cat's dish. -
Placing a portion in the dish.

Pushing the cat away,
He adds a second helping.
Then, thinking he has
added too much, -
He spoons a bit back into the can.

Standing again with difficulty,
He straightens his back,
And once more sniffs the can.
Raises the spoon -
And takes a small bite.

Liking what he finds,
He turns his back to the cat,
And eats
All that remains -
Then wipes his mouth on his sleeve.

Guiltily he looks back at the cat,
Seeing there is liquid in the can,
He once again bends low
Over the cat and its dish -
And pours the remaining liquid into the cat's dish.

He stands,
Places a hand to his aching back,
Wipes his mouth on his sleeve,

Places the spoon and can on the counter -
And steps to the center of the room.

He pulls the light cord;
The room is dark.
From the darkness
You hear, -
'Good night and God Bless.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pashion For Advertision

In the small village of no name
T'was a smith of local fame.
His family grew large but not his trade
Feeding so many called for decision t' be made.

By chance, did pass one summer morn
A most famous knight-errant, and an idea was born.
Could I use his fame to announce my smithin'?
By placing on his equipm't a sign of my forgin.

All who see the great man would know that my tin
Will never rust and seldom bend.
His shining armour will be an advertisement
O' my skills that `r Heaven sent.

Don Quixote was this knight-errant
And on his back were placed ads, most apparent.
So great was the response to these announcements
That other's demanded equal placem't.

Sancho Panza managed the in and out
Of the flow of monies that came about.
'Tis said his belly grew large and round
'Twas where his money belt's found.

The knight now had armour most clean and bright
And truth be told, avoided contest that damage it, might.
As the famous knight traveled wide, pleasures to seek
Did Rozinante's back grow fat and sleek

Surely on the mighty stallion's feet could be placed,
some of that famous, Warren's blacking paste.
His hooves now shown liken'd to his master's pate
Crowds did gather to and in time did wait
For to see this noble steed's passing,
Th' gleam of perfection there was no matching.

[Of course Sir Warren was of English pride
And came some two hundred years afterwide.

But others did invent for the hooves, some greasy paint
For to cover the cracks, crevices most errant.]

The famous Don sought adventures 'gainst enemies of youth and old,
But it's recorded, he avoided them all, becoming most vain and bold.
For with a famous stud, shining armor and proper dress
He gained entry to real castles, we'll be first to confess.

Some would suppose that Spaniards their beards do not shave,
T'is wrong, for you see, it's trimming that makes the wiskers behave.
Now the most famous of all in history must be forseen
It's Packwood's strop and cream that keeps the razor keen.

The Knight of Woeful Countenance alas, lacked this treasure
Which explains th' name based on his twisted face of displeasure.
For Packwood's genius would not be found
Until another pair of centuries came around.

Enough of the Don and his squire
We must finish this story before you tire.
For this we return to where we begin
To the anvil and products made of tin

The name of this wise smith, most bold?
T'was Sir Suburu, we are told.
Who centuries before the advent
Of media; advertising did invent.

At the time, postings announced plays and such
But the products of a forge, tin cups and much
More, awaited th' Suburu family's imagination
To Create in the public, desires, wants and pashion.

Time did fly and generations too
Until in the Twenty First Century arose a new,
Deb Suburu whose designs were most impressive
She hammered the anvils in tunes most suggestive.

The modern product of this famous smith –
Wagons that have four wheels to be driven with.
A smooth transition from stop to go
No horse, or ass or cow need be to tow.

Th' wagon's `r quite stable,
The seats staying flat like unto a table.
For there one could easily play snook'r with no excuse
If only there were a place for rack and cues

As we near the end of this little ditty
Obvious it is that there's no one to pity.
For Don Quixote found his place in history recorded
Sancho Panza ne'r his island found, yet was rewarded.

And Mighty Rozinante found pleasur.
There's more than grass in his harem's pastur.
Packwood and Warren awaited discovery
Centuries later of their marketing cajolery.

While our tin smiths of the town of no name
Have earned a place in history and fame.
Knighted Deb Suburu for her famous couches
Even now is known for engineering advances.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Patience Lost, On Not So Great Men*

Damn You, Damn You, Damn You,
Who gave you the right to do
What you have done to my creations
With you stupid obliterations.

Can't you understand what theater is
It's nothing that is hit or miss,
But must entertain if it is to win
The glory of approbations of man.

I wrote these pieces; some simple
Others complex and ample,
They were from my scratchy pen
The efforts to the audience win.

Some too clever by far
And others that ascended like a star.
But every one was intended
To amuse (and by the way, my purse extended)

And yet, the path for academic scribes to hell
Is paved with good intentions; know you well,
There are those who had evil intentions
To destroy one of the great writers of English compositions.

Nay I say to you, if the likes of dogs you breed
Are allowed to at the table feed,
(They'll grow fat on the copro-)
Provided by you of an academic bent
Who with self-serving intent
Further themselves amongst your peers
By repeating that which is pleasant to their ears.
No regard of whether is fact or fiction,
As long as it continues in the well known direction.
Besmirching the character of the man
Who almost single hand(ed)
Brought back to the public's attention
The greatest writer of the British nation.

So I say to you, "Damn you, Damn you, Damn you!
Give up the attack on John Payne Collier and give him his due! "
by W. Shagspere of modern times

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pay No Attention To The Man Behind The Curtain

He stands there before us
Reading from a carefully scripted syllabus
As he proclaims for all to hear;
"While we have hope, no need to fear.

Listen my children as I say
Tomorrow will be a better day
All that is necessary is that you do as I wish
Regardless of how it may seem, to some, evilish.

For I and I alone know
How to make the sorrows go
Just trust me and abide
By me and my workers, eventide."

We've heard him say this time and time again
A broken record without end
The pot from which he dishes
Grows cold with his never ending promises.

Who is this one who stands before the lectern
One who has not experienced poverty or governing.
Knowing only how to go on promising to those who want to play,
Taking from those whose fortunes shrink each day.

The curtain is transparent now
As the magic has escaped into the thin blue air
And reveals for all to see
That it's the tider of misery.

s

Pcorrect

hey boss its me again

this skirt you hired
to help me adapt
to the world of pc
is worse than mehitabel

She - gez did you see that
this computer
does capitalization for me
even if i don't want it too

just because she went
to smith college or
some other east coast school
she thinks that she knows
how to cure all the world s ills
and she can t even get the arky
she hooked up with to stay pure
know what i mean question mark

anyway here i was
making some notes for you
for your next political speech
and i said something about that
nubian fellow
with the big scimitar
and this skirt says
you can t say that
it's not pc
so i sez to her
we re not talking
about computers are we
and she says
you been pounding
your head too much
and from there
the conversation
just went down hill

her name s hill by the way

so i sez what's wrong with nubian
he s black isn t he
and she says
you can t call him
black and i sez
i m not calling him anything
i m referring to the country
in africa he s from
and she says makes no difference
he s not black any more
he s colored
and i sez
black and white ain t colors
and she got sort of upset
and threatened
to get out the raid

she uses pesticides
since she gave up
using fly swatters
although she claims
she s for the environment
and all
but that's another story

anyway she said you
don t understand
we are all equal
and i sez
you mean cockroaches
have the same rights as you
and she says
we re all god s children
and then so help me god
she used her thumb
to crush this little ant
that was crawling
across the desk
talk about two faced

anyway you hired her
and i have got to learn
about this pc
which i thought
meant personal computer
but she says
politically correct is
what pc means

an she says
my writing isn t going to fly
so i thought maybe pigs fly
and flies fly but for sure
words don t fly off my page

so what s she so uptight about
could it be that she s got her
shorts hiked up too tight
and she s got something in mind
for the future like maybe getting
another job that is as soon as she
can figure out how to get rid
of that blob she s stuck with

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Peace River

The Peace River creeps along
From its start in the sand it calls home
That sometimes takes up more below
Than it adds to the flow.

The groove cut deep in ages past
Into the lime-rock's cast
Remains a testament to the way
That Nature refreshes, then takes away.

Sometimes a wild river that knows no bounds
Later just a few scattered ponds
Harboring life which one day
Will again spread when the River has its say.

Once a road for paddlewheel boats
That carried goods up-river to folks
When loaded with coal and necessities
From mines and far away cities.

Then down river the boats did ply
Phosphate ore that man might buy
As an ingredient to benefit all,
Something to makes crops grow tall.

But now the Peace River's flow
Has been claimed by those below
Who've built along Gulf's shore,
And thirst for water, even more.

There are solutions, few
When Winter's drought begins anew
When fish and man alike must find
A place of another kind.

Yet the river lies quiet and waits
For the Summer rains that will create
Again the flood as in times past
When the water moves deep and fast.

The Peace River originates in an area known as the 'Green Swamp, ' a vast mostly unpopulated area of central Florida lying between Tampa and Orlando. The sandy soil (if soil it can be considered to be) accepts summer rainfall while giving up the excess to runoff, and uses the remainder to recharge the shallow limestone/sand aquifer. In the dry season of the year, the aquifer gives up a portion of its burden through springs and seeps to rivers flowing East (Orlando) , West (Tampa) , North (Jacksonville) and South (Charlotte bay) . Southwest Water Management District (Called Swift Mud) will try to 'harness' the Peace river and control its flow. But there's much about the river that they seem not to know (or want to learn) .

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Phonics And Text Messaging*

* Read out loud to make meaning clear. The 'translation' follows.

fon nks n txt msgs

st nd g n lyn at pos t of ce
mn n frnt o i wz tx n
hz thmbs mvn lgn n fst
on tny scrn

u cd c msg go ng
he typd w/ot paz e
nvr lkng t c wht he hd cnt
s he al con cn tra shun wz int nt
on kr at ng sub stnc frm th ar

I knd t rd wht he hd typd
ltrs n scrn hib t d tht
bt i wz mprsd by th wy of hs cmmd
typn wrds tht anot r cd und r std

frm of fnks tht r n tught n skol
1 tht hs on set of rls
sm tms vls r smpl y drpd
whl n othr cs s wrds r chpd

thrz no dcn ry r th sr s thts so bold
as t prvd clu t th wrds nw r old
tht sprds xros t bk lit scrn
n succsn o a thot thts cn

bt hr s a clu
wht u c is bt a few
o th mny wrds n frazs tht r cst
on th tny scrn bt, dn t lst

fr as son as th msgs snt
th fn wl b off tht s th intnt
so tht tl th othr 1
th 1 who gt th rng on hs r hr fn

th msg is n ethr spc n al
tl som 1 ansrs th cal

of a sudn th post ofce ln
b gan t mv n th sndr hd t fnd
n othr plc at n othr tme
whn he cd onc a gn snd
msg to hs frnd

s

Phonics and text messaging

Standing in line at the post office
The man in front of me was text messaging
his thumbs moving lightening fast
and on the tiny screen
You could see the message going
He typed without a pause
Never looking to see what he had sent
As he all concentration, was intent
On creating substance from the air

I couldn't read what he had typed
The letters and screen prohibited that
But was impressed by the way of his command
Typing words that another could understand
A form of phonics that isn't taught in school
One that has it's own set of rules
Sometimes vowels are simply dropped
While in other cases, words are chopped

There's no dictionary or thesauri that's so bold
As to provide a clue to the words, new or old
That spread across the backlit screen
In succession of a thought that seen
But here's a clue,
What you see is but a few

Of the many words and phrases that are cast
On the tiny screen but, don't last
For as soon as the messages sent
The phone will be off, that's the intent
So that until the other one,
The one who got the ring on his (or her) phone
The message is in ether, space and all
Until someone answers the call.

Of a sudden the post office line
Began to move, and the sender had to find
Another place at another time
When he could once again send
A message to his friend.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Picking Squash

The kids picked the golden yellow squash
Just the right size to fit in the top of the glass fruit jar
A measure dictated by the buyer that would cut and freeze them
Just the right size for the Birdseye label

But half way through the morning's work
Picking the squash amongst the prickly leaves
One looked up and saw another
Too big for the jar which he picked anyway

Then gave it a heave in the direction of his sister
Hitting her full force in the back as she bent
'Well if that's what he wants, ' she declared
And sent one his way with a masterful stroke

The battle was on with others joining in
And squash flew from rows to the end
Picking big ones was just so much the better
For when they struck home you could hear the splatter.

As quickly as it started, it came to an end
For there were no more squash remaining to send
So they picked up their baskets and headed to the shed
For it was time to weight what was left there instead.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pickle For The Knowing Ones

THE LOWLY COMMA OR A PICKLE FOR THE KNOWING ONES
(or why use a comma?)

Lord Timothy Dexter anticipated the Danes,
By more than a century, in taking pains,
To ensure that those who read and write,
Could find a way if they might.

To inser punctuation, as they please,
Into the written word without a wheeze.
His solution was just and wisely decided,
A stroke of wisdom with a bit of humor provided.

Reacting to complaints that his book did lack,
The elements that educator and hack,
Insisted were essential if one was to understand,
The Writer's intent to a man.

He added a page at the end,
Not intended to offend,
But filled with commas, periods and such,
To be added to text by the reader's touch.

A review of Lord Dexter's 'Pickle' serves us well,
*****/
When in a stroke of genius with many a stroke,
'a pickle for the knowing ones' he wrote.

He reminds us that while proper language is no joke,
Rules of grammarians and pedants are a heavy yoke.
And with Government regulation,
There will be no sure-fire salvation.

, , , , ,? ? ? ! ! ! !

The above was inspired by an editorial in the St. Petersburg Times: April 6,2002.
And should have been laid to rest, except that with the coming of the Christmas
(2003) season, a book was published to address problems related to punctuation
and such. As with all new ideas (and it seems that punctuation is a new found

idea for some; others just ignore it) even the title of the book raised the ire of some.

Ms. Lynn Truss' book, *Eats, Shoots, Leaves* has a shaggy dog tale from which it got its name. Much has been written on the Internet on the origin and spin-offs from the story which involves a panda (kola bear, various marsupials, mammals (including Australians)) and a prostitute.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pied-Piper

The Mad Hatter of Sacramento

There's a Town that deserves no pity,
Not far from famous Davis city;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
Embraced by two rivers, deep and wide.
But some three hundred days ago,
Townfolk (and others) were made to suffer so
And here begins my little ditty,
A tale of woe, - such a pity.

Energy!

It cost them all so very dearly,
Turned out their lights so they saw not clearly,
Stopped businesses in their tracks,
And put all the ac's out of wack(s) ,
Split open the kegs of finest wine,
And many a grape withered on the vine,
And even spoiled the Angel's baseball bats,
Robbing fans of their beer and brats.

To the Cap'tal they came a-flocking,
with cries for energy regulation - shocking
'To think we buy kilowatts at prices that can't be determined
From out-of-state companies at rates that set us squirming
What's best way to rid us of our energy problem!
Setting prices that puts State budget on a limb
Gov, you hope, because you're slick and wise,
To find a scapegoat in disguise? '

The people called out to the legislative body
Tis clear, " cried they, `` our Gov's a noddy;
They said to those assembled,
Legislators who quaked and trembled,
'Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing! "

At this the Gov and the Corporation

Quaked under the pall of mis-Regulation.
In wee hours they sat in council,
Trying to resolve the price for kilowatts to sell
At length the Gov broke wind er, silence,
'I wish my election were not a year hence!
It's not easy to one rack one's brain -
For sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain
Oh for a way out of this energy trap! "

Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
'`'Bless us, " cried the Gov, ``'what's that? "
(There appeared one most wise
'Twas as an energy broker in disguise.)
With this one the Gov did dicker,
Seeking relief from this sticky wicker.
Nor brighter was the Gov's eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at fund raisers he grew gregarious
Taking green for placement in hidden trust.
'Only a jingle of coins in m' pocket, '
Said the stranger whose eyes lay deep in their socket(s) .

'`'Come in! " - the Gov cried. And with a swager,
In did come the strangest figure!
Dressed in jeans and th' hat on his head
A ten gallon at least it has been said.
Well healed boots and belt with silver buckle,
The stranger, a image of Hollywood's truckle.
He himself was tall, straight and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin.
And, light loose hair, full; not thin.
No tuft of hair on cheek nor beard on chin,
Lips upon which a smile was carefully placed;
Gave no clue to the emotions behind this face.

And everybody could enough admire
This tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: ``'It's as if my great-grandsire,
Rising-up from the Gold-fields near,
Had walked this way with no fear! "

The Stranger advanced to the council-table:
And, ``Please your honours, " said he, ``I'm able,
By means of a secret charm that I alone possess to energize
All you require and let you get on with your lives
Living here `neath the California sun,
Your compressors have need to run,
The kilowatts you can freely draw,
Your problems are but a minor flaw,
While I chiefly use my charm
On businesses that do other people harm,
For you, I'll make this one time exception
And find kilowatts to solve your lack of anticipation.
(And here they noticed in the pocket
Of his well cut Western jacket
A bit of red and yellow string,
To which was affixed a pipe like thing;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, mostly hidden from display
In the jacket pocket in a most becoming way.
``Yet, " said he, ``poor player as I am,
In Washington I played with the saxophone ham,
Last June, before his huge swarm of wooden idols,
I felt his pain and played for the great movie monguls.
O' what a showing for the democrats:
We turned out the republicans like caterwalling cats
And as for what your brain bewilders,
The end to your energy jitters.'

Said he, 'I will provide your State with kilowatts
Peak price may be a thousand for the lot? "
'One? fifty thousand! " - was the exclamation
Of the astonished Gov and Convention.

Into the market the Stranger stept,
As he knew where the magic slept.
Raising his quiet pipe the while,
Twisting his lips into a little smile,
To blow the pipe, his brow he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;

And while with soothing notes, the pipe did utter,
It caused Bankers and Wall Street to shudder.

Then there came a mighty rumbling;
As out of their houses the public came tumbling.
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives -
Praised the Stranger for changing their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing.

A record of what had transpired
Was saved by one, whose house wern't wired
This one, - sweated out the summer heat
Without benefit of refrigerated meat(s) .
In a manuscript that he cherished
Was recorded how the State's budget perished.
To wit; `` At the first shrill pipe's tune,
I heard that one had only to 'wish on the moon.'
Added was the roar of energy efficient cars
And windmills churning out energy like blazing stars.
And grapes, and vegetables,
From Chile, they were imported for the table.
Half-done pickles from the crocks covered with boards,
Given to those hungry, drunken hoards.□
And a leaving ajar the medicine cupboard,
For free health care and drugs galore.
And drawing from other's petroleum reserves, so dear,
Provided to refineries, but not too near.
'Twas like freely uncorking train-oil-flasks,
Wasting the remaining fat of whales past.
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks and cheeses
You can have it all if it pleases!
And it seemed as if the Gov's voice
called out, 'Oh citizens, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast pantry!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon! '

All of us agreed that it was just
That someone else should pay for us.
But there I found that to be free
Meant we must cooperate, you and me.
But those who had followed the Gov's calling
Found themselves into the American River falling.
Into the mighty waters did they go
To meet their maker. It is so.
Was time to pay-up the trust
That the Gov said was most unjust!

You should have heard the 'other' people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
Now those who the free lunch had partaken
From the State, found they were sadly mistaken!
'Go, " cried the Gray One, 'Raise to the maxus,
Destroy nest eggs with higher property taxes.
Ignore all sane and patriotic leaders,
It's time to march with the environmental pleaders.
Don't leave in our State, not a trace or clue
Of what caused the energy crisis! " or they'll sue! '
(For it is true that with the Energy Problem behind them,
With loss of jobs the business outlook was most dim.)

When suddenly, did appear the face
Of the Stranger having done his magic in the market-place,
With a, ``Davis, if you please; My thousand dollar/kilowatt fee
It's a modest sum considering how we put the state out of its misery! "

'A thousand bucks per kilowatt! ' The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Legislature, Deregulation Board and others too.
For their Conference dinners had made rare havoc
Diminishing the supply of imported Claret
(And Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, as well as Hock ;)
And half that money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with the Rhine wine, Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering stranger
Their sanity surely be in danger!

'Beside, " quoth the Grey One with a knowing wink,
Our business was done at the economy's brink;
We've seen with our own eyes, the prices sink,

And what's dead can't come to life, regardless of stink..
However, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something to drink,
And a bit of money for your poke;
But as for the thousand, of which you spoke
As you very well know, was made in jest.
Now be a good fellow and not a pest.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand dollars! Come, here take fifty! "

The Stranger's face fell, and he cried,
'No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
Your contract must be paid!
Or I'll bring a thousand lawyers - from de Sade.
My employees are in their prime,
And must be paid by dinner-time
Wall Street has rewarded their very own
With stock in shares over-blown
Pay up you debts, and quickly so
For it's on to bigger business I must go.
I deal with Federal ones on high,
It's business as usual; do or die.
I give no bargain or mercy to any,
I'll not reduce the charge, NO not a penny!
But if you put me in a passion
I'll play my pipe - in another fashion."

'Away with you! ' cried the Gov, (growing in face red)
'Don't expect from me a crust of bread!
D'ye think I'll pay when there's no written contract on book.
I resent being worse treated than a Crook.
Insulted by a lazy stranger
With idle pipe in hand. There's no danger!
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you surely burst! "

Once more the stranger stepped before Wall Street,
And offered notes about profits sweet.
Paper hid the musician's cunning
Behind a multitude of businesses he'd been running.

And from his lips the wind did come again

Through the long pipe of smooth straight cane;

There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of distressed crowds pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, Telephones a'clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,

Out came the retirees running.
All the aged men and women,
With scalie cheeks, glassed eyes and thinning hair,
On slow moving limbs that worked, not so fair,
Tripping and stumbling, they ran after
The woeful player, portending a major disaster!

The Gov was stuck dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, The Grey One did cry
'Wait, ' to the crowd as it came charging nye,
That rebellious crowd at the Piper's back.
Suddenly had the Administration on rack,
And hearts within their wretched bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned along Freeport Street
To where the Sacramento river rolled its waters
Right in the way of these sons and daughters!

The Piper turned away from the River's flow,
To strike a message to the Government in the know.
And to the Capital his steps addressed,
And after him the old-ones pressed;
Great was the anger in every breast.

'I'll be tarred and feathered, what a mess.'
thought the Gov in his distress,
'Perhaps, the Piper will let the piping drop,
And we shall see the voters stop! "

When, lo, as they reached the building-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the old-ones followed,
And when all were in to the very last,

The door in the building-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not run the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say, -
'It's dull in our town since the democrats left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And there dogs gamboled with our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself on Capitol hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of those promises, more! "

Alas, alas, for California state and National Fed!
There came into many a voter's head,
A reasoning which says that heaven's gate
Opens to those rich, at an easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
But poor tax payers will never win.

The Governor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
And bring the lost ones that followed behind him.

But when he saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and voters were gone for ever,

They passed legislation that lawyers must
If their agreements are be held in trust,
After the day of the month and year,
Should be placed the recording signature.

Sadly, those words did not on paper appear,
And so what happened here
Is written for to memory fix
The place of the Grey Davis's last trick,
They called it, the rise and fall
Of that evil, slippery, twisting pol
Putting an end to where any one working
Was unsure of any future booking.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth an event so solemn;
But opposite the place of the capital building
They wrote this story on marble column,
And on the great hillside painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their fortunes were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.

And the muse must not omit to pen
Comming near to this poems end,
That in Washington there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
Their outlandish ways and dress
And dealing with the press
To their having passed through the gate
Out of an electoral process of a distant state.

Forgetting that long time ago in a mighty band
Rose up protestors throughout the land,
Threw out the tea and burned the presses
Cast off the shackles of the oppressives
Rose up to create a Freedom land
Based on faith and legal dealings with fellow man.

So, Slick Willy, Gray Davis or whom ever,
It's not wise to be overly clever.
Let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men - especially pipers!

And, whether they pipe us free from rats, mice or energy,
Let us keep our promise, or it's to the hanging tree!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pigs - A Fable In Modern Times

Once was a man who believed the world was round,
Another said, 'That's quite profound.'
'But it's flat as we all know
And you'll sail off the edge in a windy blow.'

So he that sailed the ocean blue
Discovered; it's round; it's true.
He ate roast beef and much more
As trading came from every shore.

But the one who followed the flat earth policy
Found his stockings empty and was filled with jealousy.
Another said, 'Divide your spoils for that's what they are
Taken from others without a care.'

'Why share that which I have worked so hard to earn?
You my brothers, have much to learn.
Perhaps when your belly's empty you'll see
Without Free Trade, there is no cornucopia.'

Or, if you prefer:

This little piggy went to market,
this little piggy stayed home,
this little piggy had roast beef,
this little piggy had none, and
this little piggy cried, 'wee, wee, wee all the way home.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pity (In Response To A Poem By Dana Gioia, Pity The Beautiful)

Save your pity for others,
Those who follow and drool
Over these few blessed ones
Who strut about and make like a fool.

The news, magazines, tv and more
Offer a glimpse for those who adore
The life style of the famous who
Are all glitz and glamour; not much more.

Those who receive each mouth watering offering
Revel in beds of lust that has no satisfying
Placing them on pedestals to be viewed
With no understanding of the person they are dietyfying.

Be they athletes, movie stars, or politicians
They are only for the moment
And will soon fall from grace
As others take their place.

While those who with mouth agape
Seek another as time grows cold
Never understanding, Pavlov's response,
Hero worship, continues for young and old.

Pity, Pity, Pity...

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Poems

Poems are like your children
No matter how ugly,
You still love them.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Poems Are Like Kittens

They start out small
And fuzzy
Something playful
Then they grow
Always needing a Mother's love
Hungry for attention.

Until
They first use their claws
Scratching and digging
Sometimes forgetting to cover up the poop
Become vocal
And demanding
Wanting to be let out.

No longer are they playful
They become a bore
Sleep a lot
Eating more
Independent and proud.

And finally
Having gone as far as they can
Fall out of favor
Abandoned for another
Lost in the wilderness.

But in my mind,
They are always playful
A joy to behold
Perhaps a scolding is needed
But some will always remain
Among my favorite(s) .

For Poems are indeed, like Kittens.

s

Poet Laureate

On reading Candy Elvis' critique of a laureate's book

Candy Elvis
(Not the Presley one)
Writes poems of time and bliss
She sees no need to atone.

Taking an author by the ears
And addressing her concern
Which well might bring to the eyes, some tears
For she teaches, what all should learn.

For she is not forgiving
When she discovers that there is no sense
To spend time in reading
A poem, or book for which coins have been misspent.

So cast out the author
And go to sleep
The writing is perhaps for another
But surely not bo-peep.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Poet Laureates

No caps here for the intent
Is to diminish the title; time well spent,
For the laureates that abound
Are for the most part hide-bound.

Which is to say that they think
That with their title, (heaven sent?)
They have the authority to impose
On readers (who should hold their nose.)

The drivel they produce
Is fit only for paper under the bird-in-cage's roost.
And with self righteous stance they appear
To express opinions, that one need not hear.
Such it is with the poet laureates, so bold
From Pennsylvania and Nebraska, (both rather old)
That they critique the writings of others
Without a glance backward, over their shoulders.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Poet Sighted In South Dakota

It's news to those
Who follow poems (and prose)
About fellows of the skin
Who some would hope to be akin.

But there's another Poet lurking there
To which few would offer a chair
To sit on and indite
A line in joy, anger or spite.

For this Poet who has a residence
In several corn growing states; a certain presence
Where the Poet is known to produce
Bountiful gas by a fermentation route.

There are those who believe
That he has no intent to deceive
But goes about his way
Laying waste each and every day.

For he consumes more that he produces
Which is the toll when nature seduces
 man to find an alternate way
To sate their hunger every day.

So it is, when Government sponsors art
Or activities for which they should have no part,
And supports those that recognize
That as long as they wear a proper disguise
Of providing a public service then,
All will be forgiven in the end.

Poet's ethanol from grain is such an issue
Because it consumes more energy than it produces!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Poets - Morbid And Morose

With pen in hand
They take to paper
Expressing feelings to fellow man
That at first seem most proper.

But as is quickly seen
They have an insight
That is downright mean
For they believe they have been given a slight.

So they spill out their guts
In a cascade of words
That expresses their innermost regrets
And poison outflow fills their voids.

Morbid and Morose
Is their message
As are those
That dwell on life's carnage.

(After reading 'New and Selected Poems' by Philip Appleman)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Pondering

reading the obits in the journal
i see life's not eternal
but goes on for all of those
(i don't know) but suppose
they nev'r knew which path to choose
so they went about their days
meanderin' along mindless ways
till others find that th' candle light
went quietly in th' night
like the cat who nev'r
had reason to ponder
if there's life beyond
out yonder

(as told to archy by mehitabel)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Poor Misbegotten Soul

Poor Misbegotten Soul

See him standing there
Balanced on two legs
Others, dangling in the air.

He cannot run
Nor can he jump.
Nature imposed on such as he
That right, he'll never be.

Then, as only one who
Has never tasted mother's milk
Or the luxury of green's free
No berries, flower tips never
Tasty herbs, garlic, onions
And astringent flavors free.

The poor blighted, hapless one
Comes to see us most every day
And stands silent, while we play
Perhaps wishing that he could be free
Of the sad shape that Nature imposed on he.

But, I, a calf must go and seek
My mother who has of kindness, offers the taste of milk.

(He only stands and waits, as viewed by the angus calf.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Possum At The Door

There was a possum at the door
Feasting on mole-crickets by the score.
In truth, he could barely see
The bounty provided there for he (or she.)

With the light shown through the window clear
He sought out those both far and near.
To aid him, on went the outdoor light.
He showed not a sense of fright.

Continuing as before,
Even coming up to look through the glass-paned door.
Then returned to his quest
Of putting more crickets to their deaths.

Fidget (the cat) , that is her name
Looked out and he outside, looked in, the same
Deciding that there was no danger, or a threat
Both went their way, without regret.

And the possum is there no more.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Preying (Praying) Mantis

The say that the praying mantis female
Eats the male after mating.
Don't know if it's a true tale
But perhaps one should be cautious of the inviting(?)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Preying Mantis

The say that the praying mantis female
Eats the male after mating.
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But perhaps one should be cautious of the inviting(?)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Procrustes's Alive

Procrustes knew well what he thought and did
Made a bed, "one size fits all" it's said.
Little did he know that his philosophy would be embraced
By those with such a liberal grace.

Chop off guest's legs to make them fit was his plan.
Or, if too short, stretch them - good for any woman or man.
Perhaps too violent for today's modern thinkers
But, no problem applying the concept as Society tinkers.

Physical restrictions were once imposed
When it came to shoes that cramped the toes.
With a shoe-horn, one size could be made to fit
Although - some may overflow a bit.

Or if too big, no problem at all
Stuff the end with paper is the call.
Too wide or narrow, no problem here
A minor adjustment to all that's dear.

Uncomfortable. That's not our problem they say,
Break it in was the message of the day.
Apply this logic to all that's dear
They're only trying to help, it is clear.

Pick a topic to see if old Procrustes was right
Knowing most will conform; not fight.
Educators joined in the fray
Modifying students every day.

Government's a Procrustes' convert
Applying his teachings till they hurt.
Like him they have the same call.
Bedfellows and Robbers, all.

sjm

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Puffer Fish

If you find
A conch shell,
Discarded by the host
And others as well.
It can be used
To make music
If you know
The tricks.

Just place your lips
Near the edge just so,
And gently,
Gently blow.
The sound
That you create
Maybe isn't
All that great,
But if you practice
Long and hard
Perhaps(?) you'll get
Your just reward.

But what if you are
In the briny sea below
And still have
A desire to blow
Other fish have tried
And failed
Attempting to play
A musical scale.

Silence is all that
From the shell emerges
When attempting pleasant sounds
Or even dirges.
And yet, there is an exception
Of which I write
Which is about a fish
That played to other's delight.

There in the
watery deep
Was a skinny fish
known as "Bo Peep";
Who blew on
the shell to call
Those to her;
Large and small.

When she puffed up
and blew away
Bubbles went right and left
and every way
And if you are
a fan of music
You'd have to say,
"Now that's a slick-trick."

The fish thought she was
Louie, reborn
Tooting just the way
he played the horn
And when she finished
her special piece
She bowed and smiled
at the other fish.

Her fame
widely grew
As it was known
how sweet she blew.
Playing all day
and through the night
She loved the sounds
that brought delight.

Alas, she discovered
much too late
That blowing a horn
was a special fate.
For when she looked

in the mirror clear
There was evidence
of displacement there.
Her lips and all that she
so proudly displayed,
Her cheeks and body
had expanded as she played.

With time others
learned her musical ways
And were miss-shapened
to their dismay
But what happened to her?
I cannot say,
As throughout the gulf waters,
she did play.
And her fate
is as yet unknown
Some saying she's
to better places gone.
Yet all that remains
to prove the tale
Is the body of the fish -
head to tail.

So if you happen to find
at the seaside a puffer fish
You will know that perhaps when she died,
she had her final wish.
To play an Armstrong,
jazzy tune
(But when puffed up,
died all too soon.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Queen Mum

Past this way she came and went,
Her bodily remains to crypt were sent,
But the memory of her and the earth she trod.
Remains with us by grace of God.

Cervantes wrote of his Don's success,
As did Butler with his Hudibras.
Another hundred years or so,
Did Dodgson, his Alice, to us bestow.

But none could write whimsy of life and style,
To equal this Royal Queen, who did beguile.
She touched the lives of all Earth's men,
As she lived past, present and future to the end.

A glass of wine to quench her thirst
Put her in mood to reign at first.
With passing time, she gave up the crown
But not her lust for Dubonnet. It was renown.

She called down to the pair
Of 'other' queens that caused her despair,
'I know not, and care not what you do
But this 'Old' queen needs her bit of brew.'

Other luxuries were torn away
From the Royal Family in their passing day.
But the Queen retained her heart felt passion
For proper protocol, in her most regal, royal fashion.

Some say that it was Hers, the draft overdrawn
By four million; of course, guaranteed by th' crown.
'Twas necessary they say for her to maintain the style
Of a living, Royal Queen who stayed on for quite a while

Progress in the eyes of this Madam of five houses,
Was to sleep in bedding with no fear of louses (or lice if you prefer) .
Embracing that which was new and all
She saw no reason for withdrawal.

A Train just for her pleasure seemed necessary
To transport this living - National Treasure.
And means for conveyance in the air?
Certainly why not a helicopter here and there.

Her response to how she lived and played
Reminds us that others have in this house, stayed.
She said when questioned: 'That chopper has changed my life
As conclusively as that of Anne Boleyn.' Henry's 'other' wife.

She may be gone but don't despair
Her life touched all with heart-felt care.
Her memory lives, as she did to
Filled to the brim, her glass slipper shoe!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Queen Nancy's Idiot Savant

Now comes forth the prince
Of words
Spreading thoughts not so clear
As he ejaculates to the gathered herds.

Speaking rapidly in his rush
To impress.
Nothing from the Queen
Doth he suppress,
This one of such humble birth
That seeks to obscure truth.

Kissing this Barney stone
Will gain him rights to atone
For sins in his not so distant past.
Known to all who dare not
The first stone cast.

So Frank is he
In his delivery
That all are awed
And confused
Because there is nothing clear
From words uttered here.

Standing proudly before his audience
He struts in his new found prominence
Chest thrown out and shoulders back
There is nothing here a-lack.

Following the course
Which has been laid
He has no remorse
For lack of reason to which he's wed.

And just when a nugget is tossed
From his shaded upper lip
His mind seems to be engrossed
As he continues hooting from the hip.

His mentor, Queen Nancy
Stands and lets him spew
As she asserts breezily
That there are few
Who can know or understand
What great words come
From this peculiar specimen.
A man, representing
The privileged few
That cannot be criticized
For transgressions
After all they are in remission(?)

But like all Idiot Savants of the past
This bit of Barney cannot last.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rabbit Scribbler

Sitting at the table, quite proper,
Wearing his baseball cap as a topper,
The Rabbit Scribbler began his journal
Of mundane events and all.

Yesterday it seems
Had to put on the 4 spf sunscreen
The medical profession had decreed
That those white such as he,
Should have protection from the rays
To prevent cancer in his later days.

That was before he had ventured out
Seeking sustenance round about,
And before he had been snared
By the barbwire fence just there.
There in his coat so sleek
A rend was seen to clearly peak,
Torn when he broke away,
That just wasn't going to be his day.

Well, through the fence he had finally passed
Into the farmer's carrot patch
Looking for one long and plump and tasty too,
Nothing but the best would surely do.
So while he had been selecting,
What should happen but the dogs come sneaking,
Almost caught him in the end,
His own, not the stories, to suspend.

Chased around and round until it was clear
That they expected to extinguish his life so dear,
What to do was the question asked,
Lest his time on earth was past.

No hollow trees were found,
But there waiting, was a hole in the ground.
Entered without delay,
These dogs had no intent to play.

Moving deep underneath the garden
Into another one's, secret haven.
Came upon a gopher turtle, face-to-face
Who had made this hiding place.

Not to worry he was told,
Others are here, both meek and bold.
A snake so long and thin,
Wonder when he did come in?
Then a skunk was there to share this place,
Best to look him in the face
(not the other end
from which the scent did send.)

But while there in the turtles lair,
It was most foul, that bit of air,
So the skunk decided it was time to go
And emerged just when the dogs were digging so.
Gave them a good spray of his perfume
Most unpleasant, we presume.
This sent the dogs running round,
Rubbing their noses on the ground.
Their game was over as it had begun
As they decided to pursue some other one.

So at least the Scribbler was free
To go about his business happily.
Crawled out of that hole in the earth
And hopped away for all he's worth.
Returned to his haven just as the sun was drooping
Over the horizon the moon was peaking,
Recorded the events of the day
So that the artist with her pen could come and play.

His day was ended, but her's just started
To cartoon the events he's reported.
How it will turn out heaven knows
But for sure, the scribbler shows
That into trouble you can get
When venturing out in the dewy wet,
Best to stay home in bed
And let others do the work instead.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rain

A chill's in the air
Cows at break of dawn
Go their own way, not wanting to share
Bits of green amongst the brown.

Clouds form on the horizon
A "Blue Norther" is on its way
The line builds higher and higher
And moves swiftly until all is dark in light of day.

Dust devils dance with no end
Leaves and bits of dry grass are airborne
Even the sand moves under the relentless wind
Plants bow and sway, bending to the distant god.

Suddenly, all is quiet in this airy hell
And freshness is in the air
Almost a chemical cleansing of the sense of smell
A pungent, sharpness with traces of nitrates there.

In the dry dust, a splatter
A single, then more droplets
The earth, a moonscape of tiny ridges and valleys here and there.
Drops slowly merge into flowing rivulets.

A distant roar as the rain now begins
Driving all before in a cascade of stinging drops
At first coating the dirt with an oil-like sheen
Before soaking in and filling the voids.

The dry season is ended!
Life will spring forth as in the beginning
From the brown earth as nature intended
Rain is here!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rape On The High Seas

The deck runs red with blood
Of those that moments before were free
Now lying there, struggling in the grasp
Of one who will take by force
Life's treasure and last breath.

Plunging deep into the belly
Of the victim, the gory knife
Rips the flesh and slices through
The virginal tissue, never penetrated before
All in lust for this body's store.

Fingers dig deep within
As the victim struggles in pain
Grasping the ovary's sac
Tearing it away in a wanton attack
To yield the golden treasure within.

Done, the body, not yet dead
Is tossed overboard to waiting prey
And the bloody stew, sloshes back and fro
While the treasured golden roe
Into the waiting ice bucket go.

This is a crime against both female and male alike
But the male's white roe in its sac has no value, so
There is no reason to save this thumb sized virginal roe
And fish and sac go over board unwanted
To the depths below.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rattlesnake!

See the bulbous body
Slither through the rocks
On the desert floor.

This is one of God's creatures to be avoided.
He has just devoured the hopes
Of a peaceful life for a number of small innocents.
He seeks a place in the sun
To warm his cold body
And perhaps give those about him
The illusion of peace and tranquility.

Is he dangerous you might ask?

Stretched to his full length
And with his beady eyes closed
You can approach as close as you like
And some have actually touched his scaly skin.

'Only a mother could love, '
Is the term that comes to mind.
But wait, this throwback to Adam and Eve's days
In this garden is truly evil personified.
He tempts by offering something
That he does not have,
And only after the bargain is struck
Do those who have been participants
In his schemes find only he wins.

Society long ago learned
That he has no friends,
Only providers.
He will as gladly bite the hand
That feeds him as any other.
Doing so with no remorse,
For you see this creature
Of the sands, has no mind.
He reacts by instinct;
Strike and kill,

That is his only way of life.
It has served him well.

In past times he has mesmerized those about him,
Causing them to believe that he is their 'friend.'
Sadly, they discover that this rattlesnake
Has no other interest than his own.

The venom that he carries in his mouth
Is a quick acting poison that kills.
It matters not whether it be
Some small innocent creature,
Or one of his own.

He must be fed and song birds,
Insects, mice, rabbits and
Even those of his own species,
He readily devours.

How else do you explain his ability to survive?
He is a killer without remorse.

'But how do you handle such a demon? ' you ask.
A sage once replied when asked,
'How to dismount from a tiger's back'.
His reply, 'Very carefully.'
And that is how you must deal
With this loathsome serpent.

There is a religious element,
The snake handlers,
Who see him as a tool of their religion.
Foolishly, they believe
That his actions are to their benefit.
It is only when their own children
Are destroyed as a consequence
Of his striking out, that they may
Come to sense the pain and agony
Of others that are his victims.

No, appeasement is not a solution.
He must be isolated.

Killing him is not an answer either,
As another will just as likely
Emerge from his den
And assume the same antisocial ways.

Enclose him in glass walls
So that he can be displayed,
And carefully note
With words, pictures and sounds
The evil that he has caused.
In this way,
Our children will come to appreciate
The devil's handiwork.

They must not fear the snake,
He in fact is harmless
Once drained of his venom.
But protect the innocents
From his marauding,
For within a short time
His sacks will be refilled with poison
And he will strike again,
If not contained.

The rattlesnake's name?

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Regulate, Regulate, Regulate

Regulate, Regulate, Regulate
Let no action pass free the gate.

First comes election of graft ladened pols
Influenced by tears and woes of well meaning trolls.
They pass legislation based on whims not fact,
They know Laws can be changed if found to be abstract.

Next come the Agencies whose interest is in survival
Theirs - not yours, Theirs is a well oiled Cabal.
To interpret what the third hand of government has provided
Requires a host of lawyers whose bottoms from sitting are vastly wide-d.

They draw up regulations, not as the people or legislature intended,
And throw in enough gobbledegook to make sure all are offended.
Of course more funding is ensured
So the public will be properly enured.

Handbooks and pamphlets require paper without end,
The printing industry is gratified to see such a trend.
With punctuation all in the proper form
Final rules are in place to reestablish the 'norm'.

That long ago standard to which all agree
Seems to have been lost when cutting the last tree.
Was it global warming or cooling that was the cause
For controlling man actions by passing these laws?

Forgot in the chase was the reason supreme
It's population explosion that has come on the scene.
All must be fed, housed and pampered without end
So away with the freedoms, we'll all live in a pen.

Time in prison is appropriate for those in violation
And a nice fine will squelch any misguided elation.
Rule of law has a nice sound provided
the Law is one that is properly write-d.

-

Reply To Jack Russell's Lament

Lies are misshapened truths
Intended to convert others to their view.
The prize be to destroy facts
As they shed false teardrops, anew.
Their lament is that there be war
Tho other's blood be shed, no less.
Forgotten are lessons learned before.
Expecting the foe to yield to kindness
From a thoughtful heart.
How good they feel to be above it all
Intent on forging peace from the start
Regardless of the loss, as humanity faces the bitter fall.

History repeats for those who forget
That submission does not hope beget.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Response To Surendra Kushwaha's Going Against The Grain

Take that one errant grain
Put it on the board
With a sharp knife
Cut it into thin slices
Line them up side by side
Then carefully,
Eat them every one.

That's all there is for supper.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Response To Tia Maria's Yesterday

Rearview mirrors show
What has gone before
But not what's in store.

And looking about
Only reveals what is,
Which flows quickly past.

The future is
As the future
Will be.

Life is for living!

s

(Her poem: Yesterday

We cannot change yesterday,
but it's over now & we have today.
A new beginning, a time to share.
A life worth living, filled with care.

There is no guarantee of tomorrow,
or if it will bring more pain & sorrow.
But in this moment we can smile,
And be lost in time for just a while.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rhymes Have I (From Robert Wright, Songs)

(He)

Rhymes fine rhymes
Rhymes fine rhymes have I
Rhymes fine rhymes sweet rhymes have I

Rhymes fine rhymes sweet rhymes have I
Sly rhymes wry rhymes meet rhymes have I
To a world too prone to be prosaic
I bring my own panacea
An iota of iambic
And a tittle of trochaic
Added to a small amount of onomatopoeia
Leis that sing with rhymes have I
Tupleis that ring like chimes have I
Happy rhymes like money makes you sunny
Spicy rhymes like virtue can hurt you
Learned rhymes the camel's a mammel
And others very various on matters multifarious
Like beard sheared burnoose loose stairs prayers musk kiosk
Minerat and parapet and many more that I'll beget in time
Rhymes have I rhymes have I I have rhymes

(She)

Rhymes fine rhymes true rhymes has he
Rhymes bright rhymes new rhymes has he
Thoughtful rhymes

(He)

Like Learning leads to earning

(She)

Truthful rhymes

(He)

Like drinking stops your thinking

(She)

Helpful rhymes

(He)

Like sinning is thinning

(Both)

And others miscellaneous on matters more extraneous

(like crutch) clutch (look) hook (vagrant) fragrant (dervish) curvish (hone)

won (caravan) afghanistan (dromedary) very hairy

(Very hairy?) Very Sorry!

Songs of sense and pertinence in reverence to all events and times

Rhymes have I (rhymes have I)

Rhymes has she

Rhymes has he

(Both)

Rhymes have we Rhymes have we we have rhymes

ROBERT WRIGHT SONGS, This one from Kismet.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Riddle - What Has Two Heads And Twelve Feet?

Love bug, love bug - flying free
Mating in pairs - more soon to be
Love bug, love bug - destiny calls
On the windscreen life ends for all!

Love bug, love bug - what a mess
Cleaning them off is a real test
Love bug, love bug - another season awaits
Again, the splatter attest to desire to mate.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rip The Wayward Rabbit

Along side the road not far from town
Is a modest home known all around.
Here lives a solitary one whose name is Robert Ingram Perr
RIP or by some the Scribbler.

For you see as you pass along
Rhyming signs appear, then are gone.
Here today and gone tomorrow
Is what they say in sorrow.

For the Scribbler having only
so much paper on which to write
Has to from time to time
remove those that seem not just right.

Like the Burma Shave of years gone by
The Scribbler's pen is never dry.
A twist of wisdom,
and sometimes a bit of sorrow
Fills the sign post with
wisdom for tomorrow.

As Robert Ingram Perr writes his bit of rhyme
He does so to pass the long winter day's time.
In his burrow, for that is what it is
He ruminates on what never was and what never is.

From time to time he rips the paper from the place
And thrusts it into the maw of the shredder's face.
Unsatisfied with what he has created
His lust for writing is never sated.

But this story is more than just about rhymes along the road
It's about a rabbit whose story needs be told.
For you see RIP as he is called
Was a rabbit that was once treed.

He escaped by wit and a bit of amazing action
That forbid the dogs from gaining traction.

On that spring day as he ventured forth
In search of greens for the hearth,
He chanced upon a magic four leaf clover
Which came to mean so much more.

Picked up that bit of greenery
Intent on adding it to his lady's finery.
Thought he as he progressed,
She will surely be impressed.

But just as he turned to go
Over the hill came the hunter, dogs in tow.
When the scent of Rabbit was gained
No holding back could long be sustained.

Charging down upon RIP
Seemed that this might be his last.
So into a hollow tree did he go
Struggling to avoid the dogs, just so.

As they surrounded this hiding place,
It seemed that with death, he must face.
But chancing to view that clover in his hand
He saw a way out; he had a plan.

Now everyone knows that a rabbit's tail is but a fluff
Of white hair made into a bundle called a tuft.
So RIP carefully removed hair
From here and there,
Until he had what looked like a tail, it's called
As he rolled into a ball.

Of course it would be light and frail
Having no substance as would a rabbit's tail.
Now he crawled up the hollow in the tree
Until he was far above the hunter and his dogs, three.

Made a whistle to attract their attention
Then released the fluff in air suspension.
As it was carried through the air,
The hunter looked on in despair,
As his dogs went quite wild with anger

Knowing not which way to pursue this hairy stranger.

Away they went in hot pursuit
And RIP down the tree did shoot,
Homeward bound was he in a flash
And safely inside, closed the hasp.

But wait, you ask; 'About the four leaf clover,
Tell us what happened before the tale's over.'
Well, you see as is often true
A writer such as RIP will deceive you.
It was used to gain your attention
And keep your interest in suspension.

He did as most rabbits do,
Ate the clover and others too.
For his intended, do not fear
She and others are living near,
And many little rabbits share the name
Of RIP, who gathers fame,
For erecting road signs near and far
So that those who travel by truck or car,
Can be amused in passing by.
Fiction is stranger than truth; I cannot lie.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Robbie Burns' Cow

The seven acre farm permitted only just so
Many things to be or go
One was the keeping of a cow
Nor more could be allow'd□

For grass and forage was always short
No need of more cultivated acres to abort
So the cow kept for milk and butter too
Was kept in the small pen like zoo
(where chickens, a pig and rats and mice lived askew)

One spring day Willie's wife said to him
"Bess needs to visit a friend
Where she can start anew
The birthing process that is long past overdue."

Was the pleasure for Robbie to go
Calling, with the cow in tow
To Master Robert's barn where his bull was kept
For a servicing delayed until just yet.

Down the path Robbie led ol' Bess
Barefoot, yet in his Sunday best
For by chance he might see
The daughter of the owner, that she be.

Arriving at the manor about ten
He called to see who might be within
And when the pretty one appeared
His heart skipped a beat, you could almost hear.

"Got my cow to see your bull, the best around"
"Take her to the barn, I'll be right down"
"I'll put her in the pen,
So's you can put the bull in."

In a while, the cow and bull were mated
And the two on the fence sat, and awaited
For another servicing to take place

For if the cow wasn't settled, would be a disgrace.

As they sat and watched the action in the pen
Was Robbie who broke the silence, just then;
"I sure would like to do that" he said with a smile.

"Go ahead, she's your cow anyhow."

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rosalind Franklin

Rosalind Franklin. Ever heard of her?
The un-famous chemist that caused quite a stir.
'Twas the discovery of DNA's helical structure
That Watson and Crick stole from her.

Her ideas and observations were plundered. It's clear
By W & C whose research was in arrear.
They needed a critical boost and publicity
To enshrine their names for posterity.

Now, Rosalind Franklin lies alone
Peacefully, under a granite stone.
Keeping her silence to this day
As praise and fortune twist another way.

Unfortunately, Rosalind Franklin died of cancer at 37, and was denied the Nobel Prize that she should have been given. (The prize is never awarded posthumous)

.

Rosalind Franklin (1920 - 1958)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Rozinante

Of spavined bones
Remembering master's errant windmill quest
Seeks refuge alone.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Saba

Who, Who, Who?

Who set the stage
For pulling the plug
On Lehman Brothers,
Denying them bailout?

Who knew that Badoff
Was on the wire
And betting big
That the Gov wouldn't let them fail?

Who set the trap
That caught the rat
That stole the cheese
That wasn't there at all?

The Saba of them all! ! !

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sand Hill Cranes

In the nest, an egg, anew.
(Sometimes, but seldom two.)
Then when it is time for life's beginning
The male or female begins the nesting.

Amist the albumin, lying on the yoke,
A spot grows by Nature's stroke,
To reoccupy space, each hour and day
Within the shell, which is the way.

Turn the egg, the keeper must
(Regardless, male or female.)
Place the beak `neath the egg and thrust
To turn it over and around
To assure that growth is sound.
Dividing cells; 2,4,16,256 etc., till
A shapeless mass grows at will.

Then ten days into the incubating period.

Organs of sight appear
Followed by other shapes, unclear.
Twenty days and the eggs contents are distinct.
Clearly, a bird succinct.
Faster grows the structures of bone and tissue mass
At twenty eight days, all is complete at last.

The hatchling need only find a way to escape the shell.
Perhaps a peck, or maybe the contents over dwell.
Regardless cracks appear
And soon the new one is clear,
Wet and with albumin film covered,
Wobbly, the chick is discovered.
A neck suspends a too large head
And spindles for legs, instead.
Wings with feathers nestled close to the body
As if glued there with mucilage shoddy.
They will soon flex and spread wide
To aid in drying that which was once was inside.

Cautious is the male or female, parent dear,
That stands akim and looks with fear.
Will this one survive and join the flock
Or waste away as others have to their shock..

The little one survives on the yoke that remains within
To sustain life for a few days more as the new life begins.
Unlike other birds, the chick must forage,
For nourishment of this fragile bird of new-hatched age.

Some day it will stand three feet high
From scaly feet to red topped head thrust up into the sky.
But first and foremost for the parents
Is protection from creatures that feast
Upon the weak and vulnerable in the nest,
Racoons, bobcats, and gulls; just to name a few
Are in search of such as this one, new.

Having learned to walk and feed
The fledgling will follow its parent's lead.
First walking, then hopping about in the clear
Spreading wings in the open air.
Suggesting that flight is what is intended
But for the present that must be suspended.

Almost as tall as mom and pop
The baby is kept near and taught
Parent's wise to ways of man
Keep this one clear of danger, if they can.

Then one day the three are gone.

Did they fall prey to man or beast
Or begin their pilgrimage quest?
Perhaps to Nebraska or further north
The call of instinct comes forth.

Maybe the three will return some day
A family bonded together in a bird-like way.
The young will see that he or she
Is no different from other cranes, and is set free.

Leaving protection from the parents, two
Seeking bonding to another of like kind too
Then the miracle of incubation and hatching
(Not birth as described by unknowing man's communicating)
A new egg or perhaps two
Will be placed in a nest, anew.

So it is with Sand Hill Cranes
And their sister birds the Whooping Cranes.
Adaptable species that in a world
Of change, takes what Nature affords.

Epilogue -

Standing in the early morn,
A solitary crane morns
Over the body of its mate
That has met with a sudden act of fate.
If you listen closely you will hear
The distinct clicking, soft and clear,
As he calls out to this one.
But there is no answer, death has come.
And now the life partner of his
Has passed from an uncertain world, this
Approaching closely and with concern
Looks for a time, before he turns
After saying goodbye in his way
To this one who has shared his festive day(s) .

Then turning to face the wind,
Into the air, he ascends,
Circling and he alone,
Like she, is gone.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sarah Through The Looking Glass

Oh Sarah,
Dear innocent Sarah,
Is this trial
Your last hurrah?

The Crime - you're accused
Of - making the guest list
Without being properly invited.
In politics, that's a game of hit or miss.

The queen of Hearts,
Katie, smiled as she stabbed you
Without fanfare or ado,
Surely that would feed the animals in the zoo.

Then Larry O., quick to the point
Said, 'Off with her head,
For it'll only take a moment.'
And silence this right leaning biped.

Oh, Sarah, Dear Sweet Sarah
Rachel screamed, 'Make it quick,
For the sight of blood
Makes me sick.'

Mercurial Keith wants it known,
He's the first to dethrone you
Keeping you from public view,
For the nightly air he claims to own.

Play life's game of politics
In the end, you'll always lose,
You'll live to regret it,
Whatever path you choose.

But Sarah,
Dear photogenic Sarah
Every time a burial they give
You pop-up outside the grave.

Could it be the tea party
Isn't for Carol's friends
Who must return to join the pages
And to seek other ends.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sarasota Florida – A Place In The Sun

Every year they come,
Like clockwork.
Old and weathered,
Weary and cantankerous,
Following the sun
That is setting on their lives.

They seek the glitzy,
The every green, the warmth,
Casting off their cares
For their time in the sun.

Maybe, just maybe
Some will see the town
Buried there
Underneath all the new
Impersonal, hurried,
Cold – yes cold,
Lifeless town in the sun.

For in an eyes blink
One sees another, Sarasota
Shell roads, deep sand,
Scrub palmetto, mosquito, flies and
Crackers making do
With their place in the sun.

Sarasota, once a family town
Where children wandered barefoot
On the pristine white sand,
Kicking a shell aside,
Enjoying their home in the sun.

The spire of the Baptist Church
Rising above it all there on Main
Beckoning all to come inside
(But now submerged amongst
The tide of scrapers
Shielding it from the sun.)

A fishing village where
One could never want for
Fresh fish, shrimp, oysters,
'There for the Taking*, '
Cast and you shall find
What awaits you in your
Place in the sun.

Yet Sarasota is the place to be
Where one can be free,
Free from the rush of life,
If only one takes the time
To Enjoy, a place in the sun.

(In Memory of Martha Louise Moore, born and raised in her place in the Sun.)

'There for the Taking', James E. Moore. A book describing his many years
harvesting shells from the Gulf of Mexico for sale in his shop in Palmetto, Florida.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Second Hand Shoppe

Went shopping at the Second Hand Store
Sign out front said, "Bargains and More";
How could I resist the urge to buy
The merchandise was there, something to try.

Quick look inside to see what was offered
Shop owner said, "You'll be rewarded."
True for there on display
Were things for work and play.

On examination, most were someone else's discards.
Broke. Cracked. Unattractive shards.
Some beautiful to behold
Until you looked underneath the folds.

Many looking for a second life
Maybe one that would be free from strife.
Priced to moved quick as could be
But priced too high for such as me.

As I turned to leave and be on my way,
The owner said, "Wait, we have new ones every day."
I thought, "Sure, more just like these
That in no case will please."

"This one would look good on your arm."
I could see it had a certain charm,
But on examination, I found
It left a green ring, and wasn't all that sound.

Then I saw one on another shelf
Had been there for a while, I thought to my self.
Why was it there, I ask you
"Takes a special person to see the value."

Have to polish and shine it a bit
Find a place for it to fit.
"Maybe, I'll have a go."
"Sorry, " Owner said, "It's just for show."

"How about if I try it out, do I dare,
Maybe a bit of loving care."
"Sorry, " was the reply.
"No returns, it's yours if you buy."

Maybe, I'll go back some day to find
If it's still there. Have to get it out of my mind.
On the other hand, I'll probably leave it there because
Hard to explain to the kids and inlaws.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Shapes Of Clay

The shape of things to come
Standing on their pedestals quiet and forlorn
The finished product of the creator's art
Wait to see if those who view them will understand
To give up the message that is cast in clay.

These are the finished ones
Others came before and were banished
Either for being flawed or
Else suffering from the stress of birth.

These are not perfect,
There are many flaws to be seen by those who search
But that is the way of objects molded by the creator
This is not perfection, six-sigma
With each a copy of the other.

As students shaped by the teacher
They have become a new image
Something that would be unrecognized
As simply a molded lump of clay.

They have undergone the painstaking fire
The driving out of the impurities and
Yes giving up some of the substance
So that they can be a new form.

See them as a transition point
Between the inanimate and the living
A creation not unlike that from the womb
Each different, yet so alike.

Forgotten are those that failed
Shards on the pathway of time
Some misshapen, others simply failed
As internally they lacked the substance to survive.

Those broken idols are a reminder
That life is one of challenge,

One of stress, One of give and take
Where in the end the creator decides
Who and what shall survive.

So we see these lumps of clay
Colored by the trace elements that fuse
Into the outer glaze
Yet representing a transition
From what never was to what never would be
For they are given life only by those who
Share the vision, And then they become
Reality.
They are the shape of the future -

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Shoes

In the Sweet Earth the Wild Blackberries Grow

Once a bull, arched back, pawing the earth, bellowing - I am here, come challenge me

An eagle high above testing his wings

A hawk hunting alone soaring above, the shriek I fear none

A coyote howling - night, time to roam

Ever a barnyard rooster insistent the sun rise so the day can be begun

A wild boar, tusk exposed, digging in the earth leaving a trace - been here

On a tree reaching high, leaving scrape marks for history, a cat

A stallion, racing the wind along the fence bound in but free

The mullet jumping as high as gravity allows

Shoes laid aside, the mark of civilization unbound

Free

Invincible, he was here

In the sweet earth, the wild blackberries grow.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Silence

On the Myakka prairie
Morning comes
Quietly
With dawn's first light..

Birds take flight
From night-time a-roosting
Seeking food,
Freedom and romance.

First quietly soaring
Above the trees
Then settling softly
Facing the breeze.

Buzzards
Soaring high above
Seek out the waste
From yesterday's plunder.

Hawks in brief flights
From post to post
Eyes searching for movement
Of scurrying animals.

Silence is the reward
For those who seek or strive
To go unnoticed
And remain alive.

Here on the prairie
Stretching to the horizon
Not far from the coast
Man lives,

Not knowing
That nature
In endless
Toil and troubles

Replenishes the maw
Of those who seek
And others find
It's wise to keep

Silent and an eye out both
Above and below
Because one can become
Part of another's diet.

The lesson to man is clear,
Neither written in stone nor sand.
One is never far away
From Nature's Grand plan.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sixty Nine's In Love

See him approach the object of his affection
Boldly he asserts "I am Here! "
The others move away making a path
For their master to have his way.

For one so big,
He moves easily with
The grace of a ballet dancer
Mincing steps.

Then he is near;
Near enough to smell
The libido enhancing message
"Yes, he can have his sway! "

With caution to avoid any untoward moves
He gazes into the shuttered lights
Glancing, seeming to be drawn in.
The mirror briefly reflects his image
Before he turns it down and away,
The looking glass cannot possibly
Hold him in proper focus.

Then as is his nature,
He moves deliberately
To the region of the body anatomy
That must be addressed.

He bangs gently at first
Then with great vigor,
He seems intent
On putting things in their proper place.

Making right that which is wrong.
He bangs his poll only
To have it come down,
Crashing down again and again.

In frustration, he is too forceful

And instead of yielding to his impulses
It is stuck, wedged half way
(Or half way down, if you prefer.)

Trying again and again to dislodge the tailgate
He fails and, as if to say, "Enough is enough, "
I'll come another day when you are more receptive
He rambles off to seek his harem.

Such is the bull's love for the old Ford 150 pickup truck.
(And I must remember to park the truck somewhere outside the bull's pasture to
avoid having to reset the mirrors and unjam the tailgate the next day. Sixty
nine is the number on the ear tag which he wears.)

□

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sleepy

Stretched out on the desk
Lying across the paper and pencils
For the moment, at rest,
Eyes closed, shading pupils.

Breathing deeply in his slumber
Mindless of the problem
He's caused a family member
In his bit of playful whim.

Erased an hour's work and more.
As purposeful keyboard tapping
He couldn't ignore
And with a single stroke, a-zapping.

Who would surmise
That Omar when peacefully sleeping
Is a devil in disguise
Lying in wait for mischief making.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Smell Of Defeat

A whiff,
The wind changes
Something's in the air
The nose knows
It's the smell of
Defeat
(or is it the feet)

Chicken hawks know
Preying on the weak
Is fair game
But, keep an eye open
For there are bigger
Predators about.

Will he learn
From the rhyme;
Apple Core
Baltimore
Who's your friend
(It's the end)
Not for shore (sure)
Not no more.
And they'll chuck the core at him
Who really has no friends.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Smell The Fear

As you walk along
There's something in the air
That doesn't quite belong
It wasn't there before
And yet it's a presence
You can't ignore.

The small hair(s)
On the back of your neck
All warn you to beware;
For something's Incorrect.

Adrenaline flows
As you move along
Can it be those
Chanting a pagan song?

So you walk on down the path
To the house round the corner
Knock on the door with
Bravado, like any other
And say trick or treat
If you dare.

For the lights are low
And the wind blows cool
And perhaps something's up from the moor.
Only a fool
Would think to pass
This way to the door
By the shaded window glass.

With a side glance
You strive to see where danger lurks.
What may happen, but not by chance
By ghouls dressed in sheet-like shirts and skirts.

It's much scarier than Halloween
When you see the political offering(s) .

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Society's Misfits

There he stands, waiting
Patience is the only thing he understands
For a reward will surely come his way
As the panhandler greets the day.

He's been here many times before
Sometimes before break of day
While others in their cribs snore
But the pangs of hunger motivated him to flight
Away from the safety of the night.

And now he stands, nervous
Shifting his weight from one foot to the other,
Standing on one leg in a practiced move
To attract attention.
He's a veteran of past encounters.

A pair of early risers see him standing there
But go about their mission
Ignoring his stare
Even when he approaches
They give him no attention.

A beggar he is for sure,
Like others that they must endure
For if they show the slightest sympathy
There will be others,
Demanding in carefully
Rehearsed cacophony.

Avoiding eye contact is essential
For once made, it's providential
That you have entered into his game
And nothing evermore will be the same.

Words are meaningless as a media of exchange
For they speak a language, not the same.
This one's of a different order
And his vocabulary they can't decipher.

Yet, a bit of fried chicken from your bucket
Seems to be his plea.
But they ignore him
As each enjoys his lunch,
Watching his carefully rehearsed pranks.

Then one offers a tidbit to the bum.
It's more than he's had this morn
And into his empty stomach,
It'll easily fit.

The other teases with a chicken leg.
He's learned from times past
How to reward those that beg
It's necessary to keep the tramp away
Otherwise he'll surely steal
What the bucket conceals.

So with a toss
The leg goes airborne
Toward the vagrant
Who's pleading;
More, more.

Catching it in midair,
He wolfs it down without a care
And then begs for even more.
More from your bucket – there.

'Scat. Shoo.' the men exclaim
And raise their fists to make it plain
They will tolerate no more
Of this moocher's antics.
They must get back to their chores.

Knowing that he will be denied
The beggar turns his back on them.
But in a final threatening move
Stretches himself to his full height.
Will he walk away?

Then, with a sudden leap,

The great blue heron flies away.

On watching two fishermen eating their lunch on the beach. Longboat Key,
Florida.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Someday

Someday
Is a place
Along the path
To Next to Never.

Someday
Is looking back.
Next to Never
Is Reality.

Sidi

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Somewhere Over The Rainbow - An Obit

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

ON APPEARANCES

While Dorothy was no different
From the rest of the class,
Having committed to more than they could
And can accomplish,
She like all the rest
In her own way, stood out.
So, you remember certain things.
As example, in the first lab,
She showed up with the most ugly
Set of protective eyewear you can imagine.
'Bad-ass' is the term that comes to mind.
They would have been great
For a shop class or a mechanic.
On the second meeting,
When it became apparent
That there was a supply
Of glasses that were 'loaned' to the students,
She asked if she could trade.
Why not?
So, Dorothy who never called attention to herself,
Was conscious of her appearance,
Wanted to be just like all the rest,
Although she was approaching 40.

THE TERRORIST

In a discussion of Anthrax,
A particular devastating
Bacterial disease of cattle and man,
I pointed out that anyone
With an understanding
Of microbiology could culture this
'weapon of mass destruction'.
And, in addition the ingredients

Were readily available at the supermarket.
As example, anyone
Who made 'home brew'
Could easily culture the anthrax organism
Or many others of equal value
To a terrorist.
To emphasize the point,
I asked if anyone brewed beer,
To which, Dorothy
Was the only one raising a hand.
From that point on,
The class labeled her a 'terrorist'

.STICK-TO-IT-NESS

In late November,
It was obvious
Something was wrong,
Her voice which was never bold or loud
Had a tinge of something in it
Which was just not right.
Sort of like
When you are talking about something
Where you aren't real confident
And your voice is just a bit higher,
And not as strong.
Unknown to most of us,
She had been told that her cancer
Had metastasized.
Well finals were approaching,
And one of her friends
Asked why she was
Studying so hard for the exam.
She replied,
'I paid for the course and
I'm going to finish it'.

ON COMPASSION

And then,

One particular day
When the lecture I gave
Was particularly bad.
And, I knew it.
What did Dorothy say?
Remarking about the grading policy
I had established,
But obviously with other meanings,
She said;
'your a good guy'.
Nice.

COLLECTING

One writer
In trying to summarize her life,
Concluded she collected memophilia
(Frank Braun's 'Wizzard of Oz')

Naw,

Dorothy collected people.
There was a bowling event
For a fund raising
That countless family,
Fellow students
And other friends attended.
In watching one of the kids,
About 8 or 9 years old,
Bowling,
Probably for the first time,
Get a perfect strike,
You had to think
That he would always
Remember this.
Someone commented,
'It's a shame Dorothy
Isn't here.'
In looking about
At all her friends gathered,
I thought,

'She is.'

Some students think the prof isn't watching, not paying attention to who they are and what they are doing. Well perhaps some teachers don't, but for the most part when you invest your time and efforts into a group of students you look for their idiosyncrasies (character, if you like) and remember semester two out of forty seven, enrolled in my class, died.

Dorthy Harwig died on March 28,1998 after cancer took its toll on her body but not her spirit.

Somewhere over the rainbow -

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sounds That Astound

Did you hear it,
There it is again,
Seems to be coming from over there
Across the fence where
The new couple moved in not long ago
Something's going on, I tell you
Young people in the neighborhood
Can't be anything good.

I heard it again
Sounds like cats a-fighting
But it's broad day light
Can't be, sounds like some delight
A cry of pain or is it pleasure
How can we know which measure
A squeal, for sure
High pitched and clear.

Peep out of the blinds as see
What's making those sounds of glee
Look, there's some movement over there
Seems someone has brought out a chair
Look, those old folks standing around
Seems to have found the source of the sound.

I need my new glasses to see clear
What is making those sounds so near.
There it is on the ground
Why it's a new puppy they've found.
Wrong! It's bigger than that
An' is wearing a funny hat.

A baby in the neighborhood.
Well, Maybe it's for the good.

s

(Written in memory of sterile communities everywhere.)

Space Shuttle's Last Flight

Twin Booms

It's the last time we will hear the twin booms
Of the space shuttles returning sounds
Breaking the sound barrier in a flash
Is the mission's last.

An end of an era in space
With mixed blessings to end the race
Between Russia and the United States
Long ago enemies; now with shared fates.

Engraved forever in memory
Is the break up of one returning shuttle's reentry
Or the disastrous after launch explosion
Which cut short another mission.

But today, Thursday, July 21, 2011
At 5: 56 in the morning the shuttle returned from the heavens
Marking man's technological mark in the book
To the expanding role that America took.

Each time one uses a "smart phone"
Or "space age" materials at home
Remember the role of NASA
In making it possible to this day.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Standing In Line At The Walmart

So this is what's to be
Standing in line in a Commissary
Waiting as if time has no value
And perhaps 'tis true for those about you.

See the others with card in hand,
Provided to the clerk to scan
Determining if the credit's good
For the food, as it should.
(Government issued credit cards
can only be used to purchase certain items at the store.)
Other items will be set aside
Unless for them, cash they provide.

Look about and see
The benefits offered to you and me.
Flu shots for everyone
Given by a nurse in a white gown.

Glasses and exams set for the afternoon,
Best make an appointment soon.
Take your pulse and blood pressure
And your glucose level for good measure.

Ear exams not to be dismissed
Offer hearing implements and bliss.
And just down the isle
Drugs to keep you going for a while.

But now you stand and wait
For your choice of the checkout gate,
Been here for what seems to be
An Eternity.

A vision flashes before your eyes,
Is this OBAMACARE in disguise?

s

Starbucks

Sitting slowly sipping the latte
Notebook open, tapping keys,
No social outing is this.
Business as usual, before on her way
Just another multi-tasking day.

Looking around to see
What the environment will be
Rain and cold wind is
What those who outward venture
Will face in their morning commute.

The coffee's grown cold
A last sip, if she's bold.
Cup doesn't last long
The cup's been down sized
Tight economy, spending wise.

On a table not far away
Morning paper's there to stay.
Left by the couple going out.
Maybe just a glimpse at the World news?
Have to get some other views.

But no, another guzzler's got it now,
Wouldn't have made a difference anyhow.
One final look around,
Time to go; there's the iPhone's chime
Not a call, just a reminder of the time.

Who would know that she's living in
The old car she came here in.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Strayed

They always played together
Stayed together,
Now they're gone
Didn't even say, 'so long.'

Just after the evening meal
They went out side, No big deal.
Cause they usually returned
After the heat of day, spurned.

The two with earrings in both ears
(Not much more to distinguish them from their peers.)
So they slipped away
Some thought it was to play.

But when the morning sun arose
Their beds were cold that shows
They hadn't slept there at home
But were for sure, long gone.

Strayed - 2 heifers

About 400 pounds, small numbered tags in both ears
East of MJ Road, North of Clay Gully
Myakka City

If found, please call --

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sugar Sand

Listen to the crunch
Of the sugar sand
As it yields to footsteps
That mark the path of man.

The grinding of crystals
Throbbing from within
A sense deeply moving
The crunch of sugar sand.

Soon the footsteps will be gone
And the time will have passed
Yet in the mind; sound everlasting
The crunch of sugar sand.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sun Rise/Sun Set

Some come to Sarasota
For the Beautiful Sunsets
The last glow in the evening
The phosphorescence in the water
The 'Green' flash as the day ends.

I am here for the Sun Rise
The promise of another day
A day in which there are not enough hours
Too many things to be done
Too much to be enjoyed.

The early time when stars hang heavy in the sky
Before the break of dawn
When grey gives rise to a burst of color
Reflections of the sun's rays upon the clouds
A glow long before the sun rises.

Then in all its glory
The colors, cannot be describe
Fill the morning sky
Followed by the sun hanging,
An orange globe, a Japanese lantern.

A new day is here
God has granted
One more day on earth
To find much to do
And be thankful.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Supplication To The Devil

A tale of a battle-dore - (moral fable with animals as the principals)

(As told by the devil to Pierce Penniless in the Supplication to the Devil and related by Thomas Nash*)

"The beare on a time,
Beeing chiefe burgomaster
Of all the beastes vnder the lyon,
Gan thinke with himselfe
How hee might surfet in pleasure,
Or best husband his authoritie
To enlardge his delight and contentment.

With that hee beganne to pry
And to smell through euerie corner
Of the forrest for praye,
To haue a thousand imaginations with himselfe
What daynetie morsell he was master of,
And yet had not tasted.

Whole heards of sheepe
Had he deuoured,
And was not satisfied; fat oxen,
Heyfers, swine, calues, and yong kiddes
Were his ordinarie vyands:
He longed for horse-flesh,
And went presently to a medowe,
Where a fat cammell was grazing,
Whom, fearing to encounter with force
Because he was a huge beast and well shod, □
He thought to betray
Vnder the colour of demanding homage,
Hoping that,
As he should stoop to doo him truage,
He might seaze upon his throate,
And stifle him before he
Should be able to recouer himselfe
From his false embrace.

But therein hee was deceiued,
For, comming vnto this stately best
With this imperious message,
In stead of dooing homage vnto him,
He lifted vp one of his hindmost heeles,
And stroake him such a blowe on the forehead
That he ouer-threwe him.

Thereat not a little moou'd,
And enrag'd that he should be
So dishonored by his inferiour,
As he thought,
He consulted with the ape
How he might be reuenged.

The ape, abhorring him by nature
Because he ouer-lookt him so lordly,
And was by so manie degrees
Greater than he was,
Aduised him to dig a pit
With his pawes right in the way
Where this big boand gentleman should passe,
That so stumbling and falling in,
He might lightly skip on his backe,
And bridle him, and then hee come
And seaze on him at his pleasure.

No sooner was this perswaded
Than performed;
For enuy, that is neuer idle,
Could not sleep in his wrath,
Or ouer-slip the least opportunitie,
Till he had seene the confusion of his enemie.

Alas, goodly creature,
That thou mightst no longer liue!
What auaieth thy gentlenes, thy powesse,
Or the plentiful pasture wherein thou wert fed,
Since malice triumphs ouer al thou commandest?

Well may the mule rise vp in armes,
And the asse bray at the authors of thy death,

Yet shall their furie be fatall to themselues,
Before it take holde on these traitours.

What needeth more words?

The deuourer feedes on his captiue,
And is gorged with bloud.

But, as auarice and crueltie are euermore thirstie,
So far'd it was this hungrie usurper;

For, hauing flesht his ambition
With this treacherous conquest,

He past along throug a groue,
Where a heard of deare were a ranging;

Whom, when he had stedfastly
Surveyed from the fattest to the leanest,

Hee singled out one of the fairest of the company,
With whom he meant to close up his stomacke

Instead of cheese:

But because the wood-men
Were euer stirring thereabout,

And it was not possible

For one of his coate

To commit such outrage vndescried,

And that, if he were espied,

His life were in perill,

Though not with the lion,

Whose eyes he coulde blinde as he list,

Yet with the lesser sort of the brutish comminaltie,

Whom no flattry might pacifie.

Therefore, he determined

Slylie and priuily to poyson the streame

Where this jolly forrester wonted to drink;

And as he determined so he did:

Whereby it fell out that,

When the sunne was ascended to his height,

And all the nimble citizens of the wood

Betooke them to their laire,

This youthfull lord of the lawnds,

All faint and malcontent,

(As prophecyng his neere approaching mishap by his languishing)

With a lazie, wallowing pace,

Strayed aside from the rest of his fellowship,

And betooke him all carelessly to corrupted fountaine
That was prepared for his funerall.

Ah, woe is mee!
This poyson is pitiles.
What need I say more,
Since you know it is death
With whom it encounters?

And yet cannot all this expence of life
Set a period to insatiable murther;
But still it hath some anvyle to worke vpon,
And ouercasts all opposite prosperitie
That may anie way shadow his glorie.

Too long it were to rehearse
All the practises of this sauadge blood hunter;
How he assailed the unicorne as he slept in his den,
And tore the heart out of his breast
Ere he could awake;
How he made the lesser beast
Lie in wayt one for the other,
And the crocodyle to coape with the basiliske,
That when they had enterehaungeably weakned each other,
Hee might come and insult ouer them
Both as he list.

But these were lesser matters,
Which daily vue had worne
Out of men's mouths,
And he himself so customarably practised,
That often exercise had quite
Abrogated the opinion of sinne,
And impudence throughly confirmd
And vdaunted defiance
Of vertue in his face.

Yet new-fangled lust,
That in time is wearie of welfare,
And will be as soone cloyed
With too much ease and delicacie,
As pouertie with labour and scarcitie,

At length brought him out of loue
With this greedie, bestiall humour;
And now he affected a milder varietie in his diet:
He had bethought him what a pleasant thing
It was to eate nothing but honnie another while,
And what great store of it was in that countrey.

Now did he cast in his head,
That if hee might bring the husbandmen
Of the soyle in opinion that they might
Buy honey cheaper than being
At such charges in keeping of bees,
Or that those bees
Which they kept were most of them drones,
& what should such idle drones doo
With such stately hyues,
Or lye sucking at such precious honnicombs;
That if they were took away
From them and distributed equally abroad,
They would releue a great manie of painfull labourers
That had need of them,
And would continually liue seruiceable
At their commaund,
If they might enioy
Such a beefite: nay more,
Let them giue waspes but onely the wax,
And dispose of the honnie as they thinke good,
And they shal humme
And buzze a thousand times lowder than they,
And haue the hiue fuller at the yeres end
(With yong ones, I meane)
Than the bees are wont in ten yere.

To broach this deuice
The foxe was addrest like a shepherds dogge,
And promist to haue his pattent seald,
To be the king's poulterer for euer,
If hee could bring it to passe.
Faith, quoth he and He put it in a venter,
Let hap how it will.

With that he grew

In league with an old camelion,
That could put on all shapes,
And imitate anie colour,
As occasion serued; and him he addrest,
Sometime like an ape to make sport,
& then like a crocodile to weepe,
Sometime lyke a serpent to sting,
And by and by like a spaniel to fawne;
That with these sundrie formes,
(Applyde to mens variable humors)
He might perswade the world
He ment as he spake,
And only intended their good
When he thought nothing lesse.

In this disguise these two deceiuers
Went vp and downe, and did much harme
Vnder the habite of simplicitie,
Making the poore silly swaines
Beleeue they were cunning phisitions (physicians?) ,
And well seene (skilled; Shakespeare) in all cures,
That they could heale anye malady,
Though neuer do daungerous,
And restore a man to life
That had been dead two dayes,
Only by breathing vpon him.

Aboue all things they perswaded them,
That the honny that their bees brought forth
Was poysonous and corrupt,
By reason that those floures and hearbs,
Out of which it was gathered and exhaled,
Were subicet to the infection
Of euery spider and venimous canker (that which corrupts and consumes; Bacon)
,
And not a loathsome toade
(How detestable soeuer)
But reposde himselfe vnder theyr shadow,
And lay sucking at their rootes continually:
Wheras in other countries,
No noisome or poysonous creature might liue,
By reason of the imputed goodnes of the soyle,

Or carefull diligence of the gardners aboue ours;
As, for example, Scotland, Denmarke,
And some more pure parts of the 17 prouinces.

These perswasions
Made the good honest husbandmen to pause,
And mistrust their owne wits
Verie much in nourishing such dangerous animals;
But yet, I know not how,
Antiquitie and custome so ouer rulde their feare,
That none would resolue to abandon them on the sodaine,
Til they saw a further inconuenience;
Whereby my two cunning philosophers
Wre driuen to studie Galen (famous Greek physician) anew,
And seeke splenatiue (hot fiery; Shakespeare) simples (single ingredient, a
herb; Drayton/Garth)
To purge their popular patients
Of the opinion of their olde traditions and customes;
Which, how they wroght
With the most part that had least wit,
It were a world to tell.

For now nothing was canonicall (law; Bacon)
But what they spake,
No man would conuerse with his wife
But first askt their aduise,
Nor pare his nayles,
Nor cut his beard without their prescription:
So senseles, so wauering is the light vnconstaunt multitude,
That will daunce after euerye mans pype,
And sooner prefer a blinde harper (player of the harp, Shakespeare)
That can squeake out a new horne-pipe (Welsh wind instrument in the time of
Spencer et. al.) ,
Than Alcinous (ruler of the Phaeacians - see Odyssey) or Appolloes (Apollo)
varietie,
That imitates the eight straines of Doryan (bold and grave Greek music)
melodie.

I speak this to amplify
The nouel folly of the headlong vulgar (masses) ,
That making their eyes and eares
Vassailes (slave) to the legerdemaine (sleight of hand)

Of these iugling (juggling) montebanks,
Are presently drawne (drawn) to contemne art and experience,
In comparison of the ignorance
Of a number of audacious ideots (idiots) .

The fox can tell a faire tale,
And couers (covers) all his knauerie vnder conscience,
And the camelion can address himself
Like an angell whensoever he is disposed
To worke mischief by myracles;
But yet, in the end,
Their secret driftes
Are laide open,
And linceus eyes,
That see through stone walls,
Haue made a passage
Into the close couerture of their hypocrisie.

For one daye, as these two deuisers
Were plotting by themselues
How to driue all the bees
From their honnicombes,
By putting worm-wood in their hyues,
And strewing henbane
And rue in euerie place
Where they resort,
A flye that past by,
And heard all their talke,
Stomacking the foxe of olde,
For that he had murdered so manie
Of his kindred with his flayle-driuing taile,
Went presently and buzd in linceus eares
The whole purport of their malice;
Who awaking his hundred eyes
At these vnexpected tidings
Aan pursue them whersoeuer they went,
And trace their intents
As they proceede into action,
So that ere halfe their baytes
Were cast foorth,
They wre apprehended and imprisoned,
And all their whole counsaile detected.

But long ere this,
The beare, impatient of delays,
And consum'd with an inward greefe in himselfe,
That hee might not haue his will
Of a fat hinde that out-ran him,
He went into the woods all melancholy,
And there dyed for pure anger,
Aeaving the foxe and the camelion
To the destinie of their desert,
And mercie of their judges.

How they scapte I know not,
But some saye they were hanged,
And so wee leaue them."

Pierce Penniless's Supplication to the Devil, Thomas Nash, (published in the years 1592 - 1596) and reprinted by the Council of the Shakespeare Society, Introduction and Notes by J. Payne Collier, 1842, pp 69-74

Notes:

Page 69, line five, the beare on a time, &c.] This elaborate apologue was of course much more intelligible and pointed at the date when it was published than at the present. It had, no doubt, an individual and personal application. As Nash says in his letter to Jeffes, p. xv., he was not a man to pen an apologue in vain. It may be suspected perhaps, that the bear was the Earl of Leichester.

Page 69, line 30, the nimble citizens of the wood.] Thomas Lodge, in his "Rosalynde, " 1590, calls deere "The citizens of the wood, " and Shakespeare, in "As You Like It, " founded upon Lodge's "Rosalynde, " terms them "native burghers of this desert city" (act .1) .

Suggested modern spelling and commentary by Sidi Mahtrow. Note that U is substituted for V and I for J in many words. Arranged as unrhymed poetry rather than as prose so that the story can be spoken as it may have been intended for the stage in 1500 by Shakespeare, Malone and others.

The moral, as before, is that entrusting all to the government (or officials) is to give away rights. And, that justice prevails over the evil doers.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Susan: Not All Plums Are What They Seem To Be.

On reading the poem by Suzan Jarvis and her reflection on William C. Williams' poem

Them plums about
which you write
were 'haps something
other than what's thought.

Cause in the West
they might just be
something collected
from other than a tree.

An if they were
a bit red and undone
it's possible they'd
be better left alone.

For the critter that gave
them up
certainly never intended
them for your sup.

(Of course Williams being from New Jersey, may not have know the difference.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Sweet Guinevere

Don Quixote in his quest
Sought a woman, the best
Who on a pedestal he placed
One who could never be replaced.

Alas, in the tale of woe of that bygone day
Written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra
The good Don never found his Dulcinea
Yet vowed to God his devotion with many a plea.

Such it is as Joseph S., in his reverie
Did write of his Sweet Guinevere.
A woman of beauty beyond compare
That shared a moment with him there.

His Sweet Guinevere.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Synonymes

A synonyme can be a most careless brother
Standing in the place of another
Making do for what was intended
A substitute word with meaning bended.

A synonyme's often selected without bother
To make rhyme, not reason, for another
For talking or scribbling, happen-chance
Inserted by the writer, without second glance.

But if all synonymes could be freely substituted
Then there would be no need for the convoluted
And wouldn't communications be simplified
Without the alternatives to be tried.

To see how it's done, go to the inner city
And discover that there are some that; (it's a pity)
Have a vocabulary of 500 words or less
For free expression of their sentiments.

These well chosen words, few
Easily from their mouth's spew.
There's no need for alternative words
It's emphasis that overlords.

Second, third and other meanings
Are as the speaker intending.
How simple communication would be
With no synonymes to confuse you and me.

Imagine if you can, how great
It would be if a series of grunts create
All that's necessary to communicate
Our emotions of fear, happiness, love or hate.

So why this eulogy for a synonyme?
Perhaps, its passing will not go unnoticed in a poem.
A colorful vocabulary if expressed
Adds life to prose and poetry with zest.

Writers as they attempt to be most bold
Create misunderstandings, for which we scold.
They use words that are quickly seen to be
Those that should not have been chosen quite so freely.

If you chose to use this creature of man's own invention
Explore Crabb's Synonymes for variations of best intention.
Use it well so your message is understood
Chose carefully from the bad and not so good.

For a synonyme out of place
Will cause you to suffer much disgrace.
For synonymes are not words that mean the same
In using the wrong one; only you are to blame.

Te he. Te he!
(As Alexander Pope wrote in a poem in the style of Geoffrey C.)
Te he. Te he!
That's what said by those who know better than such as we.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

T. Boon* Pickens And His Windmills -

Hey Sancho!

When someone promises you
An island kingdom out of the blue□
Where you and family
Can live free.

When he takes you on a journey
Where you are robbed and beaten to you knee(s)
But always offers a vision
Of something better in the next mission.

When seeing a barber's bowl
As a helmet of gold
Which he of course possesses
While beating its owner of his senses.

When he escapes at break of dawn
As he has planned all along,
Avoiding payment of the evening's lodging
Claiming it's a higher authority's doing.

When even his friends
Accept the fact that he is of two minds
And needs much help, of course
Committing him to bed or worse.

In discovering that the wind blows free
As Nature intended it to be.
(Something that sailors know,
And assume that since the winds blow
Its use is, for them free,
And anything not nailed down will also be.)

Having watched the mills with blades attached,
He thought it to be an enemy in want of dispatch
And rushed to do battle.
As Cervantes told in his well known to tattle.

So it is that you now encounter a Quixote of later day
Who enlist your help once again in a new foray.
This time you have only to offer up you savings
And pledge your children's future in the quest of his making.

But before you sign on the dotted line,
Consider what he wants this time,
Look out your window at the trees
And watch the movement of the leaves.
Notice how they move carefree
In the refreshing breeze.

But wait, you say the air is breathless
And nothing is astir without its caress.
But what about windmills, can they do better
Or must they await a change in weather?

Of course in their absence of generated electricity
Everything must wait for the whims of nature's fugacity.
Those energy saving flourescent bulbs grow dim
As they are starved for current as the amps are trimmed.
And the air conditioner struggles and goes silent
The good news is that the roads become vacant
As at the curb, the electric driven car
Awaits a new charge from afar.

Maybe on the Texas high plains or mountains or at sea,
The wind blows constant and eternally.
Oh, that it be so.
For just as it does not always blow,
It seems to be with a mind of its own,
Blowing too hard is well known.
Ask any sailor who has had to reef the sails
To keep the ship from coming about or worse, in gales.

So Sancho, before you listen to Don Pickens
Perhaps you should listen to your wife in the kitchen
Who has to pay for the flour that is ground by the mill
That is turned by the wind (when its not still.)

* The 'e' is silent, unlike this current Quixote.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Tale Of A Tub In Modern Rhyme

The tub is not as you envision
A place for a bath or other diversion
No it's there for restful repose
And for whom do you suppose?

First let us say that this special place
Is one that's to be enjoyed without disgrace.
A spot that is alluded too
With just the right temperato

And this ones built to accommodate the guest
In such a way that he (or she) reclines in grace.
The walls shaped just so
Lends support to torso.

Into the basin which we call a tub, requiet
Creeps a guest seeking quiet
No need for cleansing waters
In this bath for starters.

It's the place to be
When seeking serenity.
Curling into a fetal position
Legs drawn up easing tension.

Head and neck supported against the walls within
And tail (yes tail) tucked in neath the chin.
It's Omar napping in his resting place
Secure in the sink's embrace.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Taste Of Death

The taste of death -
Clinched between the teeth
A well honed knife of
Iron is the taste of death.

The smell of death
Comes later
When the senses
Rebel against that
Which went before
And decay sets in

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Testosterone, Estrogen

Most songs
have a strong beat
that's easy to hear.
They come out
loud and clear
With meaning
sometimes dark or mean
But for the most part
clean.

Testosterone,
Estrogen

Then you surprise us
with a trick
To catch us up in a
road house beat.
Meant to deliver
Th' message
that rings

Testosterone,
Estrogen

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Text Messaging*

* Read out loud to make meaning clear. The 'translation' follows.

fon nks n txt msgs

st nd g n lyn at pos t of ce
mn n frnt o i wz tx n
hz thmbs mvn lgn n fst
on tny scrn

u cd c msg go ng
he typd w/ot paz e
nvr lkng t c wht he hd cnt
s he al con cn tra shun wz int nt
on kr at ng sub stnc frm th ar

I knd t rd wht he hd typd
ltrs n scrn hib t d tht
bt i wz mprsd by th wy of hs cmmd
typn wrds tht anot r cd und r std

frm of fnks tht r n tught n skol
1 tht hs on set of rls
sm tms vls r smpl y drpd
whl n othr cs s wrds r chpd

thrz no dcn ry r th sr s thts so bold
as t prvd clu t th wrds nw r old
tht sprds xros t bk lit scrn
n sucsn o a thot thts cn

bt hr s a clu
wht u c is bt a few
o th mny wrds n frazs tht r cst
on th tny scrn bt, dn t lst

fr as son as th msgs snt
th fn wl b off tht s th intnt
so tht tl th othr 1
th 1 who gt th rng on hs r hr fn

th msg is n ethr spc n al
tl som 1 ansrs th cal

of a sudn th post ofce ln
b gan t mv n th sndr hd t fnd
n othr plc at n othr tme
whn he cd onc a gn snd
msg to hs frnd

s

Phonics and text messaging

Standing in line at the post office
The man in front of me was text messaging
his thumbs moving lightening fast
and on the tiny screen
You could see the message going
He typed without a pause
Never looking to see what he had sent
As he all concentration, was intent
On creating substance from the air

I couldn't read what he had typed
The letters and screen prohibited that
But was impressed by the way of his command
Typing words that another could understand
A form of phonics that isn't taught in school
One that has it's own set of rules
Sometimes vowels are simply dropped
While in other cases, words are chopped

There's no dictionary or thesauri that's so bold
As to provide a clue to the words, new or old
That spread across the backlit screen
In succession of a thought that seen
But here's a clue,
What you see is but a few

Of the many words and phrases that are cast
On the tiny screen but, don't last
For as soon as the messages sent
The phone will be off, that's the intent
So that until the other one,
The one who got the ring on his (or her) phone
The message is in ether, space and all
Until someone answers the call.

Of a sudden the post office line
Began to move, and the sender had to find
Another place at another time
When he could once again send
A message to his friend.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Th' Awkward Penguin - Gone Wobbly

T'was once a awkward penguin
Most unbalanced, they say
Teetered about, from the beginnin'
On his webbed feet he couldn't stay.

Perhaps he had a drinking problem
Due to his habit of mouth open, swimmin'
So when on ice, he usually lay there, eyes closed,
And that's mostly the way he was to be found.

This day was as others before,
If you listened, you could hear him gently snore.
Then something disturbed him, he knew not what
But the clumsy penguin sensed danger was afoot.

Slowly he raised his head and looked about
And found his very life was in doubt
For there across the ice flow crept a bear
Thinking for dinner, a penguin would be his fare.

All the other birds were a twitter,
As flight was impossible to escape the danger
Their wings not designed for soaring
Only worked for water, going.

Who would be the one selected by the hungry bear?
Self preservation was their only care.
Rushing back and forth and making such a clatter,
A wonder other bears didn't come to see what was the matter.

This bear knew a fact that all bears surely know.
Penguins (and bears too) run in a straight line when on an icy flo.
So the great white furry one,
Thought; the one lying there, he would dine upon.

And as the other penguins ran away
Wobbly was abandoned, his was the price to pay.
He stood and raised himself to his greatest height,
To face this foe in what was an unfair fight.

But at least he thought as he looked around.
The other penguins would be safe and sound.
As they raced to protecting waters and leaped in.
All were ahead of this one, poor clumsy penguin.

Wobbly just couldn't seem to get his feet together
Was it right then left, or left then right, or did it really matter.
At last he thought, well do I really care if I go right then left
Or left then right, just as long as I propel myself.

So he started in what to others would be a disgrace
But that was after all his only pace.
While others in a straight line did go,
He seemed to wobble too and fro.

Then the bear charged head on,
But, too bad (for the bear) the penguin was gone,
Wobbled sort of on his left foot and spun about
Like in a dance, or perhaps in a rout.

Again and again the bear in a straight line
Came a chargin' only to miss to his chagrin.
As the clumsy penguin,
Wobbled too and fro agin.

The bear stopped and shook his head in disgust
And uttered words unprintable, I trust.
Decided to have fish for dinner instead
As wobbly penguins confused his head.

And into the water, the bear did go
Swimming away from this particular icy flo.
Leaving behind a wobbly penguin and his friends
Who gathered round him to make amends
Apologized as penguins do
And a girl penguin winked at (you know who) .

The rest of the story you will have to figure on your own
Seems there are now several other awkward penguins at their polar home.

Thanksgiving -

The Blacksmith's Forge

He rest his hammer alongside the wall
And ask the boy that turns the bellows to not stop at all
For the coals must glow and yield the heat
Which when he returns to the metal, beat.

For in his mind's eye a shape is formed
That will impart a meaning not to be scorned
Twisted and hammered until the poetry
At once will be his mark on history.

The smell of sulphur fills the air
As the blazing heat produces a char
So this day the poem will be an acrid one
That burns the eyes and heart of some.

For he writes of the day when the world stood still
And gave thanks for the men and women who ever will
Give up their time on earth to others
As THEY are our sisters and brothers.

And the sound of his anvil is loud and clear -
Give thanks for those who are far and near.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Acrid Smell

The acrid smell creeps out
Of the fine fabric about
The composed mistress
Who sits in deep distress.

For she knows, as others will
Soon discover as well,
That something foul is afoot
In this most holy religious spot.

No noise, this time is uttered,
To forewarn others of what is to be encountered,
For she has secretly shifted her hips
To ease the birthing of these slips.

But nature has its way
To release pressure; not to stay
For otherwise the buildup would destroy
The silence of the cathedral's arbor.

Even Jonathan Swift could not
Nor could John Arbuthnot,
Disguise the essence of the day
Of a fart released this way.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Anvil

On the knee-high block of 'bod-ark'
Stands the Anvil, cold and dark
Railroad spikes hold it secure
Ensuring every abuse it will endure.

Forged in metal works, long silenced.
The roaring furnaces flames quenched,
Workers, resting in their graves,
The Anvil remains a testament to their ways.

When Wesley had young guest
They sooner or later became pest,
No matter what their age it seems
They had to test the anvil's rings.

Wesley would draw out from under his bed
His hammer with the eight-pound head.
It would be passed around.
For them to see how heavy was eight pound(s) .

The hammer head, like the anvil
Was forged in Vulcan's temple.
Suspended on a cubit length
Oaken handle, worn smooth.

Impossible to raise as intended,
By choking up on the head, in air's suspended.
Then striking the Anvil with a blow
Produced no music notes that we know.

To Wesley, is passed the sledge
He, the acknowledged ruler of the forge.
With what looked to be
A great deal of difficulty,
He raised the eight pounds of iron
A foot or so above the anvil's horn,
And in anticipation of the blow
Silence on all would be bestow(ed) .

Then, the hammer, suspended,
Would move on the path, intended.
Dropping slowly downward
In an arc, of the forearm toward
The anvil waiting dumb, for the shock,
On the bois d'arc wooden block

Wesley made no apparent effort.
Only guiding the hammer's direction to impart
A first blow
On the horn below.

And strike the anvil it would.
Producing a clear ringing sound
Not unlike a church's bell;
A single clear note, a peal.
That came forth as directed by
The maestro's baton on the fly.

The hammer rebounded, higher than before
For sure, more music was in store.
Again it would from it's apex come slowly down,
Then striking the anvil, producing a new sound.
And again it would rebound upward.
Over and over, each stroke, a new reward.
With every rise and falling movement
As a musician tuning his instrument.

Then, Wesley played on the horn's nose,
Called by him in Blacksmith prose.
To the back of the anvil's flattened plate
Then by where the wedging holes were shaped
Onto the sides, and in the center
Each produced a note of different tenor.
The anvils web, and even on the base
No part of the iron escaped his embrace.

His movements – effortless
As he played his solo - anvil chorus.
Unlike Gene Kruppa on the drums.
There was no forced movements,
No rush to combine sound(s) .

Strokes dependent on th' hammer's rebound
Giving a clear sound only capable
Of being produced by his hammer and anvil 'table.'

And then almost as he had begun,
The hammer with each strike would lose momentum.
Until on the last note, it stopped in mid-air.
And was momentarily suspended there.
Then Wesley would pass
The hammer to a waiting accompanist
Who would try to reproduce the sounds
That came from strikes and rebounds.

Finally when all were through, □
The smaller children had their due.
They would approach the anvil
And seeing another use of this iron devil.
Such a mysterious device,
Would be mounted in a trice,
Facing the horn, nose or called some other name
It became a magic steed of mystic fame.
Capable of carrying them far away
From the dirt roads and red clay,
Summer heat and biting bugs,
Alcohol and other drugs.

Sometimes two or even three
Would take their place and flee.
With arms waving and legs pumping
The air filled with their shouting.
Then they would return to where they began
Wesley's place and the old man.

Then as in times past, all would go
And sit on the porch steps and 'flo'
Waiting for Wesley to begin a story
Of how it was in times past, in his glory.
When he and his dogs hunted muskrats,
Bears and tigers (some called them bobcats) ,
Caught alligator gar that were bigger than a man
And barrels of catfish for the frying pan.

Today the anvil stands silent as never before
Wesley's gone. There will be no stories. Never more.
Neighbors will take the anvil away
To another resting place to stay
And it never more will ring and resound
To Wesley and the children's joyous sound(s) .

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Arrogance Of A Leader

Claiming superiority by Birth
Denying other's a place on Earth
A simple statement, among many,
'I won, ' in the face of the 'Enemy.'

Of a humble man was he,
Before tasting the glories of victory
Not schooled in the ways of men
No, he was above the mein.

Sometimes angry ranting,
The other party, taunting,
While assuring his progressive, communistic leaning
That they were superior to every other being.

Until the world awakened to the threat
Of his wide preaching to others, yet
Those who demanded, bread, and more, more, more
Destroyed the social structure, full bore.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Barber Shop

At the barber shop I watched
As the scissors snipped and groomed
The ego and the plume
Of the one sitting there
In the jacked up-chair.

A facial, mustache waxing
As well as a shampooing
Of the tresses
No, this not your usual misses,
It's one of those who has too much time to spend
And considers the barber, his special friend.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Barn By The Side Of The Road

The wind battered barn stands alone
Nothing has changed in the years since
It once stood proud
Defending that which was within.

Man cared for the structure as it stood
Adding a bit of tin here, a board there
But still its sagging frame revealed what man did not want to see
Sometime, but not yet, it would yield to the wind.

First would come the tearing away of the added sheet-iron
Revealing the weathered wood within
The slabs of rough cut wood greet the rain
And drink it in, not knowing that it is poison.

For with each drop that falls
It quickly causes the fibres to swell
Soon pushing against the hand forged nails
That hold all in place.

Hear the groans and creaking timbers
As they move into an unaccustomed stance
Pulling against one another
As if to be set free.

Then the sun blazing hot in this July of history
Bears down from the East warming the barn's inner soul
Drying out the water soaked beams
Hear them moan as they move against gravity.

A quick shower revives the air within
Causing dust to swirl and quickly settle
Until a cascade of raindrops falls
Wetting the boards, worn by use.

No longer is there corn piled high
Or loose hay stored within
All has been taken away
And there is an emptiness here.

A gust of wind telling of an oncoming storm
Larger than that which produced the scattered drops of rain
The West wind blows but the barn is accustomed to this afront
But then in a quick reversal, from the East it comes.

First a steady drum of drops as big as a quarter
Then more until the sky is full
The barn sighs and seems to say
This is my final day.

All that remains, for man to see
Is a jumble of aged timbers
And bits of tin spread over this once proud spot
Where stood a tribute to man's desire to protect and hold.

The old barn is no more.
Revealed, the boilers that have been stored within
Wood fired boilers to take the slash pine drippings
And yield turpentine for man.

Such is progress,
But is it progress?

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Bathroom Sink

There he lies asleep so sound
In this cool place that's mostly round
Fitting perfectly to the spine
That's bent just to be so supline.

Head resting above the edge
With porcelain providing the perfect wedge
To support and give a view of the room
That is for all purposes his own.

But, emerging from the shower
And needing a shave this very hour,
What to do but get Omar to move
That's easier said than done, when push comes to shove.

So you turn on the water tap
Just a little so as not to disturb his nap.
Then as the waters slowly rise
Omar will discover the wet surprise.

No, he's just as happy as can be
As the waters up two fingers or three
Then it occurs to him that somethings wrong
For his legs and belly are wet with water that doesn't belong.

He looks around to see
Perhaps to be sure there's a place to flee
Rises slowly from his watery bed
And stretches as if to say, well it really isn't so bad.

In the final event of the morn,
He shakes himself onto you; be warned.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Beginning

The Beginning...

A trip through the elements
searching for the beginning.
Not the DNA encoded secrets of life
but of how life began.

Not simple life forms but further back...

I thought of a bit of salt
dissolved in water
as the water slowly evaporates,
the molecules of salt find
another and another and still another
until they crystalize
in a pure transparent form
all duplicated and exactly alike.

They have a memory -
dissolve them and
if you like cause them to reform
by evaporation.

That's a form of reproduction.

Further back in the evolution of life,
not molecules
but atoms themselves,
some simple
others complex.

Each has it's deviate form,
some more stable than others.

Leave aside the larger ones
and think of the simple of the simplest.
Hydrogen, atomic number one.
But it does not exist alone.

It pairs with another to share.
Share? Share what - electrons.
Electrons those hovering bits of energy
or matter spinning about

Not unlike sperm
seeking the mother lode,
the nucleus (egg if you prefer)
to begin life anew.

But the basic
element of them
is not called
an element

- it's a neutron.

No charge,
just mass
it lies in wait
to begin it all

For in the beginning
the neutron with electron
and the nuclear mass within
separated to yield an hydrogen atom
positive mass within and free spinning electron without...

the secret of evolution
for when hydrogen was created
it began what we call life.

sidi

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Beltway Tease

The Beltway Tease

Otherwise, known as the Fed
Who some say is to the economy, wed.
Raising and lowering interest rates' the game
Through several Presidents she's spread her fame.

While all around her seek to understand
Her methods, and what is in the plan?
It's quite simple to behold
If at once we are told.

When interest rates go down, there's more money to invest
That's the logic of Street gurus who to her, become a pest.
But if this be so, how can it be
When she reduces rates, they stay the same for you and me?

No. Her scheme is rather devious.
It's the cautious investor among us,
That is the target of her efforts
As she presents graphs, tables and charts.

When interest rates are high
Old-timers living on interest can get by.
But when the rates are going low,
To their reserves, they must go.

No longer is the interest from their bank
Providing money for the auto's tank.
Cashing out an asset is the only way that
They can live, an' get mi-lady a new hat.

But wait, now we see the Tease's way.
Old-timers think, "It's the market, I must play."
Then when it goes higher than the moon
I'll cash out and in the kid's mouth, I'll put a silver spoon.

So, it is, you see, the method's to get money from your sock
And cause investment in some favored stock.

Never-mind the market's unsteady
Just withdraw from savings and get ready.

A wild ride she'll promise you.
The market will go up it is true.
But the dark underside,
When it goes down, there's no place to hide.

That's the game this lady o-the-night does play.
Tweaking money from us each day.
She cares not if we win or lose,
Instead, it's to make the market; that we choose.

Gaining profits for investment firms,
That make money regardless of how the market turns.
For you see it is quite simple,
They get a bit for each new pimple.

In the market, whether up or down
There's processing fees for New York town.
Makes them glad to see,
Fools play the market, like you and me.

Why the name, Tease, you ask?
Because she's quite up to the task.
Been there many times and more,
Like a lady of the evening, a common wh.....

Prostrates herself before Congress
In her most striking party dress.
But never reaches the desired climax,
That the investor tries to match.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Bicycle Bandit

Here's a story to be told
Before the memory grows old
About a famous (or infamous) if you prefer it
The Bicycle Bandit.

In Memphis town
Streets were clogged with traffic is well known
So how to rob a bank and escape
Avoiding problems in the wake.

An enterprising son of a well known family
Found his wagers on golf scores were unfriendly
Resulting in a tab to be paid
If he was to remain invited to play.

How to replenish the wallet that an insurance agent
Found most inadequate
Yielded up the solution
Most apparent in a moment.

Why instead of a deposit in the bank
Why not a withdrawal, he did think
Of course the funds there belonged to another
But the logistics were a nuisance, why bother.

Ureka! Two solutions in one
He'd just approach the bank in the afternoon sun
On a bike borrowed from his daughter
Who away in school would never be concerned.

Arriving in his sunday best
(At least that's the way he was dressed)
A sporting cap and glasses disguised his face
And the cameras would have not a trace.

Approaching the teller
When there were no other customers to bother
Slipping a neatly typed note for her to read
Just Twenties and Fifties was the plead.

Now no weapon was in sight,
But the teller most died of fright
And heaped piles of bills on the desk
And away he went like a will o wisp.

Astride the girls bike he was seen
As he fled the scene
To parts unknown
For tracking him was not to be done.

It worked so well that soon when his funds were limited
Another trip to Memphis (home of Elvis) did I mention.
Another withdrawal just as before
And back to the golf course by a bit after fore (four) .

He became well know to the tv audience
As he made his now weekly cash advance
And the videos or bank camera film
Clearly showed him as he did abscond.

Now awaiting the golfer (bank robber if you prefer)
His partners sat sipping a cold one waiting for him to appear
Some one mentioned that looks a lot like Jeff
And all the others agreed, twas himself.

Called the Sheriff who came a-running
Hid his car to avoid any warning
And awaited the arrival of our hero (villain)
To see if he indeed was the one.

The old pickup truck came down the lane
To the country club of robber fame
Stopped at the garbage dumpster
And unloaded the suspicious bike behind her.

Then off to the bar for a quick one
Joining his partners in their last one
Then to his surprise,
The sheriff did arrive!

Four to Twenty was the jury's decision

But time off for good behavior was certain
Because his friends needed him to make up
The foursome.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Bird On The Telephone Pole

T'was a wood pecker
That's his moniker
Given that with a frequent blow
He searches for insects, below.

Sad wood pecker that he is
Doesn't understand preservatives
That man imparts
To save the wood from insect upstarts.

Yet he hangs there by talons extended
Hopeful that Nature is better intended
To provide grubs that likewise don't understand
The ways of man.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Born-Again Pol

Standing on Dwarf's shoulders in the Swamp
Does he see better?
Too bad about those underfoot.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Butterfly - A Solo Ballet.

A poem to celebrate Caroline's accomplishments.

The Butterfly

The stage is dark
And silence hangs heavily in the air
On the floor a tiny lump appears
It does not move.

Slowly the lighting, like sun arising
Reveals more of what is to be.
The lump enclosed in gossamer
Seems to stir.

It is still too dark to make details
But it appears that the lump grows larger
Stretching and yet
The wings and legs are not extended

The shape changes
As the light becomes more clear
A wing reaches for the light
And then another,

Upright the appearance of a body
Long and lithe
Stretches to its full length
Yet still tied firmly to the floor.

First a wing and then another
Opens and closes
Until it is fully extended into the waiting air
Then collapses back to the side

A leg extends and bending
Flexing, bending flexing
All the while the lump
Slowly turns and rises.

Now in the dim light it is revealed
A butterfly in all its glory
Is emerging from its cocoon
And will soon take flight

Stretching, reaching, testing the footing
The body now is slowly but determined
Filling the space from which it has emerged
It takes a tentative step

But is still firmly bound to the birthing spot
Until with a spring
It bounds forth
Wings extended, legs mincing in the air.

The lights now ablaze
As it is seen that a beauty is unleashed
Spining, leaping, prancing
Not unlike a new born foal seeking the light.

On tip toes the creature sweeps
Too and fro
Until it is bounding over
The stage, first here then there

Testing its wings
Trying the new born strength
Of its legs
Until it is truly free.

About the stage it flies
Trying steps that no other can duplicate
The wings in motion
Providing the balance that is needed.

Until,

The butterfly seeks to rest
Finding a place not far from which
It arose
And slowly folds

First the wings
Then the legs
And finally
The body compact as once before

The lights dim
Until it is dark
Dark as it once was before.
The butterfly sleeps.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Buzzard Tree

The buzzard tree stands forlorn
Of leaves and small branches shorn
Crafted by nature, stark and bare
With no life here to share
Draped in moss through which the wind blows free
Stirring as though life's in this tree
Branches twisted and broken fingers reaching
Grasping
Once a mighty oak, long departed
By nature haunted
Casting off bark and limbs
Until only there are maggots within
Feasting on the pulp of yesteryear
Gnawing away the last substance dear
Until in a final act of the Almighty
The tree comes down with a crash.

Does anybody hear or even care?

(At the base of the tree, a nest of snow-white buzzard chicks wait for their time in the sun.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Candle

Too often we only see
What appears to be
But in the darkness there remains
The whole world not illuminated by flames.

A world that continues on
Regardless of how little light is shown
A world that is full of wonder and imagination
(As well as a fair amount of superstition)

But the candle only shows
What is there when it glows
And when it finally reaches the end
As in life, what remains, depends.

A small amount of ash and smoky residue
But value added by illumination is what's new
The body is like a candle when expired
But what's left behind is how you'll be remembered.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Clock

The old clock don't tick no more
Since I got one from the computer store
New one just sat there by the bed
And glowed an off-colour red.

It kept the time just as well
And had lots of benefits I'm here to tell.
Reset itself if the power went off
And blinked to remind me of lots of stuff.

When morning came it would give me a buzz
To gently awaken me from my doze
Then would become more insistent if I didn't rise
To greet the morning refreshed and wise.

So you ask, 'What happened to my new clock? '
In a moment of anger when in shock
I dashed it to the floor, then took back
And bought one that went tick, tock, tick, tock.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Consumer Economy

Me:

Fooled me once,
Shame on He.
Fooled me twice,
Shame on Me.

He:

Gotcha, Gotcha,
Again and again,
You'll never understand
The game we're play'n.

Me:

My fortune, my home
All gone,
All I've left is
My poor dog's bone.

He:

Did I mention
When the Sheriff comes,
He'll take away
Your last few crumbs.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Corkscrew, A Bowl Of Spaghetti And You

DNA is nothing more than a corkscrew
That permits entry into the bottled brew.
Twisting and turning as it may
Seeking like-kind in haploid way.
Lining up in associative linkage,
Halves become one parentage.

And then,

Proteins are liken unto a bit of spaghetti
Produced in a straight line from the factory,
When allowed to bend and twist
As in the caldron where they exist
They assume a final form,
Then with a bit of goo, like vermicelli
Stick together in a twisted form, ready.

Some are building blocks for structures
Unique from other proteins, for sure,
So it is in skin, hair and such
Something to see and if you like, touch,
But others are harboured inside are a mirid of tissues
Such as organs and bones to address other issues.

If that seems complicated, let us see
What happens to other proteins in this primordial sea
Some are enzymes, pure and simple, not by happen-chance,
With a mission to produce different molecules in abundance.
Then if that's not enough,
Some destroy that which comes before as such.
This bit of cellular chemistry on the fly.
Ensures the species will survive.

Epilogue

Such it is at a picnic
Where it all started, Oh so quick,
Beginning with a corkscrew
A bottle of wine and you,

Mysteries, magic, probability, chance
And Oh, Yes, romance.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Cows Know

When the cow egrets no longer fly
But seek a fence post nearby
Watching and waiting
Not seeking out the hoppers in the grass
Or waiting for them to take flight
No longer seeking a ride
On the back of an accommodating cow
The Cows Know

When the sky's clear
And there is no wind
And the grass is deep and lush
When the moon light is all you need to see
Where you're going and what is to be
When the heat of morning sun burns hot on your back
And the milk hangs heavy in the jug
Waiting for the young's attack.
The Cows Know

A bit of overcast along with a freshening breeze
Gives hint to a change
And you take to a high knoll
And pass away the day
Away from the protective shelter of the trees
Waiting and patiently chewing
On what was tongue and toothed away
From the meadow, not too far away
The Cows Know

Some sleep with legs extended
Others with head cradled against their side
While others neck extended as if to stretch their hide
Tails sometimes swishing although flies are few
Just a memory of how to do it when comes time to do
Perhaps a pesky calf comes calling
Expecting a fresh supply of milk
Ignore it this moment for it's just not worth the effort
The Cows Know

The sky darkens a bit not so much that you can see
But on the distant trees a shadow of foggy mist
Then a rumble from an unknown place
Is it threat of rain or just a static burst
A few drops wet the hide and course down the side
Nothing to be concerned about
'cause there's no place to hide.
The Cows Know

A newsman might tell you of the coming storm
Or the weather forecaster might even warn
That there's a storm a brewing out over the gulf just now
That might just develop into a tropical
If conditions do allow
A plane will be dispatched to see if an eye has developed
And will give an updat on conditions, till then we wait.
The Cows Know.

When you've got a fifty gallon barrel
Filled with water and slush
Suspended on four post
With a single hole for filling
But with an emptying bung and drain
The contents kept bubbling
With constant additions and stirring
You've got the best barometer know to man
The Cows Know.

And in the evening we got six inches of rain.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Cricket (In The Fashion Of Robert Burns)

T'was the early days of Autum
An frost lay heavy on the fields
While in th' house t'was snug an' warm
With th' smell of the blazn' fire fillin' us with good cher.

Later, th' fire was banked
With the rattlin' of the door and window
We ws little concerned
As fer th' North wind; let it blow.

In the fireplace, the embers were a'glow
An' me and wifie in our bed were there to enjoy the show
That filled the room with lights and shadows
As we snuggled in th' comforter's downfill'd tow.

Asleep were I when I heard it
The distinct chirping of the cricket.
"Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et"
It said as it likewise enjoyed the warmth.

"Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et"
He said again, and again
I thinks. how nice it is to listen
To him singing his song.

Afore much time had pass't
And would like I to again be in my sleep
But, Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et
He sang his happy song, nev'r missing a beat.

So thought I maybe I should hush him
And send him along
But knowin' he'd return agin
And continue his damning song.

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et

Put I my warm feet on the cold floor's stone
An picked up m' shoe

For which, I'd send him along
To the heaven (or hell) which was his due.

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et

How to dispatch him me thinks
I would have to crawl along
So's I could smash him in a wink
Before he continued his unflagging song.

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et

On all fours, like a weanin'
With shoe held in my hand
I started to approach him
Was my carefully thoughtout plan.

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et

But I soon discovered my night gown
Cauth my knees and held them fast
So I cudn't move along.
Toward the cricket, uttering another iricksome blast.

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et

I raised me gown up and o'er my back
I placed it high, and there it wold stay
As I planned my attack
As silently I crawled along th' way

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et

Dispatch was all I had in mind,
To end his ceaseless chirping
And he replied in kind
With another round most irritating

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et.

Then behind me I heard a snickern',
Then a giggle and a roar

Th' laughter was a'hoating
The mirth was like none I'd heard afore.

Crick-et, Crick-et, Crick-et

For there wifie sat a bedin'
That shook when she roared with no care
"What a sight to be seen, the "bulls" cods are swinging
In the firelight as exposed to the even' air."

Crick-et, crick

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Culture Media-An Eulogy

The three dark horsemen of the press do damage not with swords but with well chosen words. On the passing of; Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, and Peter Jennings

There in broth that man created,
Dwell organisms whose appetites can't be sated.
Three or so specie dwell in th' tank.
Observe them through glass, dark and dank.

Here's the favorite; manta eel like. Be not deceived by his humble roots,
Seeking out victims, now lurking alone, but for sure in cahoots,
With bigger fish who pull the strings of this department store mannequin.
Like a taxidermist prize, his face set in a sanctimonious grin.

Dressed in Sunday finery, the best of fashion's trim.
Watch him swim by as a shark seeking its next victim.
The MS in the title, stands not for manuscript which would give credit,
But instead to a sinister monster that grips them as they play for it.

Out of his depth and in rarified elements,
He puts on a show to entertain, not to inform or make any sense.
Selecting the best His Party can offer to dishonor and disgrace its foes,
Somehow missing those of their own, that in moral disgrace goes.

Is it the lone broke-caw that we hear from this twitty bird?
No, he's just one of the three-some of which we have heard.
Partner in the crime which is called providing the news,
Is the one who must have been rescued from the embalmer's mews.

The product of times past when the best that was offered,
Was a bit of intelligence on the environment in which all suffered.
Carried to an extreme, this aging Wonder holds out for victory,
Regardless of cost and with no regard for history.

Global Warming's his cudgel, with bit players of two child-like Spaniards,
El Nino and La Nina, he distorts the truth and preaches the best of canards.
Never mind that Man has had little to do with the rise of the ocean's seas,
His spiel is to fill time in the tank and broker His Politics to please.

If you Rather'd not watch this grey one of the past,

There's chance to observe the best that Canadian Culture can cast.
Into the living rooms of working class stiff,
Who won't accept Cable as one of th' nation's gifts.

Ginning over some newly chosen topic with a liberal bend,
We find that this one's the entertainment industry's best friend.
Biased in coverage, how can you doubt
That this slick willy of the pond will find some new wrong to try-out.

So in the fish bowl that all can see, are this tiresome three.
They swim in concert, only a suggestion of independence free,
Circling like buzzards in search of their next victim,
Sad to say that unlike in the other bowl; you can't flush-em.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Curious Skunk

Nosie is his name
When he got his shot at Fame.
Visiting in the even'n hours
When others were in their unawares.

Made his rounds
Along the way
Surveying his kingdom
In waning light of day.

Nosie came along
Where he didn't belong
Found the barn, not unfriendly
And ventured in to see.

Found the full view door,
Just his height,
For looking inside,
It was a skunk's delight.

Eye to eye to see
The cat within
Which caused him
To flee.

He didn't release
His scent just then
Perhaps because he thought,
Maybe next time,
They will let me in.

The apartment in the barn is home for two cats, Omar and Fidget.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Cutting Horse Contest

Old Dan and Ralph had been there before
They and the crowd knew what was in store.
When the announcer gave their name
The applause acknowledged their claim to fame.

Ralph Yarborough led Old Dan
To the center of the ring as was the plan
And raised his Stetson which was his way
Of accepting the challenge of the day.

There in the corner of the arena stood
A group of heifers, wild eyed and up to no good.
Each attempting to crowd behind the others
And avoid the soon to be encounters.

With a huff, Ralph pulled himself up and on
The saddle which creaked and groaned.
There above the herd he sat transfixed
As he and Old Dan eyed the challenge of the mix.

Selecting the best heifer from the group
Would ensure that their score would be a coup.
One that was fleet of foot and smart as well
That would compete in this arena's hell.

A brindled one of no fixed breed
Was the one that Ralph selected for his steed.
A bit smaller than the other ones gathered there
But wary of the attention she found in their stare.

Dan and Ralph seemed to have selected this very one
To challenge the powers of horse and rider soon.
In a moments Ralph had made the choice
By a flick of the reigns at the very most,
Dan accepted his task and moved so steady
To show that he was more than ready.

Neck outstretched, muzzle flared just so
In anticipation of the touch to go.

Eyes in line with those of the heifer
Who met the stare with no seeming bother.

Now ears laid back and a grin with teeth exposed
Was enough to put fear in those
Other heifers assembled there,
But the brindle still showed no fear.

Ralph took a firm grip on the horn
Knowing that his participation
Was like a puppet on a string
Bobbing with the movement of Dan's being.

Yet to those that studied contest such as this
They knew that balance was the final test.
If Ralph misjudged the direction of the thrust
Then Dan's efforts would be a bust.
His swaying could upset the horse and his timing
And cost them in the final judges points a counting.

Old Dan as he had done many times before
Edged toward the brindle and the others there
One could almost see the fire emerging
Like from a dragon's nostrils, surging.

She bolted to the right
Not from fear or from fright
For she had seen a way to escape
From this monster's eerie date.

Of course Dan had expected just such a ploy
As he had set his left foot firmly
So that he could spin on his haunches
And counter the heifer's selfsame launches.

Success. From the group he had separated her
Moving in synchrony in a blur.
As the heifer moved first left and then right
Always trying to find an answer to her plight.

Like a bobble headed doll, Ralph
Moved in unison with the pair.

Never swaying in a wrong direction
As he held on with both hands in anticipation.

Back and forth the contest ebbed and flowed
Like the never ceasing motion of the waves on the shore
As each attempted to break the other's vision
Of what would be the ending of this mission.

Then the heifer did something not expected
She stood her ground and faced Old Dan
Like an injured bull in a matador's ring,
Considering how to rid herself of this mounted thing.

Moving her head to one side in a faked motion,
To see if she could provoke emotion.
This misdirection did not go unheaded.
So when she charged straight ahead
At the horse and rider there,
Old Dan with the wisdom of years
Grinned, some say from ear to ear
And lowered his head ever lower yet
To met the challenger in the contest.

And he with a lunge forward so
Seemed to be welcoming the crashing too.
Who would give was the question
And the answer was soon shown in the direction
That the heifer chose on that final rush
As Old Dan's shoulder took the thrust.

A murmur came from the crowd as they
Rose to their feet in unity
Old Dan had won the day
As the heifer turned and ran away.

She was defeated it was sure
This monster's control she could not endure.
And with a rush she headed away
To the other end of the arena's bay.

Yet there was more drama of this horse and man
For something seemed to be wrong with Old Dan

Was he limping just so,
Perhaps as a result of the heifer's blow?

Damn, came the exclamation
From one of the others in the competition.
Did you see that bit of theatrical show
As the horse seemed to limp even more,
Until the judges votes were cast
And the scores were 9.8 or higher to the last.

Then Ralph dismounted from his horse
And lead Old Dan away with not a bit of remorse.
Who's stepping like a new born colt so pure
Nothing wrong with his legs for sure.

It's just another contest to be won
No matter; twisting the rules of this one.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Epiphany

Sitting at a light
Six cars around
Five of six,
Foreign made.

Drivers of the cars
All women,
Age of all
Under thirty.

What's wrong
With this picture?

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Evolution Of Gabby Gail

The Evolution of Gabby Gail

Remember the doll with the string sticking out
Pull it and you'd hear her say (or shout)
"I'm pretty tricky".
She'd say it endlessly.

Now we have another phenomenon
It's brought to us by an electron marathon
Where space is filled by the presence
Of a mere hint of matter's essence.

There's the ever-present
Ipad or Iphone that's meant
To communicate,
And entertain, at any rate.

So on a back-lit display
One can see life at play
With real people and events
Ever-present as messages are sent.

Then along comes electronic paper printing
With lower energy, battery sparing
With color too, in countless shades
That are reminiscent of works of De Sade.

But wait, there's more
For the Japanese have cartoons in store
Of course its pornography they have in mind
With images doing amazing things in kind.

it's just a step before
As holograms are in store
Where it will appear that right before your eyes,
Visualized is the character of the wise.

Perhaps his body on display
Or better yet, a head that can say

Whatever is programmed by the engineer
To enthrall the listener.

Let us not forget
The voice can be corrected to get
The right undertones
Of the dialect of the listening drones.

So imagine, as the big bus goes through the countryside
That there is no one inside
But instead a programmer who writes
The script that so incites.

And there atop the bus for all to see is,
Goodness, can it be? The Pres in imagery
Saying what all have heard him say,
"Tomorrow will be a better day".

And to make it more life-like than today
Quasicrystal technology will come into play
Rearranging the electrons so that he will
Appear in endless postures like Escher's stills.

But it'll be all smoke and mirrors
(Not revealed to the curious)
That preaches what Gabby said when she awoke,
"I'm pretty tricky",

'Til the string broke.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Fable Of 'Belling The Cat', Modern Version

Five judges at a cat show
were in a conference room
when the lights went out.

The cat being judged
was coal black and
only could be seen
when it opened its eyes,
and of course the cat was asleep.

While waiting for the lights to come on,
the conversation turned to nutrition
and as most cat show judges
must have another occupation,
it turned out that each
considered himself and herself
an authority on diet for humans.

Such it was that the cat and nutrition
became the subject of discussion
because nutrition is not unlike
a black cat in a dark room.

The judges were sure
that the cat must be found and caught
before someone opened the door,
and it escaped.
If only it had a bell attached to its collar,
How much easier it would be.

The first judge,
a Health Food Faddist, said,
'I see it.
Having particularly acute eyesight
because of my diet
of carrots and carrot juice,
I will tell you where the cat is
and someone can easily
catch and hold it.

There by the table end is the cat.'
Alas, because no one else could see,
the first one to attempt to catch the cat,
tripped over a chair and
the cat raced about the room and
Found a new place to hide.

'It's just like you all
to dismiss the value of natural foods,
see what it has gained you.'
With that the Food Faddist
sat brooding at the table,
contemplating her new diet book.

'But wait.' Said the Medical Doctor.
'None of you has a clue
on how to catch a cat.
I spent long hours in Medical School
after taking my pre-med degree in sociology.
I understand the way the body functions.
Food is just so much
coal to stoke the furnace,
and I know what you should eat.'

'Humbug.' said the Food Faddist,
'You took not one course in nutrition! '
'True, ' said the Doctor,
'But with my great Aristotlean knowledge,
I can tell you much about the cat.
I having studied the muscle structure
of such as this black cat possesses,
and can tell you exactly how to catch him.
You must grasp him behind the head,
by the scruff of the neck
just as his mother carried him.'

'If you can't see him,
how are you to catch him? '
Asked the Business Man
who represented a major food manufacturer.

'Why with my stethoscope,

I can hear his heart beat
and lung function;
I will locate him and then catch him.'
Moments later,
'I have him'
(But of course, he didn't.)

The Business Man having been
deceived many times before,
and knowing full well the ways
of professionals stepping
outside their area of expertise
to take a megaphone
to shout their views,
scoffed at the Doctor,
and said, 'We all know that
you haven't a clue
as to where the cat is,
or what good nutrition
is for that matter.
I will bell the cat.
All it takes is a bit of
imaginative selling,
and I can attract any kind
and number of animals.
Promotion is what it's about,
nutrition or otherwise.
You sell the sizzle
before you sell the steak, '
and with that he began to call loudly,
'here, kitty, here, kitty.'
And almost at once,
'Got him! '
(But of course, he didn't.)

'I know you don't have the cat,
for I am holding him in my lap, '
said the Very Important News Person.
'You know nothing about cats,
publicity, nutrition or
anything else going on in this world.
Without me to interpret,

and bring it to everyone's attention,
nothing would get done.
It falls on my shoulders
to explain good nutrition so
teachers and parents will understand
what's good for them (and the children) .
I have read summaries
of all the important new science
that has to do with health,
welfare, education, government, personal surveys
(I could go on and on,
and shall if you all will just
shut up and listen.) '
She made a purring sound,
much like a cat would make,
and exclaimed, 'I have the cat'.
(But of course, she didn't.)

Which brings us to the Governmental Agency Executive
who served on these committees
so that he could use
the very generous vacation and sick leave
allocated to one who worked for the Government.
He said, 'It is clear to me
that without regulations,
the cat will go free
and possibly be harmed,
I know how to handle these issues.
Didn't I give you the revised food pyramid
that stood conventional wisdom on its ear,
although I admit, it is a bit difficult
to understand how slices of a pyramid standing on end,
creates a very substantial structure.
And didn't I give you revised grades for beef
which made the lower quality beef more desirable,
(and just by changing the names!)
And didn't I make you all feel better
when I announced that 'mad-cow-disease'
was nothing to worry about.
And, didn't I define what 'natural foods' are,
and, working with the Food and Drug Administration
and the Communicable Disease Center,

didn't I solve the problems of disease management.
Trust me, I will show you where the cat is
and I know how to capture him
and save him from the hostile environment
he finds himself in.'

And with that,
he reached over
and plugged in the extension cord,
which he had pulled from the wall
when he tripped over it.

But the projector's lamp did not light.
For you see,
he tripped over the cord
after the lights went out.

At about this time,
the building janitor
hearing shouting coming
from the conference room,
opened the door and
asked why the 'judges'
were sitting in the dark.

'Shut the door! '
They all cried.
Which he did.

And to this day,
the five nutrition experts
are in the darkened room.
Having starved together.

But how about the cat, you ask.
Not to worry,
he escaped out the door
when the janitor opened it.

And without a bell, I might add.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Fable Of The 'Factologist'

Once in a forest deep
Lay one who was asleep
Dreaming of a place to be
Where 'equality' was the only way.

For in his slumbers
He imagined free from that which encumbers,
All would feast upon the bounty
And there would be no accounting.

Each taking as he would
And if he chose, do something for the brotherhood
But no restraints were imposed
As all went where he chose.

So it was in his vision clear
That the seasons passed with good cheer
Until in the first fall of Autumn's leaves
There was some concern amongst these.

Worry not, they were assured
For Society has all illnesses cured
With Peace and Tranquility for all
As we go toward Winter from Fall.

Rest, brothers and take what you will
There is plenty that remains still
To enjoy the benefits of those that toil
So that we all may sip from the Holy Grail.

Then came a blast of Wintery wind
That stirred the leaves and then
Quenched the fires that freely burned
And cooled the bones of those, unlearned.

Quickly followed the first flakes of snow
Which upon his furrowed brow
Not to worry he was entreated
For Winter will soon be retreated.

With Spring and its flowers bright
Will bring renewed delight.
Still there was worry for some
As the cold soaked to the bone.

And then piling on high
Were more flakes from the sky
Until all were covered in the blanket
Death, life bereft.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The First Snow

Slowly, softly the crystals form
Each on a small nucleus, a particle
Built onto until the naked eye
Sees the multifaceted form
Taking a shape.

Then it grows too heavy
Like a pregnant woman
Disgorging the product
Of her womb.

A perfect flake
Begins the slow descent
Leaving behind a void,
Quickly filled by others.

And the bird on the limb
Ruffles its feathers
It's going to be
A long cold night.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Girl With A Pimple On Her Nose

Sitting at her desk
Trying not to show
Concern for what, you ask?
The pimple on her nose.

Glowing red like a light
Amongst the beauty to behold
Something just not right,
The pimple on her nose.

Hair so perfectly adorned
A smile that welcomes those,
Beautiful face and earrings worn
Outshined by the pimple on her nose.

Dressed proper for the occasion,
Office work and after hour's close
To enjoy beginning of evening's fun
If wasn't for the pimple on her nose.

Soon nature will prevail
And bring to a close
The unsightly; her travail
The pimple on her nose.

Revealing all to see
The beauty disclosed
Missing finally
The pimple on her nose!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Green Alligator

There's a green alligator.
Lying on the bank out of the water,
His (or her) hide, a bilious green
And as it dries has a certain sheen.

Some would say that's most un-natural
But I reply that's colors, factual.
Brought about by being in a water that's
Filled with chlorophyll bearing plants
And as the gator swims along,
He can't help but being tagged upon
By those single celled organisms that live there
In the primordial soup we all share.

'Haps, this is his way
Of disguise from his prey,
But I prefer to believe
He'd much rather have a reprieve
From the pollution
In his watery bouillon
That coats everything large and small
From snout to tail and all.

But as he sleeps along the shore,
Covered by this slime and more,
I wonder if evolution will raise her head
And make all alligators green instead.
Then no one will notice this one apart
From others with the same colorant.

Regardless, it's best to avoid the alligator, green
Lurking there, grey-black, or some shade in between.
He knows not why you're there,
But for him, maybe you'll become the daily fare.

One agator, Two agator, Three
Green alligators neath the tree,

Slipping, sliding, slopping,
Never stopping,
Green gators neath the tree.

Mouth open, teeth, a showing,
Just a grinnin
Green gators neath the tree.

Hides a glowing green
Doesn't seem so mean,
Green gators neath the tree.

Into the water he's a slippin
Just a dippin
One green gator's not neath the tree.

Silent swimmin, easy going
Eyes and nose only showing
Green gator's gettin close to me.

One agator, Two agator, Three
He's after m....

Welcome to Florida!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Halloween Party

It was a dark and stormy night
One by the devil design'd to fright.
When came a sight most bleary
One not design'd for being cheery.

Black was the out'r covering
Fresh from a witch's warren,
Spoke not a word that I could hear
As I had drunk too many beer.

Reading lips was not my thing
And so I could not understand the muttering
Yet IT seemed to want to carry on
Some kind of conversation.

For I could see
That the lips moved deliberately
(Birds have lips, I suppose
Put there at the end of their nose)

But I digress
In telling of my moment of distress.
When the dark and stormy night
Causes the buried to raise upright.

For this flighty one
Was not alone
But had friends who
Were numbered two.

The second one of which I became aware
Was resting on the rocking chair
And caused it to gently sway
As if a child had come to play.

The second preened her dress
(It was a she, I must confess)
For no man would have been caught
In such an outfit, homemade or store bought.

And looked me in the eye
As if to ask the reason why
One would be awake
If not for old time's sake.

And the third was there
Having arrived through the midnight air
A wispy one, on the edge
Of my worn carpet's selvedge.

Pacing back and fro
As if wondering if I might go.
For you see they were there
To take me to their secret lair.

Where the famous one of old
Rested for he was growing cold
He'd become famous in his day
By a word he'd learned to say.

Now in my beery mind
I began to find
The reason they were here
That had nothing to do with beer.

For as Edgar had decreed in rhyme
(You see they were on first names
most of the time)
That on a night such as this
Friends were likely to be amiss.

So they were sent to beckon me
To join them in search of their family tree.
To rejoin in Poe-etry
And see if pigs could really fly.

For that writer of long ago
Many tales he did sow,
Some with out a proper end
Which left the reader in suspen..

I followed the one that on my carpet paced
Out the door, for the window was encased.
(Having been shuttered long ago
To lessen entry of friends, just so.)

We were followed by the one of fairer sex
Her feathers all ruffled to perplex
The one who knew not the reason why
That he was chosen under the midnight sky.

And the one who entered first
Still trying to enunciate the curse.
Moved his mouth in a most queer way
Trying to find words to say,
Exactly was to be my fate
If I hesitated and was too late.

Through the dark street we did progress
(I stumbled along; I must confess)
As our foursome moved along
To the graveyard they called home.

To visit the one most famous
Where he found peace and was encase(d) .
And there we stood in that Boston place
Where others rest in time's embrace.

Around the open grave
We stood as if looking into a darkened cave.
And listened for the word to come
That surely would spell my very doom.

Now I, with the poet and his bird
At the stroke of twelve, heard
The utterance of that word of lore -

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore! '

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Hog (Garbage Disposer To City Folks)

Dick Philips called it the hog
Cause it et everything
Bones and all
Or jus a flush off the plates.
Course if yo had a real hog
It'd be more better cause
You cud eat it in the end.

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Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Hornet And The Bittle

A harnet set in a hollur tree –
a proper spiteful twoad was he:
And a merrily sung while he did set
His tinge as shearp as a bagganet:
Oh, whoso vine and bowid as i,
I vears not bee, nor wapse, nor vly:

A bittle up thuck tree did clim,
And scarnvully did look at him;
Zays he, 'Zur harnet, who give thee
A right to set in thuck there tree?
Vor ael you zengs zo nation vine,
I tell `e `tis a houlse o' mine.'

The hornet's conscience velt a twinge,
But grawin' bowld wi his long stinge,
Zays he, 'Possessins's the best laaw;
Zo here th' sha'sn't put a claaw!
Be off, and leave the tree to me,
The mixen's good enough for thee! '

Just then a yuckel passin' by,
Was axed by them the cause to try:
'Ha! Ha! I see how `tis! ' says he,
'They'll make a vamous munch vor me! '
His bill was shearp, his stomach lear,
Zo up a snapped the caddlin pair!

Moral

Ael you as be to laaw inclined,
This lettlet stwory bear in mind;
vor if to laaw you aims to gwo,
You'll vind they-llallus zar `e zo:
You'll meet the vate o these here two,
They'll take your coat and carcass too!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Jumping Bean

All have seen the bean in action
Trying to get attention
Jumping from spot to spot
When circumstances get too hot.

The most amazing feat
Is that this actor has no message to bleat
Yet he thrives on attention given
Whether its morn or early even'g.

You hear him click and for an encore
Click - click some more
As he warms to the attention of the season
And jumps for almost any reason.

When placed in a spot too hot,
Escaping is what it's all about.
And he'll move other beans and more
To cause attention to be on a foreign shore.

Interesting, a Generation ago;
Knew what made the bean go,
But the educated ones have forgotten
That in politics, it's always open season.

So when you view the news,
And listen those who accuse
Others of being biased because they don't go along
With the jumping bean's song,
It's because they know that comes a day
When it's time to work not play,
That the jumping bean will leave behind an empty shell
For someone else to dig and delve,
While he flies away to a distant spot
Where it isn't too hot
And will bask in the medals awarded
For the missions started.

But now care and feeding of the bean is critical

For if it gets into water too hot it goes homicidal
And will do whatever is required to survive.
That's the lesson nature teaches his tribe.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Keystone

The Aztecs never conquered the keystone
Rather than the lintel
To bridge a gap to ensure that the load
Would be borne by two supporting sides.
And their blind sight continues with today's scientists and engineers
Who deign to think of information
Only in a linear fashion
(Excepting calculation with logarithms
As done by slide-rule, tables or some other trick.)

Think of the game of tic-tac-toe with its x's and o's
No surprises here for the response must follow it is clear
Or in the digital age in which we live
It's again the space that is filled or clear
So that these very words I type
Are bound to be recorded, bit by byte.

Is there another way?
One which will emerge some day
That will permit a leap away from convention
And permit a form of suspension
When two ends are known and can support
The arch that will give repartee
Between sides that have no other way
Of extending thought and processes beyond their sway.

Or is it just another fixation
On ways of suspension
For it is known that an arch is stronger still
Than a linear form bearing weight at will
One need only look at a semi-tractor trailer
That when empty - the bed has a gentle arch
But under compression by an added load as such
Causes the bed to flatten out
With the steel in compression - carries the load about
It's just another form of a keystone arch
That lends strength (and you can watch!)

Compression is much the stronger than

Extension, when supporting a span.
So can it be with bits and bytes
There's much more there than what a computer writes
In its binary code
Of one or naught.

For more on binary codes and such:
by Christine R. Wright and Samuel A. Rebelsky

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Sidi J. Mahtrow

The King Is Dead

The King is dead
So they said,
As they gathered round
The effigy King on the ground.
That had fallen under relentless assault
Of words, sticks and stones and other sort.

They danced in self-anointed pleasure
They had won, by any measure.
As in the Reformation, they embraced
The image of a Protectorate of unknown face.
One who would surely carry the mantle
A Cromwellian herding conservative cattle.

Then they thought: 'What is to be?
Who amongst them could see
And lead them now they were 'free'
Of the yoke of rules of propriety? '

But who would lead them?
Surely not those that only profited by destroying him.
It was clear, the intellectual elite
Shuffled off; this was not their meat.
The actors and actresses
Were only concerned with their state of dress (or undress) .
The moralist of no known state
Were not the ones to trust your fate.
Monied ones would surely flee
If the burden shifted to them from thee.
Politicians, with speeches to fill any void
Were not to be trusted at their word.
Interest groups with an axe to hone
Would like feral animals expect a bone.

So as they gazed upward to the stars
Decided, once and forever, a man from Mars.
And gathering up the throne on which he sat
Raised him high and began to chant:

'Long Live the King.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Legacy

On her dying bed, mother dearest
Drew a pledge from the nearest
(A daughter who sought for her, peaceful rest)
That she would fulfill this last request.

'Preserve for all to see
What was most important to me,
Our family estate; debt free
To be preserved, in posterity.

Keep it as the family's home
A place where all weary come
To be refreshed, when alone
And, remember this passing one.

Sell it not and do not encumber,
With burdens of debt to rend asunder,
Maintain it in honor of your mother
Who lived here with your blessed father.'

Then like a yoke upon an oxen weighed
The significance of this wish that was pledged,
A burden that could not be shared
One that must by the daughter, be endured.

As she came to realize
The daughter was caught in the legacy's vice
Her loving pledge, proved most unwise,
As the decision came with a most high price.

When the bills and rents came due
And profits were found to be but few,
The daughter wondered what it was she could do.
How to abide by her pledge, she had not a clue.

All expected her mother's wishes for her to abide,
And hold for them the home; the family pride
Maintain it in splendor with doors, open wide.
(Although when asked to share cost, away they shied.)

The family said. 'Thank you just the same,
We prefer to keep it just as plain
The house is yours to share,
And share it we will without a care.

Please replace the roof and paint the house,
Your mother would like it to be attractive, never mind the cost.
Perhaps you might install a swimming pool.
As the summer heat, is most cruel.

By the way, we are planning a big bash.
And find ourselves, a bit short of cash
As the guest list is mighty long
Could you sort of tag along
And pick up the expenses we have charged
To your account and then;
Make sure the place is clean as a pin.

Oh how happy we are that you and your blessed mother
Thought to provide a home for us from near and far.
And, another thing,

Please put some fresh flowers from all of us
on your mother's grave.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Lion Never Sleeps

The Lion watches its prey

It's the pursued and the pursued
But which is which
As Nature plays
The game

Sometimes the hunter
Becomes the prey
Not knowing that
What is most apparent, Isn't at all.

Until in the final moment
The game is revealed
And the aggressor is
Captured, ending the play.

The nesting osprey
Need feed the hungry mouths
And pursues fish in the still waters
Of the nearby pond.

But neither a fish too large nor too small
Will be selected for the nestling's hungry malls
So the osprey circles overhead
Watching the larger fish pursue the small.

She selects the one
Near the surface for her quick
Descent and snatch
Away from the panicked school

And with a flutter of strong wings
The talons grasp the unsuspecting one
That till the moment was the
One pursuing the ones that flee.

Away she struggles with her catch
Back to the nestlings

Where this fish will add to their growing hunger,
Till they emerge to catch their own.

And the lion never sleeps.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Litany

You've heard it all before
When called to justice
His (or her) suffering you can't ignore
As the 'victim' pleads innocence.

He said in a tearful apology,
'I hope before they make
A final decision about me,
They will be patient,
They will be forgiving,
And they will not be overly strict
Or harsh as they form their opinion.'

He suffered,
He was a victim:
Proclaimed his innocence,
As other people in his office
were responsible.
He compared himself
To the captain of a ship
Who is blamed
For the conduct
Of his crew.

The reason for his actions:
He grew up without a father
Who was killed by a drunken driver
When he was only 2 years old.

His family
Suffered from
Threats and
Discrimination.

His wife of 22 years has
Alzheimer's disease.
So the court was told.
She maintained her husband
Had done no wrong.

She wondered
How she would raise
Their seven children alone.
'Just think of me and my children, '
She asked the judge.

His lawyer insisted the doctor
Had some sort of mental illness
They maintained a lifestyle
That was 'beyond spartan.'
Said the lawyer.
The family lived in modest homes
In Sarasota and Miami.
And yet he billed the Government
More than 3.7 Million dollars.
'Something caused him to
Lose his moral compass.'
His lawyer said.
He is a devoted family man.
He donated thousands to charity.

The lawyer claimed
'The doctor suffered from
Head trauma from two accidents,
One while he was in college
And the other
In 2001 that made him unfit
To continue with his sentencing.'

Alas, the dermatologist
Grew up in one of the more
Prosperous families in Arcadia,
They owned several farms
And other real estate.
Actually in Arcadia Florida,
Everyone was 'dirt-poor.'
He went to medical school.
He practiced medicine in West Florida.

He bilked patients and
Medicare for over four million dollars

As he falsely diagnosed
One hundred percent of his patients
As having skin cancer and
Submitted them to needless treatments.

Unless he receives a reduced sentence
He is to serve 22 years.
Is he just another victim
Of Society,
Not responsible for his actions?

Or maybe he and his family are
Just plain rotten to the core!

The above was reported in The Ledger (Lakeland, Florida; October 6,2006) , on the sentencing of Dr. Michael Rosin, a dermatologist, who bilked Medicare for at least \$3.7 million for unnecessary surgery. The amount patients paid was not revealed.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Losr Maji

In a small town in the Midwest
Where everyone knew everyone's business,
Before morning light
The story got around.
Jesse Schmidt had been in a fight
At the local bar and
Tom Paine was taken to the regional hospital
With a fractured skull.

Seems his parents
Were the last to know
And when Jesse's dad
At the hardware store
Heard it from one of the customers,
He at first denied that it happened
Then it sunk in that,
Jesse was in a whole lot of trouble.

He rang up Wilma and told her the news
And asked if Jesse was upstairs in bed.
"If he is, get him up
I want to talk to him."

A beery youth of eighteen
Came on the phone
Stood and took the dressing down
That his Pa gave him.

"You better git out of town
Before sheriff Todd comes and locks you up.
Git some money from your Ma and git.
I don't want to ever see you again."

Silence, and Jesse hung up the phone.
He was surprised that his mother
Already had got the suitcase down from the attic
And was putting his fresh washed clothes
In a heap on the kitchen table.
She didn't say a word,

Just took two twenties from her purse
Laid them on top the clothes.
She turned her back on him
Went back to doing the dishes..

"Ma, I'm sorry"
He began to say and
Saw that the issue was closed.
He was to get out of the house and fast.
"Your brother will drive you over
To the bus station in Athens.
Get going."

That was early July
No one heard from Jesse
Or what had become of him.

Then two weeks before Thanksgiving,
The Greyhound pulled into the bus station
Jesse in his navy uniform
Carrying a duffle
Crawled off the bus.

He trudged up the hill
To the white frame house
Looking at those familiar places
He knew so well.

There was the Howard's,
The cousin McKays,
And on and on
Until he reached the picket fence.

He looked across to the small two story
That was the home of his best friend,
And Betsy, his wife and two kids.
The smallest had never been seen by Pete
Who was away somewhere in England in the army.

Jesse didn't know what to expect
But he banged on the front door and entered.
His mom as usual,

Busy with housework
Looked up and saw her first-born.

They stood and stared at one another.
She said, "Git.
If your Pap sees you,
He'll kill you."

"But Ma."

'Pap had to pay all the hospital bills for Tom,
Tom still isn't right.
Git" and with that she wiped her hands
On her apron and went back to the kitchen.

Jesse thought,
Maybe I can still catch the bus out of town.
He grabbed his duffle
And ran back down the street to the station.

He was in luck,
They were changing drivers
So he was able to climb on board.
At this time,
He had no idea where the bus was going,
But it was away, far away.

As happens in this area of the world,
It snows and then it snows some more.
The streets were passable, but just so.
Christmas was going to be a white one
With the snow piled high
On the fields and where it slid of the roof tops
It added to the drifts
Up to the windowsills
On the off-wind side of the houses.

With the war,
Here was rationing and yet
Everyone had something
Extra for Christmas.

The kids never seemed to have enough,
And the old folks sat by the radio
Listening to the news from the front.
The big news was the battle with Japan,
And the news wasn't good.

Many prayed that the war
Would soon be over,
But no one knew how much longer it would be
Now with Roosevelt dead
And Harry Truman in charge,
Everyone worried.

Wednesday came
With the kids out of school
And by four
It started to get dark.
Portending yet another snow fall,
Maybe even a blizzard.
Lights flickered on up and down the street
Smoke curled from the chimneys
As the people settled into their routine
And got ready for bed.

Then along about nine,
The church bell started to ring. Fire!

Everyone rushed to the door
And windows to see where.
And there across from the Schmidts,
The small house where Betsy and the two young-uns lived,
Flames were leaping from the rooftop.
You could see the fire through the windows
As it devoured everything in sight.

The village pumper truck
Lumbered up the hill,
As the neighbors rushed to the house
To help however they could.

You could feel the heat
From the fire

On you face
And had to divert you eyes.

Betsy stood there in her slippers crying,
"My babies, my babies, upstairs."

Two strong men rushed to the front door
And were driven away by the heat.
"Around back, take the stairs." One said.
"I'm with you."

And they plowed
Through the snow
To the back of the house.
"Got to go inside."
"Kick the door down."
And they did.

Inside everything was ablaze
The back stairs were partially gone.
"Give me a boost.
If I can stand on your shoulders
I can crawl up.
And get out of here it's hell."

A moment later,
Having made his way up the stairs
To the bedrooms,
He found the two kids.
The older one was holding the baby in his arms
And was softly crying.

"I'm here to help.
Give me the baby
Take my hand."

He made his way to the window
The crowd below saw them clearly.
The man was wearing a sailor's blue uniform,
In his hand
He held the baby
The small boy was

Holding firm to his leg.

The wind shifted,
And a whirlwind of sparks
Fed the flame as the
Resin from the old pine
Gave its last to the fire.

Then the old house gave a moan,
Followed by a horrendous crash.
The roof of the frame house
Came tumbling inward
Sweeping everything in its path.
The concussion blew out the windows.
The sides of the house swayed out
Then slowly inward
As they fell into the inferno.

The crowd stood,
So quiet
You could once again here
The church bell continuing to peal.

The Schmidt's took Betsy.
"Come home with us."

"No, I'm going to the church first."

And so they went.

At the door,
The Priest's house keeper
Met them and
Held wide the door.

There in the darkened room
Lit only by the glare
From the fire up the street,
Stood the Priest
Holding Betsy's baby
His hand resting on the lad's head.

"Jesse dropped them off
Said, he had to go."

"Jesse? "

"Is something wrong."

Mrs. Schmidt stood there for a moment,
"We better be getting home."

The next day the town was abuzz
With the strange happenings
No one could rightly
Explain what they had seen.

At the Schmidt's
Everyone was out of the house
Except the Mister and Missus
When a taxi arrived at the front.

A smartly dressed naval officer
Who was well over 6 feet tall
Holding a bundle,
Crawled out of the cab.

"Wait."

At the door,
He asked if this was the home
Of John and Wilma Schmidt
If they had a son named Jesse.

"Yes? "

"Mr. Schmidt
I am with the United States Navy
It is my duty to inform you
That your son,
Jesse Schmidt has been killed.

He was aboard one of our destroyers in the Pacific.
Two weeks ago that ship was sunk

In a battle engagement and all members
Of the crew were lost.

I offer you the thanks of
The President of the United States
For your sacrifice and I personally
Want to offer my condolences.”

He gave them the folded flag,
Returned to the taxi and was gone.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Lost Hat

The Argument

How the lawyer (student) ,
not accompanied by Don Quixote,
by his squire, Sancho,
or the barber,
found himself in a circumstance
of great embarrassment
and only by his quick thinking
did he retain the chance
that the hand of a fair one
might still be his.

Prologue

Fair reader,
if you think that
many of the stories of Don Quixote
have found their way
into other prose and poetry,
you are correct.

This offering is one
that has been in part
told by the fellow from Connecticut,
known for his story
about a traveler in
King Arthur's time.

As that one traveled,
he came upon a story
similar to this
but he was unable to know the ending
as the person who related it to him
did not finish it.

Fortunate we are that
the famous Don penned in his diary
the events as they happened

and by careful research,
it has been reconstructed
and is preserved for
future generations.

As with many stories
written by the great recorders of history,
some of the characters
change but the events
remain much the same.
So it is as we begin
the tale of 'The Lost Hat.'

The Beginning

The Lawyer who had aged
far more than his teeth
and was known throughout his village
as Don the Good's friend;
was manly yet gentle,
bold yet bashful,
boastful yet timid,
and as he lived
in the quite village of La Mancha,
all knew of his,
shall we say peculiarities.

His friends numbered many
including the barber, priest,
other men of learning
and the villagers
who sometimes
depended on his generosity
as he took from his own larder
to provide for them
in times of need.

He was a reader on occasion
in the Church
and at the school.
Being a reader,
was but a humble distinction;

still, perhaps it was his only one,
regardless, he was modestly
proud of it and was
devoted to the Church,
its work and its interest.

The extreme kindness
of his nature was recognized
by all; in fact,
people said that
he was made entirely out of good impulses
and bashfulness:
that he could always
be counted upon for help
when it was needed,
and for bashfulness
both when it was needed,
and when it was not.

His lady fair
if one might call her that,
was at least three score,
but who counts
when one has passed the years
where youth is favored.

It is just to say that
she did have a certain winning way,
although some might relate it
to her love for the fruit of the vine
and not too discriminating taste
in those who sought her favor.
But to the man of law,
she was most beautiful
and the subject of much day-dreaming
as well as an occasional foray
into the town
to see if her affections
might be won.

When she happened
to glance his way,

his spirits rose and
were as quickly dashed
when the smile she bore
was directed to another.

Was she wavering,
in his dreams,
he had high hopes,
but come morning
drifted into despair
and retreated to his library
where he searched his books
for an answer
or perhaps a palliative
to his miseries.

It is fair to say
that the lady's mother
had been in opposition
from the first
as she saw better chances
for her daughter.

But as wishes
were seen to be not horses
but only their leavings,
she was wavering.
Perhaps the student
sensed an opportunity,
or was it that he
overlooked the interest
the mother showed,
as that of her own amorous intent?

Nevertheless,
the student intended
to win the old one's approbation
and thought he had found a way
through other family members.

Not far from town
and over the swift flowing stream

that provided a cooling refuge
for many of the town youth,
who saw no need for modesty
when they were amongst their own,
lay the small holdings
of the mother's sisters.

Passed down from
generation to generation,
they lived alone in a house
that at best could be
described as humble.
But, it was all
that they possessed
and with the meager rents
they sometimes were lucky enough
to collect, they managed;
but not well.

On more than one occasion,
the food in their larder
came from the lawyer's
own simple table.

As the student dwelt
deep into his books,
an idea appeared
before him.

Perhaps through the hearts
of these two maidens,
he might find a way
to his true love's heart
(and permission
from her mother as well,
if it please God,
as he was so familiar
of saying.)

The Donna was touched
by his warm interest
in the two charity projects.

These were two forlorn and aged
sisters who lived in a log hut
in a lonely place
up a cross road
four miles from the more prosperous
abode of his true love.

It is fair to say,
one of the sisters was crazy,
and sometimes a little violent,
but not often,
and the other would loose
in a beauty contest
to the back end
of an ass.
Be that as it may,
they were the key
to the box that locked away
the heart of lady.

The Woeful Event

With coming of spring,
the time seemed ripe
for a final advance,
and the student,
whose name I cannot recall,
gathered his courage
together with a basket of treats,
and resolved to make
the best of it.

He would take along
a contribution of food
from his root cellar,
double the usual size,
and win the mother over;
with her opposition annulled,
the rest of the conquest
would be sure and prompt.

He took to the road

in the middle of a placid Sunday
afternoon in the soft period
before the onset of the heat
of summer,
and he was equipped
properly for his mission.
No armor did he wear.
No he was clothed
all in white linen
pressed carefully
by his house keeper,
a blue ribbon
had been fashioned
for a necktie,
and he had on what
could be described
as dressy tight boots
or shoes if you so call them,
blackened especially for this occasion.

The horse and cart
were the finest
that the livery-stable in town
could furnish.
Across his lap,
a robe was of the finest wool,
carefully dyed and woven.
It was new,
and it had a hand-worked design
known only to a select few
and it could not be rivaled
in that region
for beauty and elaboration.

When he was four miles
out on the lonely road
he came to the wooden bridge
and as he was unsure of the horse,
he stopped, stepped down
and carefully led the rental horse
over the bridge.

As might be expected in the springtime,
a fresh breeze
swept down the creek and,
alas, his hat blew off and
where did it drift on the wind,
but into the creek.

It floated down and
lodged against a sand bar
not too distant.
What to do?
Somehow, he must recover his hat,
that was manifest;
but how was he to get it?

Then he had an idea.
The roads were empty
at this time of day and
nobody was stirring.
Yes, he would risk it.
He led the horse to the roadside
and set it to cropping the grass;
then he undressed and
put his clothes in the cart,
petted the horse a moment
to secure its compassion
and its loyalty,
then hurried to the stream.
He swam out
and soon had his hat.

Alas, when he got to the top
of the bank the horse
and cart were gone!

He had faced many challenges
in his life,
but this affront
was too much,
his legs almost gave way
under him.

And then he spied the horse
walking leisurely along the road,
nipping at tender shoots of
grass as he went.
The student trotted after it,
saying, whoa, whoa,
here good fellow, and,
perhaps muttering a few choice oaths
remembered from his reading.

However, whenever
he got near enough
to chance a grab for the reins,
the horse quickened its pace
just a little
and defeated his efforts.

And so it went,
the Spaniard,
naked as a jay-bird,
hat firmly settled on head,
perishing with anxiety,
expecting every moment
to see people come in sight;
he could only continue
this game of cat and mouse.

He tagged on and on,
imploring the horse,
beseeching the horse,
cursing the horse,
till he had left
only a short distance between him,
and the Donna farm;
then at last
he was successful,
he caught up the reins
and brought the horse to a halt.
He got up onto the cart seat,
flung on his undershirt;
next came the shirt;
then he reached for his pants

but he was too late;
he sat suddenly down
and pulled up the lap-robe,
for he saw someone
coming out of the near yard;
a woman, he thought.

He wheeled the horse
to the left,
and struck briskly up
the crossroad.
It was perfectly straight,
and exposed on both sides;
but there were woods
and a sharp turn
three miles ahead,
and he was very grateful
when he got there.

The Encounter

As he passed
around the turn
he slowed
the horse to a walk,
and reached for his pants,
too late again.

He had come upon villagers
who were visiting the Donna
and his true love.
They, four in number,
were on foot,
and seemed tired and excited.

At once, seeing the cart,
they stepped to it and
reached out their hands for comfort,
all spoke at once,
and in their gabble,
sounded as geese,
but finally it was understood by the lawyer.

How glad they were
that he had come,
and how fortunate it was.

The first woman said,
impressively,
'It looks like an accident,
his coming at such a time;
but let no one profane it
with such a name;
he was sent.
Sent from on high.'

They were all moved,
and the second said in an awed voice,
'Sandra C.,
you never said a truer word in you life.
The man is an angel
an angel as truly as ever an angel
was an angel of deliverance.
I say angel,
and will have no other word.
Sir, let any one ever say to me again,
that there no such thing
as special Providences;
for if this isn't one,
let them account for it that can.'

'I know it's so.'
said the fair-one's mother, fervently.
'Sir, I could worship you;
I could go down on my knees to you.
Didn't something tell you,
didn't you feel
that you were sent?
I could kiss the
hem of your lap-robe.'

The student was unable to speak;
he was helpless
both with shame and fright.
The prattling continued:

'My, just look at it all around, women.
Any person can see the hand
of Providence in it.
Here at noon what do we see?
We see the smoke rising.
I speak up and say,
that's the Old People's house afire.
Didn't I? '

'The very words you said.
I was as close to you
as I am now,
and I heard them.
You may have said
hut instead of cabin,
but in substance
it's the same.

And you were looking pale, too;
a colour not unlike
the fine detail
bordering the lap-robe.'

'Pale? I was so pale,
that is why,
you just compared it
with his lap-robe.
Then the next thing I said was,
we'll get the hired man
to rig up to team
so we can go to the rescue.
And she said,
to the other one that is,
don't you remember,
you told him
he could drive
to see his people, and
stay over on the Lord's Day.
And it was just so.
I declare for it,
I had forgotten it.

Then, said I,
we'll all go afoot.
And go we did.
And what did we find,
why we found this one
on the road. '

'And we all went together, '
said the second woman.
'And found the cabin set fire and
burnt down by the crazy one,
and the poor old things so old
and feeble that they couldn't go
afoot with us.

And we got them to a shady place
and made them as comfortable
as we could,
and began to wonder
which way to turn
to find some way
to get them conveyed
to a proper house.
And I spoke up and said
now what did I say?
Didn't I say,
Providence will provide? '

' By gory,
why sure as you live,
so you did!
I had forgotten it.'

'Say, I said it first,
added her companion,
But you certainly said it.
Now wasn't that remarkable? '

'Yes, I said it.
And then we went to the
first neighbor's house,
I never can remember their name

but you know
they have the nicest
flowers and those children,
just too many to count.

Dear me,
I done forgot
where I was headed.
Now I remember,
we be gone some two miles
if it isn't a step less,
and when we
hallowed the house
it was quiet,
cause all of them were
gone to the prayer meeting
over on the estate of that Count,
you know the short fat one
with the roving eye;
and then we came all the way back,
two miles, and then here,
another mile, and lo,
Providence has provided.
You see it yourselves.'

They gazed at each other
awe-struck,
and lifted their hands and
said in unison:
'It's per-fectly wonderful.'

And then, said the older
and wiser one,
'What do you think
we had better do?
Let this fine young man
drive the Old People to our house
one at a time,
or put both of them in the cart,
and him lead the horse? '

The student gasped.

'Now, then,
that's a question, '
said the smaller one.
'You see,
we are all tired out,
and any way we fix it,
it's going to be difficult.
For if the man takes both of them,
at least one of us
must go back to help him,
for he can't load them
into the cart by himself,
and them being so helpless.'

'That so, '
said the first.
'It doesn't look easy,
but, how would this do! -
one of us drive there with the man,
and the rest of you
go along to my house
and get things ready.
I'll go with him.
He and I together can lift
one of the Old People into the cart;
then drive her to my house and - '

'But who'll take care of the other one?
said the worrier of the three, '
We mustn't leave her there
in the woods alone,
you know especially the crazy one.
There and back is
eight miles, you know.'

While our student
had sat on the cart seat
with the robe
gathered around his legs,
the daughter,
(That is his intended)

gave him a queer look and
then and went
to sit with her mother and
the other two on the grass
beside the buggy.
The ladies were resting
their weary bones and
continued to chatter,
The most of which
can't be remembered.

They fell silent
a moment or two,
and struggled in thought
over the baffling situation;
then one brightened and said:
I think I've got the idea, now.
You see,
we can't walk any more.

Think what we've done already,
four miles there,
two to neighbors, is six,
then back to here,
it's nine miles at least since noon,
and not a bite to eat or drink.

I declare I don't see
how we done it;
and as for me,
I am just not going any more.
Yet, one's got to go back,
to help him,
there's no getting around that;
but whoever goes has got to ride,
not walk.
So my idea is this:
one of us will ride back with him,
then ride to the next house
with one of the Old People,
leaving his goodness
to keep the other old one company,

you all to go now
to the cabin and rest and wait;
then one of you
drive back and
get the other one and
drive here and
our good neighbor,
the young man can walk.

Splendid! they all cried.
Why, that will do.
That will answer perfectly.
And they all said
the Donna had the best head
for planning in the whole district,
and they said
that they wondered
that they hadn't thought of
this simple plan themselves.
They hadn't meant
to take back the compliment,
good simple souls,
and didn't know
they had done it.

After a consultation
it was decided that the
youngest should drive back
with the student,
she being entitled to the
distinction because she had
invented the plan and
besides she was the stronger of the two
in case any help was needed in
getting the crazy one in the cart.
Everything now being
satisfactorily arranged and
settled, the ladies rose,
relieved and happy,
brushed down their gowns and
three of them started homeward;
the elected one set her foot

on the cart step and
was about to climb in,
when finally the lawyer
found a remnant of his voice
and gasped out,
please, call them back
I am very weak;
I can't walk,
I can't indeed.

'My dear!
You do look pale;
I am ashamed of myself
that I didn't notice it sooner.
Come back,
all of you!
The man's not well.'

'Is there anything
I can do for you, Sir.
I'm real sorry.
Are you in pain? '

No, madam,
only weak,
I am not sick,
but only just a bit weak lately;
not long, but just lately.'

The others came back,
and poured out their sympathies
and commiserations,
and were full of self-reproaches
for not having noticed
how pale he was.
And they at once
struck out a new plan,
and soon agreed
that it was by far
the best of all.
They would all go to
their house and

see to the man's needs first.
He could lie on the sofa
in the parlor,
and while The Donna
and the light of his life,
took care of him
the other two ladies would
take the buggy
and go
and get one of the Old People,
and leave one of themselves
with the other one, and -

By this time,
without any solicitation,
they were at the horse's head and
were beginning to turn him around.
The danger was imminent,
but once again the lawyer found his voice
and saved himself.

He said, 'But ladies,
you are overlooking something
which makes the plan impracticable.
You see if you bring one of them home,
and someone remains
behind with the other,
there will be three persons
there when one of you
comes back for the other,
for some one must
drive the horse and cart back,
and three can't come home in it.

They all exclaimed,
'Why, sure, that is so! '
And they were all perplexed again.

'Dear, dear, what can we do! '
said the sly one;
'It'a the most mixed-up thing
that ever was.

The fox and the goose
and the corn and things,
and Sancho's tales,
oh, dear, they are nothing
compared to it.'

They sat wearily down once more,
to further torture
their tormented heads
for a plan
that would work.
Presently the daughter offered a plan;
it was her first effort.

She said:
'I am young and strong,
and refreshed, now.
My friend can go on to our house and rest.
You see how plainly he needs it.
I'll go back and
take care of the Old People;
I can be there in twenty minutes.
You can go on and
do what you first started to do,
wait on the main road at our house
until somebody comes along
with another cart;
the farmers will soon be
coming back from town now.
I'll keep Old Polly patient
and cheered up.
The crazy one doesn't need it.'

This plan was discussed and accepted:
It seemed the best
that could be done,
under the circumstances,
and they thought,
the Old People must be
getting mighty discouraged
by this time.

The student felt relieved,
and was deeply thankful.
Let him once get to the main road
and he would find a way to escape.

Then Donna said:
'The evening chill will be coming on,
pretty soon, and
those poor old burnt-out things
will need some kind of covering.
Take the lap-robe with you, dear.'

'Very well, Mother, I will'.
And, she stepped to the buggy
and put out her hand to take it

What was he to do?
Consider: His character;
great generosity and kindness,
but complicated
with unusual shyness
and diffidence,
particularly in the
presence of ladies.

Then there was his love
for the beauty before him,
in a hopeful state
but far from secure
(in his own mind) indeed,
this affair must be
handled with great tact,
and no mistakes made,
no offense given.
And there was the
mother wavering,
half willing but adroit
and flawless diplomacy
would be necessary,
to win her over,
now, or perhaps never at all.

Also, there were
the helpless Old People
yonder in the woods
waiting.
Their fate and his happiness
to be determined
by what he should do
within the next two seconds.

As she reached
for the lap-robe;
he had to decide,
there was no time to be lost.

And of course
there could be none
but a happy ending to the story;
finding him in high credit
with the ladies,
his behavior without blemish,
his modesty unwounded,
his character for self-sacrifice maintained,
the Old People rescued
through him, their benefactor,
all the party proud of him,
happy in him,
singing his praises on
all their tongues.

But he was beset
with persistent and
irreconcilable difficulties.
His shyness would not allow him
to give up the lap-robe.
This would offend all.
She and perhaps her mother
would be disgusted;
and it would surprise
the other ladies.

How could his stinginess
toward the suffering Old People

be reconciled,
it was out of character
of his family,
and as he was a special
Providence as they claimed,
he could not properly refuse.
If asked to explain his conduct,
his shyness would not
allow him to tell the truth,
and lack of invention
and practice would find him
incapable of contriving
a lie that would wash.

Alas. Alack, Woe.
And, his fair one was still
reaching for the lap-robe.

It appeared that Angelenia
seemed to have reached
the best conclusion possible
(from the ladies viewpoint
but not from our hapless suitor.)
It appeared imminent
that he would be uncovered,
his nakedness revealed.
His fate would be sealed,
if this be the case
for they would surely
discover his secret and
in so doing,
damn him to eternal bachelorhood
with the loss of the one
he was so close to winning.

The False Denouement

His voice was faint,
but he rose to the occasion.
'Ladies, I have what I believe
to be the best and only solution.
Hear me out.

Now this came as quite a surprise
to the ladies
who were unaccustomed
to having their decisions challenged,
and especially by
one such as a student of law.
But he noted
his intended looked favorably on him
with a smile that could only
be considered encouraging.
He thought,
the battle to be half won.
I have the support of Donna Angelenia,
perhaps I can extricate myself
from this mess that I find myself in.
And he said,
'A single robe
will not be enough,
I propose that Angelenia
(for that is what the Donna
called her daughter) and
I go to the house and
fetch a couple of quilts
that will keep the Old People
quite warm until help comes.'

'Lausy be,
why didn't we think of that.'
Exclaimed the spry one.

'Takes a man to
know these things.'
Angelenia said
with a widening smile.

'Then do it young man, '
her mother said,
nodding her head agreeably,
and looked again
at this Catholic
that might soon be

a member of her household.

It being agreed,
Angelenia placed her foot on the step
and was quickly seated beside the lawyer.
And off they went the
short distance to the house.
When they arrived,
he said,
'If you please
would you gather the quilts
and I will hold the horse in readiness.'

She did so and
soon returned with two quilts
from her own bed,
but so quickly that
the student
could make no progress
whatever with his pants.

Then he said,
'Perhaps some water
for them to drink
would be in order
And off she went
to the well to draw a bucket
of fresh cool water.
Each time she was sent
on an errand,
she returned in short order
so that he was unable
to make any adjustment
in his difficulty.

Finally, Angelenia said,
'Mother's right,
we are all famished,
let me get some bread and cheese,
I'll be right back.'
With that she returned
to the house and

shortly brought
a small basket of foodstuffs,
which she placed
in the back of the cart.

Gathering all his manly courage,
he said to his lady intended,
'It is wrong that
a lady risk her reputation to,
be on the road alone and
going to the aid of those poor old ladies.
While I am in a
somewhat weakened condition,
if I do not go,
your mother will think badly of me
and that is something
I cannot bear.
I shall go to the assistance
of the old ones alone!

'And, as I have responsibility for
the return of this fine horse and
cart to the livery in good time,
I must have the final word.'

'We are agreed that
we must aid our aged brethren,
and the way is clear to me as
how that it shall be done.
You underestimate my abilities.
I shall go alone to
the burnt out house and
I shall put them both aboard the buggy and
point them to the way home.
The good horse knows the way
as well as I and
will return them to you and
your care in short order.
I will remain behind to
salvage what can be of
their possessions and
dear Mary,

you can come for me
when the ladies are comfortably settled.'

'I shall go with you.'

'No, we must
remain here at the house,
it would be a scandal
to our families and
to our Church,
if we by ill luck
must spend the night together
without proper chaperones.'

'But how will you
get them into the cart,
the step is high,
and they are frail? '
asked she.

'Worry not about that,
I have a plan that
will surely work to
get them aboard,
As I remember,
there is a large tree stump
near the house.
It will make a good footstep.
All that is required is
that I bring the cart close and
they can easily climb aboard
as they have done so
many times before.'

Angelenia released the grip
that she held on the horse's reins and
the student turned
the cart sharply in the road and
gave a wave as he sped away.
He could hardly contain himself
as he knew for the first time

that all would end well.
The road being straight and level,
he let the horse move along
at a quick trot and finally after
going more than a mile,
he was sure no one was in sight.
'Blessed Jesus.'
He thought, and
pulled the horse
to the side of the road so
that he could finally
address his problem.

The Secret Revealed

He removed his pants from
underneath the lap-robe and
was just about to cast the robe aside
when he heard from the near bush,
'Glory Be, Ms. Dulci's young man
has come to get us,
get up, Crazy One.
And almost at the left wheel
of the cart,
not six feet away,
there emerged the two wizened ones.

With God as witness,
they both looked
as spry and happy
as spring chickens.
Both were covered with
smut from the fire and
dust from the road but
were none the worse
for their trek.

The sane(?) one of the pair
came to the right side of the cart
and the other sister
appeared on the left.
'You going to give us a ride, boy? '

asked the Crazy One.
The student's problems had
reappeared with a vengeance,
as the crazy one
pulled herself up and
to his amazement,
raised the lap-robe and
used the corner to
cover her skinny legs.
Here was a woman
who was not able
to help herself,
but she had obviously
walked upwards of a mile and
was raring to go.
And her sister,
held firm to the reins.
Trapped betwixt them
he saw no escape, and
now his problem
had grown worse.

The sister still on the ground,
looking approvingly
to the cart had noticed
something that no one
had seen or not seen before.
The student wore
no shoes, or boots.
His pale white feet,
perfectly clean from
the morning scrubbing,
gleamed.
His toenails reflecting
the summer sun.
'Where're your shoes, boy? '
she asked.

Silence.

And then in a voice
almost too weak to be heard,

'Ladies, I have come for you and
to see that you are safe to
your sister's house.
But first I must tell you a story
that I beg you will indulge me
the time to tell.
When I am finished,
my fate and that of my marriage
interest in your niece
will be in your hands.
I pray that you will not
pass the story on to anyone,
either friend or family,
and I need your solemn word.'

'Tell me a story, '
urged the Crazy One
as she pulled the robe
closer around her,
threatening to bare his legs.
Her sister looked disapproving
at her but couldn't find words to
stop her from her childish play.

'Go on, I think you are going to tell me
what happened to your shoes.
Lawdy child,
that hardly seems reason
to ask for a vow of secrecy.
But go on! '

As only a lawyer can do,
he described in great detail
how he had lost his hat and
then the horse and cart.
How his secret
had come near
to being discovered,
but he in coming for them
had gained a final chance.
But all was lost when
they appeared before him;

his voice failed him and
trailed off.
He began again,
'Underneath this lap-robe
I have nothing on.'
From his face
which was now crimson,
they could see
he was most embarrassed
to be sharing the robe
with the crazy one.
He pleaded,
'Please let me take the blanket,
wrap myself in it and
retire to the bushes where
I will put on my pants.'

'That's a fine story,
but it don't explain
where your shoes be.'

My shoes,
must have been left behind
at the crik.
I can retrieve them
when I go home.
You, Ms. Polly can
drive the cart to your sisters and
ask Angelia to come for me.
Please, oh, please.'

'Sir, that is the most
outrageous and delightful story
I have ever heard
in all my born days.
Take the blanket and
get down,
I'll hold the horse.
And you do
what you may please
in the bushes,
but be quick about it.

And mind you,
I don't believe a word
you've said
but it sure makes a poor soul
feel better after
just having lost her home and
all she has to her possession.'

As quickly as possible,
he got his pants on and
then helped the sane one
into the cart.
He turned the horse
toward home and
gave it a smart slap on rump and
away they went.

The Very End (almost)

About an hour later,
Angelenia came back with the cart and
the first thing she said was,
'Let's go get your shoes.'

Along the way,
she revealed how the Crazy One
had told the whole story
to the disbelief of everyone but herself.
Her mother had laughed
at her sister's tale and said,
'That's the way it is,
the Crazy One just imagines
the most amazing things,
don't you just love her yarns.'

'But you? '

'I remembered
you weren't wearing shoes.'

Did the student win the fair one's heart? Well, that awaits another of Mahtrow's writings, but be warned that the student was considered a worthy catch by some

of Spain's most eligible ones and he may find himself in the puzzle of trying to decide how he should divide himself so that he could please so many.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Lotus

Poems you write
While others seek
To with words indite
A spirit that is weak.

Yours is a message
From the heart
With words that wage
An image, to impart.

Write On!

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Mallard Hen's Virgil

How she came to be
Nesting along the highway, busy?
But there in the planting
Out of usual sighting
A clutch of eggs
Amongst the twigs
Maybe three or four
Certainly not many more.
In a feathery nest
Where warmth the eggs would bless
Until the magic day would appear
And cracks in shells became at once clear.
So soon, the calcium cage
Shattered likened by a wedge
Did appear a duckling
A wet and furry something
That stood and looked around
At the new world it had found.
Soon joined by another
And then another
Till only one remained
In its hard shell domain.
But the hen seemed to know
And turned the egg for a masterly blow.
Pecking until she did win
Freedom for the duckling within.
And then the four emerged from the nest
And following mother in their quest
For the pond that lay
Just a short distance away.

There in a line they swam
Keeping perfect time,
Celebrating the new world
That was now theirs to explore.

Happy is the mother who sees her brood escape from the limits of the nest and follow the sun.

(The Smith Insurance Agency on Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota Florida has a planting not more than fifty feet from the busy highway where a mother duck tirelessly, year after year has nested her eggs and led her ducklings safely away to the pond that is behind the row of office buildings.)

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Man From Hope - A Reply

Lest we all forget the presidential mess
There is more than just a simple dress
Need to remember Bill Clinton and his Bride
For giving the country a merry ride.

Without pause we can recall
Madam 'no lights' and all
There she stood as Secretary of State
Running about yelling 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' early and late.

Of course this was after she just happened to discover
That there was a bit of Jewishness in her mother.
You must wonder what else she might have found
If she had just happened to look around.

Then there's the other half of the pair,
Remember, they always said, you get two, its only fair.
So Hill joined up and lead the charge in 'Travel gate'
To dismiss the staff in the White House was the fate.

Of course McDougal went to jail
And death sealed his lips without fail
(As did the grim reaper come to call
On many other's who crossed them all.)

But also let us remember too
That it was the disappearance of records of the coup
Related to her memory of indulgences past
They were found at last.

Firing of attorneys is nothing new
As Bill dismissed them all, not just a few.
Surrounded by lawyers to the end
Remember, recently one stuffed his pants with odds and ends.

Then there's Webster Hubbell as we recall
Billed clients for work not done, but that's not all
When found guilty and without income,
Bill's friends provided sustenance and then some.

The list goes on and on
As we recall the error prone:

Elders and her birth control promotion
That even Bill seemed to find beyond redemption.

Attorney General, Janet Reno
Best remembered by Waco and its funeral pyre

No outrage to the insult to dragging by their feet
Dead Americans through a foreign street.

Marc Rich's wife paying the dues
For a pardon from Bill made the news.

Universal health care with the imprint of Hill
Seemed to be too much to swallow, and is still.

Nominated ones who employed labor
That wasn't legal to mind their girl or boy.

Clueless secretary of defense
Who seemed to always be on the fence.

Staff suicide (or was it)
Rumors of a White House passion pit.

Ladies not a few
Including the one dressed in blue.

So we come to remember the Man from Hope
And his bride of devious scope
Who can't quite decide if she is
Hillary Rodham Clinton or just his missus.

As selective memory comes into play,
Forgive and Forget, Alan seems to say,
Is what we should practice in judging Bill and Hill's
Eight year foray into abusing the public will.

The Meadow

Once was a green stretching through
The low lands lying to the west
A lush pasture that Thoreau would have embraced
As fit for man and nature to live side by side

But over years of benign neglect
Invasive species took their toll
Till now all that is seen is soft rush
Mounds of brown swaying in the breeze

No creatures call this their home
As it is a "Barren" place devoid of life
Not even snakes transit amongst the clumps
For there is no subsistence here.

But come the dry season fire could bring life to this place
Except that it is protected and unlikely to burn
So each year the debris of the past
Builds until it is a mat through which nothing can emerge.

Change is in the air
For a renewed vision of the meadow stirs
A place where grasses and flowers grow
And cast a green earthy glow

With the rush cut and the land laid bare
New plants are beginning to send up their heads
To greet the sun and with their feet firmly planted
In the peaty soil, draw nutrients from the once dead tangled mass.

Rush needs light to germinate
And while there are countless seeds
Lying dormant there, it is at a disadvantage
For the stronger grass and flower seeds
Larger and more vibrant predominate

The meadow comes to life
As a dark green cast lies over the virgin soil
Soon to be the grass will be

Several feet tall and dense

Then life underneath this spread
Will welcome the meadow to the future
Where it will house a multitude of animals
Now dependent on it for their life.

Rabbits will come to feed and later nest
Sand hill cranes will find this a place to feed
Cow egrets will come to harvest the insects
That live amongst the green.

The other day an egret alone
Found a shadow above
Which was an eagle in pursuit
Seeing the egret as fair game

In panic the egret flew
But the eagle above matched
Each move until it appeared
That the end was nigh

Then the egret flew close to the meadow green
And the eagle dove hopping to dispatch this bird
But the egret could turn more sharply than the eagle
And on the same flight plane the egret had the advantage

And away it flew
The eagle in pursuit
But unable to close
Until finally it soared again on high.

A black snake raced
The tractor through the meadow
Cutting through the grass with ease
Until it tired of the game and was gone

In the dense area
Two sandhill cranes nest
And soon the two eggs will hatch
Bringing forth the next generation

Wild hogs now feed here as once before
Seeking out frogs that hide in the close grass
They seem to understand
That it is not necessary to root in this magic place.

A cow pauses in this protected place
A new calf is dropped and here will stay
Until the mother senses it is time
For her to take the calf away.

Where cattle have cut a minor path
Going from one area to another
A boar possum unhurriedly walks
As it moves from a resting place.

And listen
You shall hear the chirp of frogs
The cricket sounds
And the call of birds that abound.

The meadow is alive
King rush is gone
Not to be restored
A new day is upon us.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Mobus Loop

The Mobus Loop

To be everywhere and nowhere,
At the beginning and the end.
Educated beyond intelligence.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Mockingbird

At first it seemed a game
Between the criminally insane.
A bird risking death without a care
To provoke this one, from the air.

Flying by the outstretched head
Ignoring the threat that other's dread.
Darting back and forth
In what appeared mindless mirth
As it teased this one of blackness
Intent only in causing distress
To this one of Nature's lowest creatures
That Eve discovered had other features.

The snake remained motionless
Seeming to ignore this flighty pest,
Then slowly raised his head
Above the surrounding grass, and instead
Of lying silently,
Motionless, patiently.
He challenged this demon of unrest
The long-tailed airborne pest.

His tongue darting out as if to warn
The bird that his scorn
Would be answered quickly by
A strike, as he flies
Nearer and nearer to the grassy stranger
Who seemed to pose no impending danger.

As if rising to the challenge, in mock
Of the snake, the bird feigned an attack
From one angle, reversing in mid-air
And came in a fast swoop, as if from no where.

The battle was over, the bird had won
As the snake dropped his head and was on the run.
Now attacking from the rear
The snake had much more to fear

As the bird with outstretched tiny talons
Plucked the tip of the tail and raised it to the heavens.

Having no defense from this attack
The snake squirmed and flipped its back.
Too late to strike at the offender
It was equivalent to surrender,
But the bird, no quarter given
Plunged again from the heavens.

Again and again he attacked
While the snake squirmed on its back.
Then as suddenly as it had begun
The mockingbird had had enough of his fun
And landing in a branch, on the fly,
Serenaded his mate, nesting nearby.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Music Of Ernest Clary

Your poems have
A musical quality
That uses rhyme
And meter for all to see.

Each one tho different
From the other
Brings attention
to another.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Needle

Under the bed, her sewing box.
Near the bottom, a shirt,
Pressed and folded with a patch pinned
Covering an elbow busted out from within.
The shirt long ago had become too small
But somehow it remained
As a memory of something for us all.

In the small cardboard box
The tools of her trade,
Scissor, measure, chalk,
And of course; needles and thread.

And she said, 'Please thread the needle, dear.
My eyes aren't what they use to be.'

Taking the white cotton thread,
Casting off a bit with which to work
Then with scissors trimming the end
So that it could be shaped with wetted fingers.
Until the thread, rolled til the end
Was smooth and tapered round

The chosen needle is held between
The thumb and second finger in such a way
That it could be rotated to catch the light of day
In the needle's eye.

No camel or dromedary need apply
To pass this way.
Instead the thread is brought to bear
And with gentle twisting find its way
Through the eye.

That which emerges from the other side,
Is captured by the index finger
Holding it against the needle
To prevent its escape.

With the other hand, a length is drawn
To equal the amount that will be sewn.
Snip off the allotted thread
And sink the needle into the cushion

It's done and no other words spoken
And even now silence fills the room.

How I wish I could hear,
'Please thread the needle, dear.
My eyes aren't what they use to be.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The New Abc's

A is for aids
the plague spread not by fleas.

B is for bitch
the source of, I know not which.

C is for conservative, but has other meanings to
as example Christian (declining) , or c (as in c u) .

D is a democrat, or the party,
but once stood for democracy.

E is to the environment
and those that believe the cause Heaven sent.

F is the F word that all know
made popular by use on the tv show(s) .

G may be greens, or government,
and in Florida it's gator, if you don't get et.
once stood for gay as in happy go lucky
now for those who are, but can't be said to be.

H of course is for hillary
the wronged spouse that will see us all in the pillory.

I stands for I-pod, not me,
nor for Iraq; you see.

J is the jew word that some can't forget
for others its an imposition of genetics yet.

K is the tropical storm Katrina,
but also k (as in ok) .

L once stood for lesbian,
now Latino is the calling.

M as in mother of all wars,

but also Mex as they cross our borders.

N is for nigger which you cannot say
unless your are black, then it's ok.

O not stands for big oil which is taking a beating
remember when it had a sexual meaning?

P - politics and politicians are known for this letter
made popular by their doing worse, not better.

Q a queer little word that has so many meanings
but best used to identify those of a life style and feelings.

R republican, is what it is said to be
however the Republic was what it was meant to be.

S stupid (as in stuck on stupid)
is a phrase used to identify those who are, well, stupid.

T tax (or taxes) comes to mind
jingles in your pocket, the tax-man's sure to find.

U of course is you, you see
to distinguish U from me.

V virgin is the airline that flew
like the near-extinct V that's disappearing from view.

W is that Bush that all democrats hate,
George of course is the son of his mother and his pate.

X generation has escaped us as it has another cause
setting their own rules and of course their own laws.

Y why me? You say it's the abbreviated version
which seeks to dismiss all blame or aversion.

Z is I suppose for zit which everyone knows
grows red and worry-some about one's own nose.

And now that you've seen the New ABC's

Perhaps you'd like to add some to these?

(Prompted by the use of Blackberrys, e-mail, Political Correctness, and the New Education.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The New Deal

Authors* in writing of the New Deal,
Describe the Liberal Embellishment of Hell,
We've been there in times before
It was of mock Hudibras' lore.

When Vogel** poked fun at those
Who were Democrats, (I suppose)
Educated beyond their own intelligence
And lacking any common sense.

So it was that Vogel did write
The 'A Modern Hudibras' in spite
As he saw the error of their ways
That came in those Glory Days
When Franklin could do no wrong
Mostly because he favored both sides of the coin.

Experimenting with Communistic doctrine
To see if Wallace and Hopkins were Stalin's next of kin.
The government's Administrations
Spread like a prairie fire without suppression
Until all was in danger of collapse
Like a patient in relapse.
Then by saving grace,
Hitler rose up and saved FDR's face.

Now we have a new educator* of the sort
That hasn't read the literature to report
That perhaps others may have criticized FDR
After too many drinks at the BAR***.
The lady's right as she can be
Embracing, Vogel's writing of History.

And what of Schlesinger and his fame
Well, he's authored many a book under his name
And embellished Franklin's character without fail
Even though in his heart must have know full well
That the villain of the opera
Was Hoover cast there as a Soprano

Like the actors of today, who glory in the violence of that era.
(And at least one presidential hopeful gives a wink)
That their antics may have a post-term stink
All is permissible, if you please
So long as the Republican villain's made to flee.
Then, they can regain the mantle of the past
And institute the agendas at long last
Battering free enterprise into submission
As agencies enlarge and rule by Congressional emancipation.

How then will this all play out in the years to come?
Depends on just how many of the voters are truly dumb,
And support those who promise pie in the sky
Passing off burdens to others, bye the bye.

* The Wall Street Journal, Amity Shlaes, June 25,2007, pp A15

** A Modern Hudibras (The New Deal in Rime) , Ulysses Grant Vogan, Blach
Publishing Company, Athens, Pennsylvania,1939 (81pp)

*** BAR - Born a Republican

From A Modern Hudibras:

'See those who march in strident manner
Beneath the garish New Deal banner,
And cast their eyes on clouds of mist
In search of goals that don't exist;
Cocksure of things that are not true,
Entranced by what is weird and new,
Till 'twould appear these devotees
have caught some cerebral disease,
Which blurs their minds with some confusion,
And makes them seek a wrong conclusion.'
pp4

'It is our plan all folks to cheer
By saying what they want to hear;
And, when we meet a worried group,
That say they're floundering in the soup,
Because all prices are too low,
We promise them, with much ado,
That we'll adopt some new devices
To guarantee them higher prices.'

Next day, we meet some delegates,
for whom their spokesman loudly states
Disaster stares them in the eye,
Because all prices are too high.
Of course, as sympathy bestower,
I say that prices should be lower,
And that on profiteers I'll hop,
And quickly make those prices drop.'
pp 43

'To pay the debt, we'll tax the wealthy.
Of course, we know 'tis truly said
That taxes over all are spread;
And, while this axiom we know,
We always say that soft and low;
And 'round elections in the Fall,
We never mention it at all.'
pp 45

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The New Maji

With the passing of the storm,
The sky was clear and
The streets swept clean
By the rain.

Once again
Sean O'Roark made breakfast
Of hot oatmeal and
Coffee for Marg and
Himself then they sat
Discussing the coming week.

Things were pretty dismal
What with the rising unemployment,
Marg's health,
And the tight budget.

They had decided
To economize everywhere they could.
In fact walking the mile or so
To work rather than taking the bus
Saved seventy five cents each way,
And the walk
When the weather was nice,
He enjoyed.
So with a sandwich
In the plastic bag,
He headed out for the plant.

Today, he decided
To take a turn down Main Street
And look in the shops
Along the way.

No one else
Was walking
And he had plenty of time
Before the whistle.

Next to the downtown barbershop
Was a store he hadn't noticed before,
Wasn't even sure if it had been there
When he last passed this way.

A millinery shop
With fancy hats and gloves
In the window,
He thought,
'Who in this town was going
To be buying hats and gloves
At this time of year.'

And yet,
He took the time
To look in the window
And there in the back corner
Was a wig.
Not just an ordinary wig
But one that looked as if
It was made with real hair,
And the color was just like Marg's,
And cut sort of short the way
She liked to wear her's.
Nice, he thought and
Then he passed on down the street.

On the way home,
He retraced his steps
Past the shop
And thought
That would really be a great gift.

But, what was he thinking.
No way could they afford it,
Even though he didn't have an idea
What it would cost.

Dinner was
A rich vegetable soup
And dark bread
That made it seem almost festive.

Of course they decided to
Forego the butter and
Save it for some other occasion.

News continued to be of strife
And the depressed economy
Even though it was just
Four days before Christmas.

Marg seemed to have had a good day
And continued to gain strength
After the chemo and radiation treatments,
So they talked about
What they were going to do in the Spring.
And as usual,
They both were in bed before nine.

Well another day
And again the sun was bright and warm,
It was early morn
When Sean headed out to work.

As he walked along,
A gust of wind
Picked up a bit of paper and
In a quick grab,
He caught it as it flew by.
An advertisement,
Well why not
It was Christmas time.

Walking along he glanced
At the bit of print
And was surprised to discover
That it was for the Millinery Shop.
A puff advertising
Thirty percent off with the coupon.

No trash can was in sight,
So Sean stuffed the ad in his jacket
And continued on his way.

That evening
As he headed home
He passed by the shop,
And everything was there
Just as before
And he thought,
'I bet no one passed
Through those doors today.
So sad.'

Then just as he was beyond the store,
A ladies voice called out.
'Excuse me.'
Sean turned
And a small gray haired lady
Who was probably
Old enough to be his mother,
Was standing in the doorway.

'I saw you admiring the wig.'
Now with all the hats and gloves
In the window,
How had she known that
He was looking at the wig?

'Oh, yes.
I thought how nice it is.'
'It's a wig for a girl,
Made with real hair,
Isn't it pretty? '

'For a girl?
I thought maybe for a lady.'
'Oh, no.
You see it would be too snug
To fit over a full head of hair.'

'That's interesting.
What if the woman had no hair? '
'I don't know,
Never was asked that before,
But of course

It would fit then.'
And she gave a big smile.

'It must be very expensive,
Made with real hair and all? '
Well yes,
But with Christmas just three day's away,
We are having a sale.
Would you like to come in? '

'Really I would
But I've got to be going.
Thanks, anyway.'
And Sean with a smile headed home.

That evening
He and Marg had their dinner
And watched a bit of the news,
This being the Christmas season,
A really good movie was on
Which they watched,
Before going to bed.

Morning,
Just like the days before,
And off to work.
As Sean walked around the corner,
The old lady from the shop
Was sweeping leaves
From the front of the store
Into the gutter.

He touched his cap
(As his father before him
Had all ways done,
And said, ' Morning.'

'Why good to see you.
You know my husband
And I were talking
About the wig last night,
And he said,

That maybe you might want to
Consider trading something for it? '

This caught Sean up short
As the thought never crossed his mind
That they might have something
Worth trading.

Regardless,
He needed to be on his way
And after wishing the lady the best,
Continued to his job.

That afternoon,
Sean took a different route home
To avoid passing by the shop
And Marg commented
That he sure seemed fidgety about something.
The evening seemed to drag on
And while they watched another movie
It just didn't seem to have
The Christmas spirit.

After they turned in,
And Marg was deep
Into her slumbers,
Sean crept from the bed
And opened
The camphor chest at the foot,
Carefully removing a box,
Closed the lid and
After closing the door to the bedroom
So the light wouldn't wake Marg,
Sat at the table
With the box.

He carefully
Untied the ribbon
That held the top in place
Then removed
The cloth wrapped treasure.

He placed the dish on the table
Before him and then
Held it to the light.

Clearly chased in the silver
Were names,
Lots of name and dates.

The first was a date in the 1800's
And the names of grandparents long ago.
Under that,
Another and another
Until finally the date
When he and Marg had been married
And their names beautifully
Cut deep into the silver.

This was the family history,
A legacy.
Back into the box and
Into the cabinet over the stove
And Sean was ready for bed.

Next morning,
After breakfast,
Sean slipped the box under his coat
And after wishing Marg good health,
He was off.
His pace was too fast and
He was sure if he didn't slow down
When he got to the shop
It would be too early.
Or maybe they wouldn't be open,
After all it was Christmas Eve.

And, just as he feared,
The lights in the shop were off.
But, above a single window showed a light,
Which meant perhaps
Someone might be awake,
So he tapped on the door.

He heard the shuffling of feet
On the tile floor and
A light came on
Deep within the store.

'Perhaps, I am being foolish, '
He thought, and turned to go.
'Why, good morning sir.'
And the door of the shop opened.

There stood
The old lady in a long dressing gown,
Hair in a head rag,
Bare feet and looking quite cold.

'Would you come in?
How can I help you? '
Sean never at a loss for words,
Stood like a wooden Indian,
And drew the box from under his coat.

'I thought perhaps
I might be able to trade
Something for the hair piece.'
'Why of course,
Let's see what you have.'

And before he could do otherwise,
She holding him by the elbow
Brought him into the store.
He offered the box to her and
She carefully opened it.

'What a pretty piece,
I've never seen the likes of it
And pure silver it is.'
It must be very long in your family.'

She ran her gnarled finger
Along the chase marks in the silver,
The names, the dates,
The decorative cuts.

'Let me get my husband, '
And she disappeared
Into the darkness of the rest of shop
With the dish in hand.

A moment later,
Certainly more quickly
Than anyone would expect
Who was to examine something for its worth,
She returned with a smile.

'Of course, of course.
And he insist that its value
Is more than the wig and that we
Should give your twenty dollars
Extra in exchange.'

With that
She drew four five dollar bills
From deep in her robe pocket
And place them in his hand.

'I'll put the wig
In a special box and
Have it ready for you this afternoon.'
And with that,
Sean felt that he had been almost
Propelled from the shop.

All day, he worried.
Should he have done this?
But of course.

Finally the afternoon came
And the boss called
All into the office at four.
A Christmas basket of fruit
For each
Which for those with a car or a ride,
Was no problem,

But for Sean,
He thought how would he carry both the basket of fruit
And hat box the mile or so home.
He'd manage and
Away he started toward home.

A trace of clouds
Was covering the sun
And it was drawing colder,
Christmas day promised to be one
Where staying inside
Was going to be most welcome.

Soon he was at the store front,
But something was different,
The hats and gloves
Had been removed from the window and
'His' wig was nowhere to be seen.
There was no light in the store
Or in the window above.
As he looked up and down the street,
Was he at the wrong address?

He tried the door handle
And the door swung easily open.
Dark as the inside of a cow, it was.
'Hello.' There was no answer.
Standing quite alone,
Speechless, fear crept
From the bottom of his stomach until it
Lodged in his throat.
He turned to go.

'Why Mr. O'Roarke, you surprised us.
We are closed for the Holidays you know.'
'But not to fear,
I have your gift here by the counter.
See what a pretty box I have chosen.
Would you like to look inside.'
And she lifted the lid.

Then she closed the box,

Tied the ribbon and
Placed it into a large shopping bag.
'Now be off with you,
And have a Merry Christmas.'

With that and before Sean
Could do more than mumble Merry Christmas to her,
He was out the door and
The door closed behind him.

'Yes, we will have Christmas
At the O'Roarke's'
He said, and headed home.
But first, we must have a tree.

Not too far away,
A lot once filled with fresh cut trees
Was in sight.
As he approached,
He could see that most had been sold
And only a few remained.
A group of teenagers
Had been left to run the stand
And had been promised they
Could keep whatever they earned.
Pickings were slim.
The big trees were gone and
The smaller ones were misshapened.
None would do.

The youngest of the lot
Asked if he could help,
But there was surely
Nothing he could do.

'A tree.'
Was the best that Sean could offer.
'Big or small, fir,
Pine or balsam? '

He thought,
This lad has got to be kidding

None of the above
Would have been the simple answer.

But he said,
'I'd like a balsam, freshly cut,
On a wooden stand.
About six feet would be just right.'

Into the bed
Of an old pickup truck
Parked at the curb,
The boy climbed.

He held up a tree.
'How about this one? '
Suddenly Sean found himself
At a disadvantage.

He'd committed to buy a tree
And hadn't even asked how much.
As if anticipating the question,
The boy climbed out of the truck
Balanced the tree with one hand and said,
'Well we usually get twenty dollars for one
Of this size and quality,
But if I don't sell it,
It'll just go in the fire tomorrow.
How about ten dollars? '

For the first time,
Sean seemed to remember the money
Boot that had been give for the plate.
'Yes, of course.'

And he dug deep into his pocket and
Extracted two five dollar bills.
From nowhere, two larger boys appeared
And each took one of the bills,
And were gone.

'Will you be needing help
Getting it to your car? '

Suddenly, Sean discovered that his problem
Had suddenly become more.
'I'll carry it home,
I only live a few blocks away.'
'Can I help you? '
'But of course.'

And away they walked
The small boy carrying the tree,
Sean leading the way and
You could almost hear the sounds of bells in the air.

At the front door,
Sean told the boy
To put the tree on the porch
So that it would not dry out
In the inside air.

He reached into his pocket
And fumbled for some change.
There was none,
Only the two remaining five dollar bills.

He gave one to the boy
Who stood there for a moment and said,
'Sir, you gave me five dollars.'
Sean said, 'Merry Christmas! '
And the boy said, 'Thank you Sir! '
And disappeared in a flash.

Marg had not been idle this Christmas Eve.
After Sean left she started baking.
Not just any baking but something special for Christmas.
Her recipe:

LACE COOKIES

These cookies spread to make very thin wafers, almost transparent.

Set oven at 375. Mix in a bowl the following:

2 1/4 cups oatmeal (uncooked)

1/4 cups light brown sugar
3 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt

Stir in
1 cup butter melted (note: margarine will burn)

Add
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla

Blend well.
Arrange by teaspoonful at least 2' apart on heavy cookie sheets
Or on foil.
Bake until lightly browned (about 7 minutes) .
Cool.
As soon as firm enough,
Remove cookies from the cookie sheets.
Place gingerly into tin to protect from breaking.

The tin was tied with a ribbon
And slipped under the bed's edge.
And Marg peacefully
Crept back into bed
Where she slept the rest of the afternoon.

Sean placed the hat box
Besides the tree
And took the fruit gift inside
And sat on the side of the bed where
Marg was propped up reading.
'Fruit! Where did you get it? '
'From the boss,
It's Christmas you know.'
And they sat there and ate an apple,
An orange, a banana,
And a bunch of grapes.
Dinner that evening was
Just an afterthought.

Morning:

A brisk wind
Caused the windows to creak in their sashes,
And both Sean and Marg
Seemed to have over slept.

Sean crept from bed
And brought the balsam tree
Into the next room where he placed it
So that it could be seen
When the door was opened.

Then he brought
His gift to the bedside
And gently awakened Marg.

Merry Christmas,
He whispered again and again
Into her upturned ear
Until finally she stirred.

A smile spread across
Her face as she sat up.
'Look what Santa has brought.'
As he offered her the box
With the big bow on top.

'Sean, what have you done?
How could you? '
And a tear seemed to swim
Across her eye.

'My what a big box,
And so pretty too.
I know that you
Could not have tied such a bow.
Where have you had it hidden? '

And hundreds of questions
Came as she caressed the box and ribbon.
Slowly, she carefully untied
The ribbon and laid it aside,
Pressing it flat with her hands.

Then she lifted the lid,
To see inside,
But the gift was itself
Wrapped carefully in tissue,
So that only after she removed
Layer and layer of the thin paper
Could she see.

'What is it?
It can't be.
It is!
Sean it's a wig
And so much like my own hair too.
Oh, its beautiful.
I do so love it.'
And with that she put the wig
Carefully on her head.

Sean bring me my mirror,
I must see.'
'It's so lovely, and
Oh so warm.'

'Sean O'Roark
when I am better,
You'll pay for this.'
And they embraced.

'Well you must understand that
I am not the only one here
To have a gift.
Reach under the bed and
Get the package
I have for you.'

As Sean pulled from underneath
The bed the old and very worn fruitcake tin
Which had been in the family for years,
A smile came on his face.

'What have you done?

Have you been in the kitchen
When you shouldn't ought? '

And he carefully
Held the tin and
Gave it a slight shake.
It seemed empty.

'Open it.'
And he did.
There nestled amongst tissue
Were the lace cookies.
And what beautiful cookies they were.
Baked to a golden brown,
So thin and fragile
That one was almost afraid
To touch them.
His eyes swelled with tears.

'Sean,
Get our plate from the trunk
So that you can see them.'

Silence.
And his chin dropped
And his eyes closed.
What was he to do?

The wind stirred once more
Against the house,
And the windows rattled,
The bed room door slowly opened.

'Oh Sean, a tree.
You got us a tree.
And look, there atop the tree,
Like the guiding star,
Our plate,
Oh, how it shines! '

Merry Christmas.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Nose Knows

In the elevator in the midst of winter
One doesn't expect the smell to linger
But there it is for all to sense
The presence of a chemical essence.

As the young lady entered there
Her aroma was one to share
A bit of nutmeg or other spice
By some standards; sure smelled nice.

Then the man just past his teens
Dressed in sandals and torn-kneed jeans
An earthy smell is what you discovered
Probably from sleeping with another.

An elderly lady entered next
With a string of pearls about her neck.
Gloves covered her hands and a prim hat upon her head,
But most distinguishing was the floral bouquet her entry lead.

Next came one who must sell cars or insurance
For the ever presence old-spice fragrance.
Surely said to one and all
This one's a promoter, without gall.

And the mother carrying her bundle of joy and toil
With the too wet diaper beginning to spoil.
The trace of ammonia in the air
Means there will soon be diaper rash on the bottom there.

What is this the smell of unwashed feet
Seems to come from the professor dressed complete
With rumpled shirt, tweedy coat and English-school tie
Distinguished for sure, I cannot lie.

Standing at attention, commanding the door
Is a soldier, probably home for leave, or more.
Not a hint of essence of perfume
A man's man, in this small square room.

There stands a petite one, most proper
That for appearance is for sure a stopper.
Wearing the latest fashions of those that know,
And her perfume, warmed by her body glow
Gently adds to the fragrance noticed there.
No cologne or 'toilet water' used without care.

Wait, is something amiss, could it be
What in olden days a bag called aspidia.
Suspended around the neck of the one who
Desired to be protected from pestilence, one or two.
(And also rumored if garlic, to protect the wearer
Against vampires, werewolves and the evil eye.
Not to mention diseases like the plague or whatever.)

Some complain of air poisoned by the smoker
But their presence is not noticed in this car,
Surely a pipe smoker with his fragrant briar
Would if lighted fill the air,
And a cigar smoker with his stogie alit and aglow
Would let us all be aware and in the know.
Cigarettes once carried into the elevator with care
Protected against brushing in another's hair,
But now all are banished from the environment
A Government given reprieve in any event.

But what is it that I sense as the door slides shut,
Something that has been described as indifferent - but.
A smell that comes from the one in the corner
Rank and distinct it is described by another,
Yet can't be identified by the nose
It's 'old-man smell', I suppose.
(And if you will care to venture a guess,
It well could be the 'old-lady' just passing gas.)

As the elevator comes to a sudden stop
And all emerge to work or shop,
We're reminded that the 'smells' about us
Are there for pleasure, or to disgust,
For the nose knows no bounds on what it senses
As the air passes through the violated sinuses.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Old Rope Swing

Drifting down the river
Going where the current takes you
Away from the snags and rocks
Over the deep cool pools
Where the fish lay quietly
Waiting for the smaller fry.

Time passes slowly by
With the clouds overhead
Drifting slowly until they too are gone
Only blue sky remains although
Through the trees only a glimpse
Is given before all is again in shadows.

Around the bend and on the far bank
A lone girl, maybe ten
Tends to the business of spooning
Sand from the tannin stained water
She looks up but
Seeing no one she recognizes
Returns to her task
Of looking for shark's teeth.

As the snaking river makes another grand
Loop and runs over a stretch of lime rock
Pools of deeper water formed by the current's erosion
Appear dark and foreboding
But not to anyone intent on swimming.

An old rope dangles
From the overhanging tree
The tree, shaped by
High waters of the past,
Its roots set firmly
In the mucky dirt.

Crude steps of assorted boards
Nailed to the trunk
Spaced for climbing

To a branch that seems to
Hang there as if by design.

And higher yet,
Placed there by someone
More venturesome than most,
Wrapped around and around
The massive trunk is the rope.

A manila rope black with
Ever present mold
Hangs listlessly not even
Moved by the slight breeze.

The rope carefully knotted
By an engineer
Who knew just what to do.
Small knots for a handhold
And at the bottom a massive knot
Tied back and forth on itself
To form a lump bigger than two fist.
Designed to be held between the legs
As one swings on the rope.
The end frayed or unraveled
By countless use.

At first the woods are silent
But soon the muted voices
From the high bank.
Some four or five,
The oldest maybe thirteen
And the youngest not more
Than eight or so.

Mindless chatter
As they beat the grass in front
To encourage any rattler
To find another place in the sun.

Backs glisten with sweat
Ringlets around the neck
Where dirt lodges in the wrinkles

Feet bare and toughened
An occasional sandspur
Can't penetrate the hard sole.
Cutoff jeans faded and worn.
Blond curly-tops speak
Of their English heritage.

Down the bank at the tree
They eye the dark water
Looking for the eyes and nostrils
Of the gator that some say
Is twelve feet long
He's master of this stretch of water
And keeps all others away
Making it a safe place to swim.
No other gator dare enter his territory,
The penalty is death.

The youngest boy jumps in
With a big splash
And the other watch to see
If it raises any interest down stream
It's as though they offered
Him to the gods
To see if all was well.

Satisfied the oldest climbs the tree
Reaching for the rope and
Gives it a push causing it to
Swing back and forth until
One of those on the ground
Can catch it.

The heaviest of the group
Tugs hard on the rope and
Kicks off from the bank
Swinging out over the languid water
Back and forth he goes each time gaining
A bit more momentum until he
At the peak of his swing over the river
is some ten feet or more in the air

Then he lets go and drops with a splash.

The rope swings back toward the bank
and another captures it
And repeats the process
Until the one in the tree
Who now has the rope.
Positioned on a gnarled knot
Readies for the most daring of leaps.
He kicks out and away from the branch
As if attempting to jump to the bank itself
But the rope describes a lazy circle
Taking him out and away
Until he is twenty feet
Or so from the bank
Maybe fifteen feet in the air.

Releasing the rope
He cannonballs into the river
Where the water
May be ten feet deep
At this time of year.

The water is now alive
With plunging bodies and
Sounds of splashing
Overwhelmed their voices
Raised higher and higher to be heard.

Up river, the small girl
With her bucket, shovel and screen
Comes swimming down
Toward the tree
No one speaks to her.
She crawls out onto the dirt bank
And adjust the straps
On her swimming suit.

Then, climbs the tree
To the gnarled knot
And exhibits a perfect dive
The boys are on the bank

Are waiting for her.

All climb the bank
And head for home.

It's time for dinner.
And the old rope hangs forlorn,
Waiting for another day.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Parable Of Do-Good, Do-Better And Do-Best

Once, a village, right and proper,
thought of ways
To make things,
better for future days.

Accept a gift
from England's Queen
And use it to
promote their theme.
Take the swans,
they contrived
And keep them
at the lake side.
Feed them and
watch them grow
And the people will
enjoy the mating show.
So the pair started with,
soon produced even more
Swans than ever thought possible;
before.

And the swans did
what swans do
And produced,
stuff, known as Doo.
Made the lake
and shore a mire
To be avoided to save
shoes and other attire.
That's the way it was,
in the time of knights and men
When Do-Good
took a presence and action in.

'Time for a change
to take place
To alter the
lake's unpleasant face, '
So ruled Do-Better

Who took action,
Which caused amongst the swans,
Consternation.
'It's for the swans and people, '
He said,
As his lieutenants
Went ahead.
Called forth equipment to
Dig and haul away,
That which had accumulated
On that day.
They visioned a lake again,
Pristine in style.
Which would take a bit of Gold
And just a little while.
That's the way it was,
In the time of knights and men
When Do-Better
Took a presence and action in.

So, it came to pass that it was
Necessary to find
A place like the other.
One the swans wouldn't mind.
Fortunately a lake was located
Just out of town
Where the swans
Could nest(le) down.
This is just what Do-Best did,
We are told,
Made the move for the swans,
Most bold.
Which is the way it was,
In the time of knights and men
When Do-Best
Took a presence and action in.

The new lake's alligators
Welcomed the swans,
And ate them,
Every one.

Some see the actions of
Do-Good, Do-Better, and Do-Best
As nothing more than,
personification of the anti-Christ
But, Others know
that it is the Way
Government works in
Society.

(In memory of Lakeland Florida's swans.)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Pear Tree

Underneath the shade of the tree
Horses and cows swat flies
Endlessly
But there's another reason they're here
It's hoping for the dropp of another pear.

So tasty to man and beast
(And for the horses,
A measure of how high they can reach.)
A sweet and crispy thing
That old memories are sure to bring.

To repay the tree for its beneficence
The cows and horses
Add a meadow muffin essence
(Careful where you step.)
Will be there to fertilize the next crop
Of pears growing year-to-year non-stop.

And to ensure there's no waste
A family of tumblebugs assemble in haste
And carefully rolling into a ball
The bounty that did fall
From the grateful cows and horses
That gathered here
In the heat following summer solstice.

Did Darwin note the ever present
Bugs that assemble with intent
To preserve those droppings for the future?
To us, it just seems to be a bit of manure.

And is recorded in their DNA
A special message that tells the way
In which each ball should be formed
So that it's easy to roll when made round?

Such it is when you think too much
It'll warp your brain and put you out of touch

With the reality of the day
(And maybe it's better way.)

But the horses and cows continue to swat
Enjoying the fruit and know not what
The meaning is of evolution
Or their contribution to pollution.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Pedant

The Pedant

'Lysander talks extremely well;
On any subject let him dwell,
His tropes and figures will content ye;
He should possess to all degrees
The art of talk; he practices
full fourteen hours in four-and-twenty.'*

Lysander reminds one of a later day
Scholar that has much to say.
Who lectures both to the left and the right,
To all who would lend an ear in their plight.
This anointed one, like Lysander of old
Grows wearisome, and increasingly bold!

*Matthew Prior, pp208, *The Poetical Works of Matthew Prior, Vol.. II*,
London,1729. MDCCLXXIX

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Penance For The Peas

Now all you sinners come this way
Feel the distress as you pass the day.
How is it, we all ask,
'That taking peas is no easy task? '

For you see it clear as the morning sun
As your new day has begun,
Cups of coffee and other potables
Whistle wets are most agreeable
Down the hatch they pass
Without concern or dispatch
Yet, they cause us not to pee
Till afternoon when go wee,
And other drinks in abundance go
Yet through the bathroom door no liquids flo.

Till, it's late in the eve
When a pause is taken for your 'daily' pee.
Then, off to the sport of the evening when perhaps a glass
Of port, bubbly or just water the whistle pass.
After comes eleven in the night and the cap
Rest upon the head for a nap.

Then the time of woe begins
As its up to pee, the message the bladder sends.
Repeating the urgency of the flow
As rapidly, one must to the bathroom go.
No peace, or pease,
Or peas, or pees
Will drive the demon from our back
It's an epinephrin attack.
From the tiny adrenal gland
Its presence known to every woman and man
Sitting there so smug
Atop the kidney like a slug.
The bladder, it does command.
Incessant is the message plan.
Awake, Awake, Awake, its time to go!
Is the coding for the nocturnal flow.

The patron Saint of Peter Pindar's poem
Or John Wolcott of the pseudo born,
Is taking revenge on such as we,
As up we go, to take our ever-present, nocturnal pee.

For Saints are not to be denied
Regardless if the peas be boiled or dried.
Penance must be paid
For sins that are by others made.

So read the following poem by Petery
And see if you find peace in your misery.

(The Pilgrims and the Pease
(a true story))

A brace of sinners, for no good,
Were ordered to the Virgin Mary's shrine,
Who at Loretto dwelt, in wax, stone, wood,
And in a fair white wig; looked wondrous fine.

Fifty long miles had these sad rogues to travel
With something in their shoes much worse than gravel;
In short, their toes so gentle to amuse,
The priest had ordered pease into their shoes:

A nostrum famous in old Popish times
For purifying souls that stunk of crimes:
A sort of apostolic salt,
That Popish parsons for its powers exalt,
For keeping souls of sinners sweet,
Just as our kitchen-salt keeps meat.

The knaves set off on the same day,
Pease in their shoes, to go and pray:
But very different was their speed, I wot:
One of the sinners galloped on,
Swift as a bullet from a gun;
The other limped as if he had been shot.

One saw the Virgin soon – peccavi cried –

Had his soul whitewashed all so clever;
Then home again he nimbly hied,
Made fit, with saints above, to live forever.

In coming back, however, let me say,
He met his brother rogue about half way –
Hobbling with outstretched bum and bending knees,
Damning the souls and bodies of the pease:
His eyes in tears, his cheeks and brow in sweat,
Deep sympathizing with his groaning feet.

'How now, ' the light-toed whitewashed pilgrim broke –
'You lazy lubber! '
'Odscurse it! ' cried the other, "'tis no joke –
My feet, once hard as any rock,
Are now as soft as blubber.

'Excuse me, Virgin Mary, that I swear –
As for Loretto, I shall not get there;
No! to the Devil my sinful soul must go,
For dam'me if I han't lost every toe.

'But, brother-sinner, do explain
How 'tis that you are not in pain:
What power hath worked a wonder for your toes:
Whilst I, just like a snail, am crawling,
Now swearing, now on saints devoutly bawling,
While not a rascal comes to ease my woes?

How is't that you can like a greyhound go,
Merry as if nought had happened, burn ye! '
'Why, ' cried the other, grinning, 'you must know,
That just before I ventured on my journey,
To walk a little more at ease,
I took the liberty to boil my pease.'

John Wolcot, 1738- 1819

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Poet

'The poet understands
that the mast of a ship,
the gallows, and
the cross are made
of different wood.

He understands
the difference
between the stone
from a church wall
and the stone
from a prison wall.

He hears
'the voices of stones, '
understands the whisperings
of ancient walls,
of tumuli,
of mountains, rivers,
woods and plains.

He hears
'the voice of the silence, '
understands the psychological difference
between silences,
knows that one silence
can differ from another,

And this poetical understanding
of the world should be developed,
strengthened and fortified,
because only by its aid do
we come in contact with
the true world of reality.'

Peter Demianovich Ouspensky, *Tertium Organum* Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1955, pp 144. (As translated from the Russian by Nicholas Bessaraboff and Claude Bragdon)

The Puzzle Box (A Mystery)

The Puzzle Box is there to see
A roundish thing most certainly
For it contains the truth as well as falsehoods, also.
Believers, accept that which they want to know.

But the box is older yet
Than those who often fret
Seeking answers that will reveal
The future and mysteries (they may conceal.)

For those who speak with such authority
Are no more capable than the majority
In forecasting the future and the box's fate
That will surely come in some far off date.

The box grows warm from who knows what
Perhaps it's due to man's actions about
Or maybe it's just a timely change
That comes when tectonic plates rearrange.

Regardless, what the seer's see
Is meaningless, as it is a mystery
Not to be revealed until history records
That man passed this way, untoward.

So much for global warming being manmade.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Quilt

She made the quilt piece-by-piece
From Bull Durham sacks, each-by-each.
Carefully emptied, washed and dried
Then so carefully dyed.

Sewed them together just so
So that the colors blended as you know.
Her quilt of red, blue and white colors, available.
Were the colors that were most stable.

Then a batting She so carefully formed
With carding brushes to remove the seed.
Laid the cotton out thin, straight and flat
So that there were no lumps or things like that.

Sewed the top to the bottom of bleached muslin
For that was the only cloth She had in.
And edged the quilt with a dyed band
Of that same muslin kind.

Now the quilt is a treasure to be sure
From the hand that poverty endured,
Yet She never thought She was poor
As She had so much; much more.
A loving family and home
A place to come to; never alone.

Those Bull Durham sacks
Remain, a part of history,
Something to reinforce our fading,
Time-warped memory.
Of a time and a place
That our dear Mother graced.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Rabbit

See him frozen there
As if caught in a man-made snare
Knowing not which way to turn
For is it escape, or potential harm.

Nose aquiver as if to test the wind
To find a fragrance that does portend
The presence of another one
Who just might venture out with him.

Entwined, as if in blackberry vines
That sometimes produce the finest wines,
He knows not what to do.
Run away, through the morning dew?

Yet the rabbit's genes foretell
That life is short and just as well
As some in their short time on earth
Never sense the value of another's worth.

But Nature's laws prevail
And just as sure as his short ears and tail
He'll see the sunrise as a welcome feat
And gain victory, and not defeat?

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Roost

The Convention of Crows was intended.
To debate a subject oft suspended.
Needed was guidance to mankind's wonders
In avoiding dogmas and politically incorrect blunders.

How best to approach those who knew not what
And for that matter gave not a squat.
Did evolution really matter much at all
When considering man's biblical fall?

The old crow who was most literate
Spoke first to those who did patiently wait.
'Erasmus D. had the idea first begun
Twisted in poems of Nature that he spun.

Linnaeus and others certainly laid the foundation
For current thinking about evolution.
And from the New World's distant shore
There was the wandering scientist (Rafinesque) , with ideas galore.

Rev. Wilberforce and others were in a rage
Because their credentials were out of phase.
The spokesman for Charles D. was a learned man
Who unlike the others had a devious plan.

Thomas Huxley was a great debater.
(Actually a religion hater) .
Who took Charles D's ideas as his own
Since he had none of his, to atone.'

Then spoke up the youngest crow with feathers shiny
'Cut to the chase and don't expose your hinny.
The object of the debate is to show
That there is a goal in Nature's plan.'

'Enough. You have hardly learned to fly
And say without God, you'll get by.
What is Nature, but God's other name?
The beginning, existence and ending are the same.

If you deny there is a God for sure
And it turns out that your wrong - it's going to be hell to endure.
While if you are right and there is no God
Your existence here matters not a dirt clod.

But if there is a God who has a plan
And you accept him like the common man.
Then your fate is sure and rewards await
As you fly through the pearly gate.

Perhaps you believe and when your time comes,
There is no God that provides eternal life for some.
What have you lost but some time on earth
Where you did well for others and proved your worth?

So you see, Junior, it is best
To consider the outcome with the rest.
Protest (or caw-caw-caw) with the others
But, the rising-setting sun's proof there's an order to our universe.

Call it evolution if you like
But notice that man can't fly,
Or migrate easily,
They must remain and work which is a pity.

They grow fat, old and grey
And disease ends their turn on earth, in a ghastly way.
But we just spread our wings and away we fly
To better worlds, through the friendly sky.

Here we crows debate evolution
But with a lot less commotion.
They studied coral, flowers, moths and bees
Yet overlooked us here in the trees.

They fight and die at each others whim
And never give much thought if evolution is a sham.
They are on the wrong track.
Eating themselves into an early grave - their god's a morning snack.

The other Corvus listened to the discussion

And finally in unison
Spoke out with loud and discordant cry
As they leapt from their perch and soared in the sky.

'Darwin was right, It was (and is) the Descent of Man
Screwing up the earth (and universe) without plan.
While we evolved to a greater life
They remain behind with all their strife.

Call it evolution. Sure you can,
And claim there is no God (or Nature's plan) .
But if man doesn't learn from his mistakes
He'll become one of God's off-takes.

And abandon the good land and skies
To us that relish freedom without disguise.
Mankind on its current path will waste away
But we'll survive to enjoy another day.

So deny, if you like, the great plan.
But remember evolution does not always benefit Man.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Sadness Of The Empty Home

Red Skelton would have loved the sadness of the empty home
For he would have mimed the act of being all alone
Passing from each room and pausing to show
That there was an emptiness in his tow.

Until he reached his bed in time to reflect
That all was not lost in effect
For the sadness could be used to note
That he could end with his characteristic quote,

'Goodnight, and God Bless! '

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Satiric Eye (A Book Review)

Those "romantic" folk
Of which writers often fun do poke,
Of the late 1700's and early 1800's
Earned their keep by writing
What appealed to the buying public.

Never mind that those
In the halls of learning
Still are trying to understand
The workings of the writers
And publishers of that long past time.

In The Satiric Eye, Dr. Jones
Has selected a group of "perfessers"
Who offer-up
(Although have some difficulty
In explaining in words
Those not privileged
To be in the Illuminati
Can understand)
A thin volume on a variety
Of loosely related topics
That is a pleasure to read.

Wonder what barbers,
Slave-traders, pantomime artist,
Computer hackers, children's book writers,
Religion and pulp fiction writers
Have in common?

It's explained quite well
In The Satiric Eye.

It was for MONEY.
Actually nothing has changed.

Of course there's the exception
Which is of course in Academia,
Getting your name on the cover

Or in the index is enough.

God knows that charging
An exorbitant price for a book
Ensures that it only will
Appear in the stacks of a few libraries,
Carefully protected
From the reading public.

And when the publisher gets cold feet,
Slash goes the price
And it is dumped,
Regardless.

So it is with this small book.
If the contributors,
Editor and publisher has insisted
On a bit of polish
It could have well been a popular book.

Had they remembered the four "e's";
Excite, Entertain, Educate and End.
The book might have eluded
The remainder shelf.

Instead, they begin
With an introduction
That would make any old maid weep
(Not tears of joy, but tribulation
And anguish.)

What exactly is it is that
Dr. Jones is trying to say?
Heaven knows.
He writes,
"The promiscuous opportunism
Regarding medium and form
Is especially characteristic
Of radical political satire."

"London at the end

Of the eighteenth century
(And into the beginning of the nineteenth century)
Was awash in heteroglossic media..., "

"...the newly dominant
Nineteenth-century critical reviews
As a genre
Used parody
To underwrite their own authority
Vis-a-vis the (negative)
Example of Wordsworthian simplicity,
Thus setting up
A "new school of criticism"
In the (mirror) image
Of the new school of poetry."

"Finally, for some
(And I count myself among them) ,
Satiric modes often provide us
With a dialectical counter voice,
Even a counter history,
Within the period,
A dialectical perspective
That has helped to construct
And has been constructed
By more conventional
Notions of the Romantic."

Ah, well.
I still recommend the book.
Select a chapter and get comfortable
With the topic
As the writer paints
An interesting picture
Of the changes taking place in England
And throughout the world.

Suddenly,
The printing press
Made it possible for the masses
To own a book.

But before
They were going to part
With their scanty earnings,
It must offer something in exchange.

So it was that satire
And the handmaiden,
Parody,
Stood at the alter.

Never mind,
That the lady
Had been much abused;
The congregation was forgiving,
When the flesh was weak.

Writers exercised the truism
"It is easier to steal
Than to invent, "
Plagiarism was rife.

Perhaps this added
A bit of spice to the stew
As the public had a greater awareness
Of the "classics"
Than we have today,
And knew full-well
When a bit was "lifted".

Sam Butler
(The Butler of Hudibras fame)
Would have been pleased,
Then and now,
To discover
The offspring of satire
And parody;
Sarcasm lives.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Shape Of Things To Come

Standing on pedestals quiet and majestic
The finished product of the creator's art.
Will those who view them, understand
The message cast in clay by man?

Revealing subtle obvious flaws
This is the way of objects
Shaped by the hands of the creator.
Not six-sigma perfection.

As students shaped by the teacher
They have become a new image as
Something unrecognized
As simply, lumps of clay.

They have undergone the reducing fire,
Driving out impurities and
Giving up some of their substance
So that they could be born anew.

See them as a transition point in being
Between the inanimate and the living.
A creation not unlike that from the womb
Each different, yet so alike exiting the fiery tomb.

Forgotten are those that failed
Shards on the pathway of time,
Some misshapen; others simply failed
As internally they lacked the substance to survive.

Those broken idols are a reminder
That life is one of challenge,
Where in the end the creator decides
Who and what shall survive.

These are the finished ones
Colored by elements that fuse
Into their outer being, a glaze.
Each represents a transition.

Given life by he who
Shares the vision,
As they become
Reality.

The shape of the future -

(On viewing the sculpture at Florida Southern College, January 2007)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Sharpshooter

Traveling through the countryside
The Showman looked far and wide
To find an attraction that would be
Something to add to his menagerie.
And there on every post and wall
He saw targets both large and small
That were a testament to the marksman's skill
For centered on all was the bullet's drill.

Secretly he planned to take this one
Of gun-shooting power, now unknown,
And exhibit his talents to all the world
To Washington D. C., the capital, it's called.

He enquired who might be
This one that would go down in history
As the greatest shot
That parents had begot.

'It's Inez's boy, ' they said
'Right here in Searchlight, born and bred.
Why he's known widely, '
They answered smirkingly.

So old PT (or maybe some other)
Loaded up junior
And off to DC
They went happily.

Announced with great promotion
With advertisements to gain public's attention
That he was bringing to town
A marksman of great renown.

They'd have a show that would open eyes
Of those cynics and other wise
Who thought those from the sticks,
Among other names, were called hicks.

Was on September 29
Assembled in a chorus line
Were assorted ones, great and small
There to promote junior's talents, all.

The lady, for that's what she was called
Seemed to be more interested (as I recall)
In her own deeds and accomplishments
Than the One senatored for prominence.

And to be Frank
One other seemed to be always on the flank
Of the lady and bid her due
As he was suppose to do.

Doddging right and left as well
Like a cat chasing his tail
Was one who reminded all who would listen
That it was he that deserved their attention.

And hidden from view, although supposedly
The reason for this great assembly
Were the financial genuses that would provide
The money for the show inside.

Off to the side stood Nevada's favorite son
Who was there to cement the deal as done.
Silent without scripted words, he wore a smirk
Grinning, then sober, sometimes even appearing alert.

The hall grew silent as he took his place
For on the stage were the targets he faced.
Raising his arms as if an Angel in flight
He appeared to be adjusting the rifle's sight.

The crowd grew silent, then restless
As the man seemed to be under duress
Until finally with a blast
He fired his rifle at last.

The several targets placed there in plain view
Were to receive the leadened bullets, each on cue.

First one and then another and another
Were fired at as his rifle thundered.

When the cloud of smoke disappeared from the stage
The crowd was aghast, then in a rage
For not a single bullseye was hit.
No, the bullets had endangered those far from it.

As the public filed away from the show,
Some questioned how it came to such a blow.
How could a marksman perform such a feat
Overshooting easy targets without missing a beat.

And Leherer (or some other showman, in season)
Asked him for the reason
For this disastrous showing of marksmanship denied
'Was there a reason? Did he have something to hide? '

Junior then said in a voice quite low,
You made it difficult for me to show
How I hit the bullseye so true and fair□
But come back tomorrow (if you dare.)

By then I will have drawn circles around
All the bullet holes that I have found.

Slowly it occurred to the promoter and the press
That Harry, the village idiot,
Was not unlike all those others elected to Congress.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Slumper-Thumper

Sitting silently at the booth in Mindy's Café
Is an old man at the end of his day
Looking over the offerings on the menu card
Of which there were few he could afford.

Before selecting the "something"
He does some careful thinking,
He's different from the rest of the men
Foreigners, that have hustled in
They're short and stout and younger
He's tall, stooped and much thinner.

Maybe fifty five or so
When you get to his age the years go.
Looking at his hands, white and clean
From scrubbing time and time again.

In his mind he sees his place on the floor.
As a new one enters the swinging door.
The sack once secured in the mother's womb
Contains the one who's life is doomed.
Now quickly with a practiced grace
The old man moves his equipment into place.

A swipe with antibiotic dressing
Clears the path to the target's blessing
Between the ribs he skillfully passes the needle
Into the heart and watched the flow of the blood into the waiting vessel.

As the volume begins to ebb into the vacuum stand,
He thumps the side with the heel of his hand,
Driving out the remaining blood from the heart and tissues,
When complete; for a moment pauses.

Then secures his equipment
For the sanitizing treatment
So that this batch could join
Others identified only by a number on.

The lifeless one for which no one cared
Is sent to the offal bin where
It with the thousands of other pounds of waste
Will be discarded with dispatch.
If one asked the old man what his job is called,
He'd reply that his job was one essential
For the first step in producing fetal calf serum
Which to avoid distaste is called; "fcs", an acronym.

Science requires this precious fluid
For research and products that will find
Their way into serving mankind.

Still it is an unpleasant job for any man
Especially one that understands
The taking of one life from so young
Seems to be simply wrong.

But then the name given, "slunk"
Seems to say it all; it's reduced to a hunk
Of never-born life that is dispatched
As man seeks to find solutions to problems, cached.
They were unknown just a few years ago
But now are a part of the way that things go.

So, a slunker-thumper the old man's called
Not a proud term for a job he didn't want it at all.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Smell Of Death

The smell of death
Quickens the senses
As those who muck through
The decay of civilization
Find a way
To express
The bile within

Those who seek a political toehold
Are intent to destroy -
Just as death itself
Releases enzymes
That breakdown and destroy
That which represents Life
So it is that Society and Civilization
Must pay the price of
Their unwanted Attacks

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Spit And Whittle Club

No one knows
When the group decided to sit
Under the elm tree on the corner
Of the square
And pass the time.

They were just there.
Some days not.
But round about 8: 30 or so,
One of the club would drag
A court house chair out
From the storage room.

The chairs were nothing fancy.
Straight turned legs and back.
Slats fitted across the back
And across the seat.
Not even painted or stained.
Well used and substantial and
Carefully kept from the rain.

Who they actually belonged to
No one knew.
They just appeared there
One day and
There they stayed.

Some said the plant
(That's what they called
The manufacturing business,)
Just made too many
And they were piling up.
So they just loaded them
On a pickup and took them
To the courthouse.

Regardless,
If you wanted some place to sit
Before it got too hot,

Just grab a chair
And add it to the collection
There on the corner.
(No women or children allowed.)

Of course you were expected to
Return it when you had had your fill
Of watching people go
Into the drugstore on the corner,
Or climbing the stairs
To Dr. Nash's dentist office.

The several old timers,
Those well past 60,
Would sometimes be there
And sometimes not.
Maybe it depended on
Whether they could get a ride to town
Or maybe if their wife
Needed something from A&P.
Never-mind the reason,
They would sometimes show up,
And sometimes not.

And if they did,
You could be sure they
Each would have a select piece of cedar
Carefully chosen to be free of knots
And with straight grain.
The piece would be smooth
On all sides and the end carefully sanded
So no burrs from the saw remained.

With the chairs set just so
To avoid any unsettling movement,
The men would
After nodding a greeting to passersby
Or to who ever,
Would fetch their pocket knife
And carefully open it.

The glint of the sun

On the metal would reveal it
Had been polished by much use
And carefully honed to a razor sharp edge
That could have been used for shaving
If that was its intended fate.
Maybe to show off its keen edge,
A careful swipe across the arm
Shaving off a few hairs
Might have been done,
But that's what boys do
And was not to be the mission
Of these selected knives.

Usually the blade
Would be drawn back and forth
In reverse direction
Across the cedar block,
Thick edge of the knife leading
As the keen edge was honed
By the cedar itself.

Then positioning the blade carefully
Just an inch or so from the edge
Of the wood piece,
The old man or men
If there were several there,
Would slowly draw the blade
Along the surface of the wood.
A master in action.

If the wood had been properly selected
And if the blade was ready,
A thin curl of fragrant wood
Would be lifted and slowly rise
Into a pigtail of
Reddish, paper-thin shaving.

When at the end of the draw,
The blade would be pulled a bit further
Into the wood to finished the stroke.
Making it a bit thicker
Than that which preceded.

The job finished.
The piece dropped to the ground
Between the whittler's legs.
No notice of the dropping.
Now attention was given
To the block of wood
That was carefully turned
In the opposite direction
In preparation of the next stroke.

If one finished before the others,
And someone always had too,
He would wait
Until all had finished his mission
Before beginning another round.

Now was the time to
Comment about the events
Of the past day, week, months or years.
And all would shift their weight
On the oak bottoms of the chairs
Waiting for the next round.

While they might be called
The spit and whittle club,
No one dipped, chewed or smoked
And certainly, no one spit.
No. This was man's work
And one had to know the necessary
Protocol to participate
And to be accepted as a member.

Perhaps if the day grew hot,
One might be observed
To take his hat from beneath the chair
And take a walk
Underneath the marble steps of the courthouse
To the basement
(Which was really not a basement at all,
Just some three feet or so underneath ground level,
Leaving ample room for windows

To admit fresh air and light.)

In the cool recesses of the 'basement'
Were water fountains for
'White' and 'Colored'
Standing testament
To the history of the South.

One also found the necessary bath rooms.
(Not rest rooms as city folks might call them,
Although this was certainly
No place for a bath.)
The marble slabs that provided
Protection from prying eyes,
Also concealed one stall
That always seemed 'Out of Order.'

This was the residence
Of the local proprietor
Who kept a brown paper bag
Placed there for a customer or friend
That needed a quick pick-me-up,

Money might have changed hands
But no one knew
(Especially not those in the Sheriff's office
On the second floor.
Jess Sweeden may have been the finest
Pistol shot in the whole United States
With a keen eye and steady hand
(As featured in Life Magazine) ,
But somehow his gaze never seemed
To see the marble stall
Or its contents down below.

But you can be sure,
Or maybe relatively sure,
That the spit and whittlers
Never sampled the 90 proof.
But you would know for certain
That they were not going to do anything
To cause their hands

To be less that steady.

Round about eleven or so,
One or the other will rise and stretch,
Put his knife in pocket,
Admire the stump
Of cedar that remained,
and carefully pocket it as well.
Then pick up the chair and
Return it to storage.

By noon,
All that remained as evidence
Would be a small trace of shavings
Caught up in the wind created by passing cars
To be swept away like so many chicken feathers.

And now, they all are gone.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Team That Can'T Talk Straight

'First you say you do,
Then you don't,
You're undecided now,
What are you going to do? '

So we have mouthpieces that spew
What is happening - the latest new(s) .
Until it's found that it is just a lie
So what to do, live or die?

Naw, they just spin another
Knowing that it doesn't really matter
For facts are only as they see them
And can be changed on a moment's whim.

Problem is that their fearless leader
Is into the fix, for he's just another 'mudder'
Spreading what he thinks the public wants to hear
And if reality gets in the way, change the story - clear?

Those about him aren't going to make a move
Unless he alone does approve
So they take each uttered word
As if from some golden tongued god.

And as each is way beyond his element
The results are self-evident
Fact and fiction merge into one
As they seek the best rhyming tone.

You're undecided now
What are you going to do?

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Tease

She sits there
Waiting for attention
Could it be that she's been here before
Maybe she wants someone to notice her
To pick her up and enjoy a bit of time with her
Or maybe she's just passing by
Thought she'd drop in and see what's happening
Regardless she's just a little bit off
Maybe because she was rushed to get here
Maybe she was next to tears
Or perhaps had something else on her mind

Whatever, there she is, for all to see
Waiting for someone to pick her up
Quickly searching for the line that would suggest more- more
Her English isn't quite as good as some
But who notices, it's the thought that counts.
Spilling words out sometimes in rhythm and rhyme
Other times, just a string of unconscious thoughts
She's been there, done that
So many times, or -
Maybe this is her first
A bit timid but will grow more bold as the time goes.
To some she's nothing but a passing fancy,

But to me, She's a poem waiting to be read.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Traveling Rarebit*

It's said that the rarebit, a non-quadrupled,
long suffering from neglect is dead,
But that's just a bit of pressmen's junk,
That history of this creature is true bunk.

No the rarebit is live and well,
Having found another place to dwell,
A bit of Frito band-dito from the store,
Yields a gustatory delight and more.

A heap of cheese wrapped to preserve,
The essence of pepper conserve,
Encased in plastic to ensure,
The contents remain USDA/FDA pure(?)

Velveeta we're talking about,
A spread that's rubbery without doubt,
And a flavor not beholden,
To the dairy that's for certain.

A heap of band-dito chips in a dish,
Slabs of Velveeta added to enrich,
Then into the microwave for a quick zapping,
Merges all into a plastic happening.

Hot and steamy after short seconds,
Results in a goo that defies expression,
It's rarebit without an English scone,
Melded (should I say melted)
Into a form that lacks backbone.

Shaped not as mother nature intended,
But instead with a covering suspended,
Over the framework of the band-dito pure,
Chips that get soggy, yet endure.

Something for the airport fare,
Best if eaten on a dare,
But regardless, the rarebit has a bite,

Tightens sphincters and holds on tight.

In midair the creature takes on a life of its own,
Bubbling in the stomach caldron,
Sending forth a bit of gas,
That from orifices wantonly pass.

Finally safely on the ground
Last middens of remains are found
Left there by fellow travelers that endure
The pleasures of flying that are pure.

Rarebit, rarebit, rarebit they exclaim,
Ever more a traveler's bane.

*

Writ in praise of antacids of all description. Sidi J. Mahtrow upon traveling through St. Louis, purchased the Rarebit from an offering in an area called by some a lounge. The rarebit accompanied him on the departing flight and took on a life of its own.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Tree

Roots exposed by the rushing waters
Bent by the restless wind
Leaves picked clean by hungry cattle
It stands, withered and forlorn, devoid of mantle.

No other nearby to give it protection
No sharing shade from the boiling sun
No grass to shield its roots
It's bowed, diminished, mute.

Once roots grew deep in rich loam
Thriving on moisture from the nearby stream
Branches with leaves rustling in the wind
Lusting for rays of sun without end.

Nature challenges,
Strong survive.
There among the few leaves remaining
Buds, renewing.

Soon the tree will cast off
Its fruit, acorns
A promise that life will be
Another tree.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Trial Of Sarah****, Alias Slim Sal

The Trial of Sarah****, Alias Slim Sal,
For Privately stealing,
The Pris'ner was at large indicted,
For that by thirst of gain excited,
One day in July last at tea,
And in the house of Mrs. P.
From the left breast of E. M. Gent,
With base felonious intent,
Did then and there a heart with strings,
Rest quite, peace and other things,
Steal, rob, and plunder, and all them
The chattels of the said E. M.
The prosecutor swore last May
(the month he knew but not the day)
He left his friends in Town, and went
Upon a visit down in Kent;
That staying there a month or two
He spent his time, as others do,
In riding, walking, fishing, swimming,
But being much inclin'd to women,
And young and wild, and no great reas'ner,
He got acquainted with the pris'ner.
He own'd was rumour'd in these parts
That she'd trick of stealing hearts,
And from fifteen to twenty-two
Had made the devil-and-all to do;
But Mr. W. the Vicar
(And no man brews you better liquor)
Spoke of her thefts as tricks of youth,
The frolicks of a girl forsooth;
Things now were on another score
He said, for she was twenty-four.
However, to make matters short,
And not to trespass on the court
the lady was discover'd soon,
And thus it was One afternoon,
The ninth of July last, or near it,
(As to the day he could not swear it)
In company at Mrs. P's,

Where folks say any thing they please,
Dean L., and Lady Mary by,
And Fanny waiting on Miss Y.
(He own'd he was inclin'd' to think
Both were a little in their drink)
The pris'ner ask'd, and call'd him Cousin,
How many kisses made a dozen?
That being as he won'd in liquor
The question made his blood run quicker,
And sense and reason in eclipse
He vow'd he'd score them on her lips:
That rising up to keep his word
He got as far as kiss the third,
And would have counted th' other nine,
And so all present did opine,
But tat he felt a sudden dizziness
That quite undid him for the business;
His speech he said began to falter,
His eyes to stare, his mouth to water,
His breast to thump without cesiation,
And all within one conflagration.
'Bless me! ' says Fanny, 'what's the matter? '
And Lady Mary look'd hard at her,
And stamp'd and with'd the pris'ner further,
And cry'd out, 'Part them, or there's murther! '
That still he held the pris'ner fast,
And would have stood it to the last,
But struggling to go thro' the rest
He felt a pain across his breast,
A sort of sudden twinge he said,
That seem'd almost to strike him dead,
And after that such cruel smarting
He thought the soul and body parting;
That then he let the pris'ner go,
And stagger'd off a step or so,
And thinking that his heart was ill
He begg'd of Miss Y's maid to feel:
That Fanny stepp'd before the rest
And laid her hand upon his breast,
But mercy on us! What a stare
The creature gave! No heart was there:
Souse went her fingers in the hole,

Whence heart and strings and all were stole;
That Fanny turn'd and told the pris'ner
She was thief, and so she'd christen her,
And that it was a burning shame
And brought the house an evil name,
And if she did not put the heart in
The man would pine and die for certain,
The pris'ner then was in her airs,
And bid her mind her own affairs,
And told his Rev'rence and the rest of `em
She was as honest as the est of `em;
That lady Mary and dean L.
Rose up and said `t was mighty well;
But that in gen'ral terms they said it,
A heart was gone and some one had it;
Words would not do, for search thy must,
And search they would, and her the first:
That then the pris'ner drop'd her anger,
And said she hop'd they would not hang her;
That all she did was meant in jest,
And there the heart was and the rest;
That then the dean cry'd out O sy!
And sent in haste for justice I.
Who tho' he knew her friends and pity'd her
Call'd her hard names, and so committed her.
The parties present swore the same,
And Fanny said the pris'ner's name
Had frighten'd all the country round,
And glad the bill was found:
She knew a man who knew another,

who knew the very party's brother
Who lost his heart by more surprise
One morning looking at her eyes;
And others had been known to speak
Who only chanc'd to hear her speak;
For she had words of such a sort
That tho' she knew no reason for `t
Would make a man of sense run mad,
And rifle him of all he had;
And that she'd rob the whole community

If ever she had the opportunity
The pris'ner now first silence broke,
And curtsy'd round her as she spoke.
She won'd she said it much incens'd her
To hear such matters sworn against her
But that she hop'd to keep her temper,
And prove herself eadem semper;
That what the prosecutor swore
Was some part true and some part more:
She own'd she had been often seen with him,
And laugh'd and chatted on the green with him;
The fellow seem'd tohav humanity,
And told her tales that sooth'd her vanity,
Pretending that he lov'd her vanity,
And that all women else look'd ghastly:
But then she hop'd the court would think
She never was inclin'd to drink,
Or suffer hands like his to daub her,
Or encourage men to kiss and slobber her:
She'd have folks know she did not love it,
Or if she did she was above it:
But she said was sworn of corse
To prove her giddy and then worse,
As she whose conduct was thought levis
Might very well be reckon'd thievish.
She hop'd she said the court's discerning
Would pay some honour to her learning,
For eve'ry day from four to past six
She went up stairs and read the classicks.
Thus having clear'd herself of levity,
The rest she said would come with brevity.
And first it injur'd not her honour
To own the heart was found upon her,
For she could prove, and did aver,
The paltry thing belong'd to her.
The fact was thus. This prince of knaves
Was once the humblest of her slaves,
And often had confess'd the dart
Her eyes had lodg'd within his hear:
That she, as `t was her constant fashion,
Made great diversions of his passions,
Which set his blood in such a ferment

As seem'd to threaten his interment:
 That then she was afraid of losing him,
 And so desisted from abusing him.
 And often came and felt his pulse,
 And bid him write to Doctor Hulse.
 The prosecutor thank'd her kindly,
 And sigh'd and said she looked divinely:
 But told her that his heart was bursting,
 And doctors he had little trust in;
 He therefore begg'd her to accept it,
 And hop'd would mend if once she kept it:
 That having no aversion to it,
 She said with all her soul she'd do it;
 But then she begg'd him to remember
 If he should need it in December
 (For winter months would make folks shiver
 Who wanted either heart or liver)
 It never could return; and added
 'Twas her's for life if once she had it.
 The prosecutor said Amen,
 And that he wish'd it not again,
 And took it from his breast and gave her,
 And bow'd and thank'd her for the favour,
 But begg'd the thing might not be spoke of,
 As heartless men were made a joke of:
 That next day whisp'ring him about it,
 And asking how he felt without it?
 He sigh'd, and cry'd, 'Alack! Alack! '
 And begg'd and pray'd to have it back,
 O'r that she'd give him her's instead on 't,
 But she conceiv'd there was no need on 't,
 And said and bid him make no pother,
 He should have neither one nor th' other:
 That then he rav'd and storm'd like Fury,
 And said that one was he de jure,
 And rather than he'd leave pursuing her
 He'd swear a robbery and ruin her.
 That was the truth she did aver
 Whatever hap betided her;
 Only that Mrs. P. she said,
 Miss Y. and her deluded maid,
 And Lady Mary, and his Reverence,

Were folks to whom she paid some deference,
 And that she verily believ'd
 They were not perjur'd but deceiv'd
 Then Doctor D. beg'd leave to speak,
 And sigh'd as if his heart would break.
 He said that he was Madam's surgeon,
 Or rather, as in Greek, chirurgion,
 From chier, manus, ergon, opus,
 (As scope is from the Latin scopus :)
 That he he said had known the prisoner
 From the first sun that ever rise on her,
 And griev'd he was to see her there,
 But took upon himself to swear
 There was not to be found in nature
 A sweeter or a better creature;
 And if the king (God bless him!) Knew her
 He'd leave St. James's to get to her;
 But then as to the fact in question
 He knew no more on't that Hephestion;
 It might be false and might be true,
 And this he said was all he knew.
 The judge proceeded to the charge,
 And gave the evidence at large,
 But often cast a sheep's eye at her,
 And strove to mitigate the matter,
 Pretending facts were not so clear,
 And mercy might to interfere.
 The jury then withdrew a moment
 As if on weighty points to comment,
 And right or wrong resolv'd to save her
 They gave a verdict in her favour.
 But why or wherefore things were so
 It matters not for us to know
 The culprit by escape grown old
 Pilfers alike from young and old,
 The country all around her teases,
 And robs or murders whom she pleases.

Edward Moore (March 22,1712 – March 1,1757) , was born at Abingdon,
 Berkshire. The above poem is to be found in several books of his poetry. This
 from: *The Poetical Works of Edward Moore*. Edinburg, At the Apollo Press, By the
 Martins. 1781. Pp 126.

Some see a similarity in his poetry and that of John Jay and Thomas Gray. His rhymes are both pleasant and a bit of a tease. He was an astute marketer and recognized that women could both read and write. As such, his poems and other writings were directed to this new found market and one can imagine that while the husbands held the purse strings, the women had a distinct voice in what literature might be bought and brought into their homes.

Sadly, Moore
And civility are no more.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Unipeg

Where's the Unicorn is the question asked -

Pegasus came and took him away
For they were mates of another day
And if you look closely at the image of a flying horse
Atop his head is a single horn - of course.

Some call it a Unipeg
Or others say it's a Pegahorn
The product of mythology - reborn.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Un-Sexed Female

It was a masterly delivered stroke
That removed man's yoke
Freeing her and kindred souls
From childbearing and rearing toils.
So that they at once were free
From whatever it was they sought to flee.

The Un-sexed Females chanted the siren's song
As they encouraged others to come along
'Be not just free but in command
So that you no longer take orders from simple man.

Having cast aside the burdens of motherhood
We all are members of a higher brotherhood
That permits us to practice a level of passion
In escaping from 'man's' domination.'

They profess to be
Of the fairer sex as we see.
(But harbor a bit of chemistry of late
That confuses their fate
And gives them a boost where there is need
To be Unsexed Females indeed.
Testosterone it's called
Which appears in sexes, all.)

But this is not a new event
As they would insist.
For the Jacobians and others
Followed the lead of females
Who in times of old
Were seen as doing things most bold.
And in more recent times
There was the axe wielding females of great-grandmother's time.
Who rose up against demon rum
And bashed barrels and th' heads of some.

So what became of those so arrogant
To think that they could by shouts and rant

Control the nation's laboring souls
Who toiled without, in heat and cold.

All slipped away from sight of press
That discovered that there were other issues to address
And let the 'ladies' go their way
When the Nation's interest came into sway.

Now again we hear the clarion call
Of voracious voices from spring to fall
When the babble seems to be
Rising up from the primordial sea.

Man (and woman too)
Discovers that there is much to do
But following the lemmings o'er the cliff
Is hardly the way to abide mischief.

Calmer voices will be heard
Away from the chant of the misguided herd
The nation and the world will turn
And reason will return.
To address the needs of Mother Earth
And bury those who have renounced their right of birth.

Note: Richard Polwhele penned the poem, 'The Unsex'd Females' in 1798 where he addressed the Jacobian (French laissez faire attitudes toward life, liberty and pursuits of happiness.) With copious notes, Polwhele drew analogies between the activities of some liberated women of the times with those described by Plutarch in his Lives of Lycurgus and Numa (ca 840 BC) .

Polwhele was an admirer of Thomas Mathias and his book, Pursuits of Literature (which was published citing 'anonymous' as the author.) Mathias didn't return the favor.

The quote in Polwhele's book:

'Our unsex'd female writers now instruct, or confuse, us and themselves, in the labyrinth of politics, or turn us wild with Gallic frenzy.' Appears on pp 204 in the 7th American edition published in 1800.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Wood Stork

Standing tall in the afternoon sun
Woody waits for what's to be done.
Arriving on wings widespread
Expecting something extra for his daily bread.

Now with wings folded to conceal
Tips of black he will not reveal.
Unless to show off in love
Or war, in a graceful move.

Watching carefully to be assured
That his presence has been noted,
He's motionless as a statue of stone
His eyes take all in to be sure he's alone.

It's not necessary to move his head
While appearing to be looking straight ahead.
He has peripheral vision for the unwary
Frogs, fish or whatever that be his quarry.

Woody's here for another cause
His friend will soon provide food for his maw.
It's time and he must wonder how it is
That other animals can't tell time for this buis.

Their biological clock that sets the timing
Must be faulty when it's time for dining.
Woody's never minutes late
For this important meal time date.

Because of traffic, disputes or planning errors
Humans often spend too much time in cars.
But Woody soars above it all
Master of flight, in time for the dinner call.

As in times past
He is ready for the game's repast
It's played by rules established long ago
By the bird's appetite and man's ego.

The General, stands just inside the door
Holding the hot dog from the store
Not the best that money can buy
But for this friend, he'll get by.

A game of catch is what they play,
Yet the hot dog will only go one way.
Each plans his moves, selects his spot
Eyes the opponent, so goes the plot.

The treat must be cleanly caught
Or planning is for naught.
A toss is made within easy reach
Of fast extended neck and scissor beak.

Neck and beak move in concerted action
Catching the treat in time; just a fraction.
Then again into the air the dog's tossed
And down the hatch it goes; no motion lost.

Woody's had his treat for the day
And is gone in a jump, up - and away.
A spring of legs, with extended wings
A simple flap and he's airborne it seems.

Once again in the air so effortless
He circles once to set his compass,
Straight away to a distant place, away from here
Until tomorrow, same time and place for sure.

Woody II

Is this the same bird as yesterday?
You can't be sure is all you can say.
All look the same in flight
Or on the ground, in day or night.

Woody II arrives at the appointed hour
When the sun is in descent from it's lofty tower.
Even'ng warns that feeding must be complete
With time to return to the roost to sleep.

Soaring above the ponds as the stork
Seeks out the special one to disembark.
Now depleted of water by the drying winds,
That have come with the passing seasons.

In a pool where he has fished many times before,
He knows what feast is in store.
Small minnows, shads, frogs and slimy things
Taste matters not, it seems.

Down the hatch they'll pass
As just a part of this day's catch.
Joining others in his crew
Where substance matters not at all.

As he flies in Florida's cloudless skies
Wide swept wings carry Woody as he flies.
Effortless on distinctive wings,
Black tips revealed on mostly white it seems.

Attention is called in space and time,
To this marvel of aerodynamic design.
Neck outstretched to steer the course,
Like swan, duck, egret or goose.

Silent; on his way he goes,
No feather flutter shows.
Not soaring on the wind,
Like buzzards and eagle kind.

But like the Sandhill crane,
Or Whooper of similar name.
On ward he goes, effortless,
Over his wings the wind flows.

He has a mission,
A target in the distance,
Where it's famine or feast
For this hunter's repast.

No wasted motion or

Riding thermals to soar.
Straight from point-to-point does he fly,
Before descending from the sky.

Woody III

His landing has not the grace of swan.
Result's all that matter to this one.
A controlled crash as he landed,
Perhaps it's what he planned.

Taking a bit of a bounce as a light plane
Descending from the ether just the same.
Gangly legs absorb the shock
Hinged almost brokenly to prevent a flop.

On the ground he arranges his feathers
Not so much that appearance matters.
Carefully tucking wings to side
The black'd wing tips to hide.

Now standing erect on legs spindly,
They're double jointed which comes in handily.
Later when he's finished tasking,
He'll relax and take a pose, backward sitting.

With a face and neck that a mother bird
Could love, assuming she's a turkey buzzard
Long scissor beak useful for a grasp on
Creatures he desires to dine on.

While he waits he takes a stance,
Silently watching, as if in trance.
On one leg, the other drawn up and hidden
Displaying balance to those challenge smitten.

But more than likely in a clever feat
Woody III takes a front-row seat.
Legs fold differently from the rest
Permits him on his butt to rest

Or he sits like a goose concealing

A nest of eggs, to no one revealing.
His large body hides
His off-white yellowed underside.

Perhaps under wing, head tucked
He's unseeing like a sleeping duck.
If he can't see it, it isn't there
Of what goes about him, he has no care.

A headless feathered lump asleeping
While his metabolic clock's a ticking
Appearances matter to him not at all,
As passing time seems to stall.

Woody IV

Awakened, Woody goes ahunting.
Using a technique most cunning.
No problem with wading into the swamp,
His legs are long enough to protect his rump

Carefully in the shallows he moves forward,
Not disturbing critters in their wattery sward.
When in a likely spot,
He uses a method not soon forgot.

Lowering beak to just above the water,
For observation of the aqueous order.
Opens wide his scissor beak,
Ready to grasp subjects he seeks.

Eyeing the orchestra of fishes,
He's about to direct their performances.
Taking the Maestro's stance,
He'll lead them in their watery dance.

Standing on one foot as if to show,
Who controls the subjects down below.
He'll direct their final movement,
Setting the pace for their atonement.

With perfect balance he stands,

The other foot moves like a magic wand.
With a motion swift, then slow,
he begins to stir the water down below.

Any fish, frog or other disturbed creature,
Must seek refuge to ensure a future,
Before being seen by the beady eyes,
And caught in the beak, when escape it tries.

Balance can be lost or improved upon it seems,
By the occasional raising of Woody's wings.
They darkening the water over which he hovers,
And gives shadows for those seeking covers.

This motion most abrupt,
Perhaps cause the game to run amuck.
Making an attempt to escape,
Only to delay the fish's fate.

Now he walks back and fro,
Driving the water animals on the go.
He stops to repeat the one leg standing,
And repeats his concert-hall performancing.

Up go the wings,
Revealing the black under-things.
As he drives beak and head below,
To a minnow's flashy show.

Under the water's surface seeking fishes,
He sometimes captures, but often misses.
Again and again he tries this art,
Seeking a partner to play its part.

The performance end nears.
There's no time for cheers or tears.
Betwix the scissor blades a fish is caught,
And lifted high but not for naught.

With a motion too quick to follow,
The fish is turned for Woody to swallow.
Down the gullet it quickly moves,

Joining others, paying dues.

Success. But as Woody is quick to see,
The dropping sun will soon not be.
With a spreading of his wings,
He is in air, as if on springs.

Then through the cooling air,
He's off to spot I know not where.
But tomorrow unless it rains,
He'll return to begin the hunt again.

Woody V

If minnows, frogs and snakes,
Do not adequate nutrition make,
Woody is not above taking from the hand,
Dog food, hotdogs, or viennas from the can.

Birders seek fowl in native places,
But forget birds are smarter in most cases.
They seek handouts every day,
Feeding is regular and they're here to stay.

Suburban yards are favored spots,
Begging for food from human louts.
Taking what's offered with no qualms,
Picture posing in return for alms.

General James Edmundson of Longboat Key provided some observations on a wood stork that came to depend on him for a daily hand-out. Woody would patiently wait for his treat when the General was late. He would take what was offered and then be off to parts unknown till the same time, next day.

Other storks 'ganged-up' on the neighborhood on Tanglewood Drive, numbering twenty or so. They patiently waited their dog-food feeding from a couple of old bachelors, either on the lawn or more preferably on the roof-top across the street. (The red-tiled roof soon became splotched with white.) Finally enough was enough and the feeding stopped, so the storks sought other handouts.

A solitary stork daily visits a small retention pond in an area off busy state road 60. Here he is master of all he surveys, and when the appointed time arrives, enters the water and begins his orchestrated conduction of a watery ballet

In flight the wood stork is as graceful as any of his better known brethren, but on the ground he is a tragic comedy in progress. Only when he enters his fishing mode does he regain his dignity and the seldom seen performance is without equal.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

The Yellow Bus

Crusing down the road th' other day
Saw a school bus a coming along my way
It looked sort of funny, like a big yellow toad
And as it passed me on the other side of road
I saw the children inside
Who all seemed to want to hide.

Their heads were all shiny with the early morning dew
And all shades of green, some with white stripes too.
Still as statues, none smiled or even looked my way
As if they had other interest this early in the day
They were all packed together, and quiet as could be
For the driver was in a hurry so as not to let them flee.

The windows were all open as I could plainly see
(That is, on the bus sides where windows used to be)
The window ledges were padded with carpet old and new
So those by the window had an unobstructed view.
While those behind them were packed as close as could be
And seemed to be atop one another as near as I could see.

The seats would'd been full, 'cept they'd been taken out
To make more room for passengers, far as I could tell, near abouts.
The driver waved as he passed me on his way into town
And speeded up as he put the pedal down
For this load of melons was to be delivered the very next day,
To buyers who would never know they'd been a riding on a school bus on its
merry way.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

They'R-R-R-Re Back (A Fable For Modern Times)

Termites once infested the house.

Owners called the exterminator
Tented the place
Toxic gas spewed throughout
And all was quiet,
Or so it appeared.

The colony retreated
Safe in deep tunnels
None were apparent
Underneath it all.

In the nest,
Workers protecting their queen
Until the danger was passed
Then slowly they emerged
Showing a head here and there.

Attack was their only way of defense
When attention was focused
On the damage they had done
It was quickly dismissed.
Support came from the expected sources
As nourishment was provided
For their widespread troops.

Paper seemed to be favored
But the very air was charged
And the electronic aura created
Made them appear
Not a challenge at all
But something of value.
Something that somehow
Make their way better.
No one questioned
If this was true.

Damage to the house

Was said to be the fault
Of the current residents.
The past was ignored
And while in fact
Owners from years before
Were responsible
For most of the problems
That emerged,
They remained blameless.

When the heat
Was turned off
On the house
The creepy-crawlers grew stronger.
No one questioned whether
It was right and proper
For them to return,
The only question was when.

The house became vacant.
With the passing of the season,
It was swept clean.

Some thought the new owners
Would be different
Expecting them to bring Change.

The New Owners arrived
Surrounding themselves with
Others who had been with them before.
But they had no friends. Only takers.
(For that is the way of this town.)

Now all that was necessary was
For the silent ones to return.

At first only a few were seen
But that's their way.
They crawled along the familiar corridors
Left bare by the sweeping out
Of the last owner.
Halls were to be walked anew.

Some appeared not to notice,
Others even cheered.
Change was now.
The new owners were all too ready
To accept whatever
Would make them
Appear to be willing to compromise.

Almost from the first
The Queen emerged
Surrounded by her minions.
Workers all too ready to do her bidding.

The drone had done his job
And while some paid homage to him
Most recognized
Him as a nuisance
That must like all
Drones before,
Fall to ground.
His wings clipped and damaged.

With the passage of the season
They spread until
They were to be seen
In almost ever crook and crevice
The walls echoed their footsteps
Their march became more pronounced
Until even the non-vigilant
Became alarmed.

But it was too late
Her troops fed ever on paper
And destroyed all
That had once been bedrock.
They spread
As only they can.

Once the house was captured and secure
They spread to other structures.
Their tunnels were deep and wide

With soldiers defending
What they had captured.

Opposition was quickly crushed
In ways that would turn the stomach.
Beheading was much too civilized
For their victims.

Those that once served as regulators
Found their arsenal of tricks diminished
Their hands were tied by too many rules
Until they could only fight with bare hands.
The contests were one sided at best
More like a massacre.

Finally the stone mason was called.
In the stones covering the graves
Were chiseled, not the names of those buried below,
But instead the names of the victors:

Panetta,
Emanuel,
Craig,
Richardson,
Gensler,
Summers,
Browner,
Holder,
Johnsen,
etc.,
etc.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Thomas Chatterton

Once was a priest
Who lived in England
Who recounted the history
Of events that have come to be
Important to those who
Admire those who
Went before.

Rowley was his name
According to records left
By Thomas Chatterton.
Great was the exclaim
In Chatterton's time
That a man of record
Made such detailed
Writing on parchment.

Basking in the attention
Bestowed,
Chatterton sought to
Enshrine his discovery
For posterity.

Alas,
It came to pass
That the imagination
Of Chatterton
Was responsible
For the priest
Who lived only in
Parchment and ink.

Thus began one of the
Most famous extraordinary
Delusion know to be
Foisted on the illumini
Who refused to believe
That a boy of seventeen years
Could produce such,

And in abundance, much,
For in addition to Rowley
He produced poems,
Satiric essays and other writings.
Far greater than is
To be expected of one of
Chatterton's young age.

No other has done as much
To confuse the reader
Than perhaps Christopher Marlowe
Who some think was the
Ghost masquerading as no less
Than William Shake-speare.

s

...

Whan from the diftaunt ftreeme arofe a mayde,
Whofe gentle treffes mov'd not to the wynde;
Lyche to the fylver moone yn froftie neete,
The damolfelle dyd come foe blythe amd fweete.

Ne browded mantell of a fearlette hue,
Ne thoone pykes plaited o'er wyth ribbande geere,
Ne coftlie paraments of woden buue,
Noughte of a dresse, but bewtie dyd fhee weere;
Naked fhee was, and loked swete of youthe,
All dyd bewryen that her name was Trouthe.

The ethie ringletts of her notte-browne hayre
What ne a manne fould fee dyd fwotelie hyde,
Whych on her milk-white bodykin fo fayer
Dyd fhowe lyke browne ftreemes fowlyng the white tyde
Or veynes of brown hue yn a marble cuarr,
Whyche by the travelier ys kenn'd from farr.

...

line 39, The Storie of William Canynge, as written by Thomas Rowley and others
in the fifteenth century and copied by Thomas Chatterton (according to TC) .
When Chatterton sought rhyme, he sometimes used words to fit from the
glossary he created.

Regardless, Thomas Chatterton continues to draw moths to the flickering candle flame.

The Rowley Poems, Clarendon Press, 1911.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Thoughts On Sitting With The Dead

It's said that hearing is last to go
As life's candle loses its glow.
So sit quietly and whisper thoughts of how
Being together is forever, not just now.

Remember as the lips grow cold
How the touch brought warmth when you were not yet old
And how so many things you planned to do
Will have to wait a while, but mention a few.

Then look to see the one who has been so dear
Resting peacefully. Tell her what you want her to hear.
How you will someday be together and dance
Once again to the music of the old romance.

(In rural America it is customary for family and friends sit through the night with the one who has passed away.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Thoughts On Teeth

Ever starred at someone's open mouth
And noticed the teeth that are peeking out,
Sometimes they are there to see
Even when the owner doesn't want them to be.

Perhaps the lips are drawn tight
To hide some mystery from the light
Or to project a grim unsmiling face
Making sure that there's no joy in this place.

But mostly teeth are there to bare
So everyone can the moment share
As example when the camera flashes
To reveal the pretty white ones.

Of course there's the Terry Thomas gap
That is a trademark of his grin
When he with perhaps a lecherous smirk
Is going to do someone a bit of dirt.

Or when in television glare
The pretty anchor is about to share
Some bit of news with breathless presence
Announcing some catastrophic event.

But I prefer to remember most
Those teeth that long ago gave up the ghost
And while yellow and sculpted with cavities many
Are saved to remind one of the relief from agony
That a visit to the dentist office brought
When extraction was the solution sought.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Three Short Poems

1) An Ibis

An Ibis

Is.

2) Ibis Eye

IbisEye

In the sky.

3) Hurricane forecast

Weather

Forecaster.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

To Adam M. Snow - On Melancholy

Woe is me' indeed
That's not what you should plead,
Instead look around
And see the good that you have found,
Plenty of time to address
The unpleasantness
'coming close, the forsaken morrow.'

So let's begin by saying
There is no telling
What the future holds
So let's instead be rather bold
And taste the fruits from life's tree
Enjoying the best that are free
It's time to bank, not stoke the fire
'Melancholy of my one desire'
For melancholy is a permanent affliction,
Or black bile which lies in the constitution.
But what you suffer is dejection or rejection,
A temporary affliction from which you can be set free
From sadness and the plea, 'Woe is me.'

s

*Crabb's Synonymes, pp 413, Tenth edition 1849, New York, Harper Bros.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

To Ernestine

How busy you have been
To post four poems on a whim
(I know it doesn't rhyme
But 'been' is difficult in its prime)

With eyes wide open
Listening to the din
Of the world about you
When others haven't a clue.

You capture the celestial beauty
Of the water and its bounty
As you watched from the shore
And duly penned it, for evermore.

Tomorrow will come with sunrise
And many a surprise
So keep your eyes wide open
And ready your paper and pen
For a new poem is somewhere hidden
Just where and when?

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

To Juan Olivarez, A Distant Sunrise

I stand welcoming the rising sun
On the Myakka Prairie where morning's just begun.
The landscape's flat for miles around,
Silence, for it's miles to the nearest town.

And then the first noise you hear
Is a calf crying out in fear
That the cow has gone far away
And will not be here at break of day.

The freshness of the morning dew
Welcomes the senses to judge anew
The smell of new cut hay
That just yesterday, the sickle lay.

With the brush of a gentle breeze
Sweeping the grass and distant trees
Stirring the cool from the past night
With a new warmth to delight

And, then a bursting on the horizon
As the sun begins arising,
Colors beyond description
Cast a glow of redemption.

And you know that this is the place
Where mankind lives in blissful peace
On the Myakka Prairie, far from town,
Where man and nature are of one.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

To Loyd Taylor, On The Evils Of Drink

After more than his cup would hold
Big Joe beat the bar and told
Those around him
He had come to town to drink.
And when he was finished,
They'd better be gone in a wink.

So belly up to the bar did he
And one more round was drunk
before this story's end is told.
'Get me a hoss, ' said he
One that's mean
And evil just like me.

The barkeep locked the door
And went with Big Joe to the barn
And there in the corner stood
The baddest horse around.

Big joe took one look
And said with glee
Looks like that there hoss
Was made for just me.

Jumped astride that critter
No saddle was put on there
For saddles are for greenhorns
And there was surely no time to spare.

Out the door the pair departed
To heaven knows not where
For that was the last we have
Heard of Big Joe and the spavined, one-eyed mare.

Don't drink and ride.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

To New Poets

Books may become a thing of the past
As technology decides what will last
But a person is more than just a flashy jacket
That entices the reader to pause a bit.

So, not with books that are going away
I hope you and your poetry are here to stay
And you will write more as time permits
For all to read and think of it.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

To Poet Master, C. Richard Miles

On the hyena and the Mockingbird

The hyena's laugh was his last
This meal, not his best
For indigestion came on fast
As the flighty bird in his stomach wouldn't rest.

Hope you'll write more poems such as this
Or the one about the cat and spider
For the moral, you cannot miss
As in life there is always something bigger

Sidi J. Mahtrow

To The Right Reverend...

There he stands, sculpting an image
Of what never was and never will be.
Prodding his disciples to find the way
And cast their lot with the Maker
Who teaches creative art.

They, as they emerge from the cocoon
Which envelops them,
See the light of the breaking day,
Discovering that it requires more than
The simple acquiring of knowledge, but
The laying on of the hands with fervor,
Not in haste but slowly, and with feeling,
To yield their own vision, everlasting.

As they go forth spreading the word,
Those who provided for their early
Sustenance will see the profit of their wisdom
In partaking in this bold experiment that
Rewards all those who seek and find.

Those who pause momentary
As they pass through Life's Gallery,
See Art and Religion intertwined.
Searching; they find
The maker's mark and are rewarded.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Tobacco -

Others try to control tobacco use
Forcing one to become a recluse
Where in isolation of one's own choosing
Others gather to avoid the abusing.

Tobacco is a blessing in disguise
As it hastens ones demise
An early death seems to be ensured
So that the agony of old age need not be endured.

When the cost to the country is considered
Would be less expensive to let those like encumbered
Go the ways of Tobacco's pleasures
Than the cost of old age's Medical Adventures.

Just a thought for those who seem hell bent
On seeing that others must repent
And enjoy the agony of growing old
If it is in fact, enjoyment bold!

(From one who doesn't smoke, dip or chew.)

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Today Was Once Tomorrow And Will Soon Yesterday Be

But wait my father,
There is time - yet. Go no further,
But stay awhile with me
As we both search the sea.

For there is a ship I see on high
Sails set against a flowing tide
To reach a goal that has been set
Where men, women and children are met.

There joining in jubilant cheer
Holding together what is most dear
A union that knows no breaks
For we are All - As we awake.

Go not gentle into that good night
But bless the days when all is right.
Rage, rage, rage - not against the failing light
For together we have yet another war to fight.

Today was once tomorrow,
And will soon yesterday be.
But I pray,
It shall be
As it was
Meant to be.

Sidi
01/07/17

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Too Tall

They say he's well over six feet tall
But that's when playing basketball,
Is he really head and shoulders above
Those that surround him when push comes to shove?

He always seems to chose members of his teams
That are pigmies, by all appearances it seems.
Both in stature and in mental abilities
They all seem to be Nature's castoff shorties.

So when you hear someone say,
"He's so intelligent, clear's night and day."
You know they are trying to deceiving us all,
For he's not exceptional, and not really tall.

Cause he makes dumb mistakes,
as all of us do,
But most of us acknowledge the facts,
that're obvious to me and you,
While he just goes along on a clueless path
Ignoring the counsel that would avoid all the wrath.

Some say that its his plan to change the road that we're on
And implement change before the chance's gone.
But if he's so smart why can't he see
That we like it just fine, and let it be..

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Tranche

</>'Please sir, can I have a bit more? '
For there's more in the company store
And I need it to ensure
That my citizen's welfare is secure'
(To paraphrase Tiny Tim.)

'A tranche here,
A tranche there,
Pretty soon it's real money'
That's never a-plenty.
(To paraphrase Senator Everett Dirksen.)

'A spoonful of Euros
Makes the medicine go down.'
For those
Who live the life style
Of the Bourgeoisie.
(To paraphrase Mary Poppins)

Tranche, a term used to disguise
The disgust amongst the wise
As the French look down their nose
At those inferior ones below.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Transactional Analysis

Took a seat next to a friend in the bar.
Greeted him with 'Hey'
To which he replied, 'Yeah'.
And we sat quietly sipping our beer.

I noticed he was twisting something
Between his thumb and forefinger.
Rolling it round and round a bit.
Nothing much else was going on.

So, I said, 'Interesting.'
To which he replied, 'Yeah.'
And we sat awhile.
And he held it up to the light.

Curiosity killed the cat, they say
So I asked, 'Could I see it.'
And he seemed surprised,
Unwilling to share it, I surmised.

Then after another sip of beer,
He offered it to me
So I could more clearly see.
Although, he seemed somewhat at a loss.

I took it carefully in my hand
And held it to the light
Yet I still did not understand,
What it was that held his interest.

So, I said, 'Don't think
I ever seen
The likes of it.'
And he said, 'Yeah.'

It had a soft texture
Pliable to the touch
And somewhat brown
But not too much.

'Interesting.' said I,
As I rolled it between
Thumb and forefinger
The way I had seen him do.
'Yeah.' Said he.

'Where'd you get it? '
I enquired as he finished his beer
And stood to go.

'My nose.'

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Transient -

Posted as a comment on poem: False Beauty

Time when my fleeting days at last,
Unheeded, silently are past,
Calmly I shall resign my breath,
To life unknown, forgot in death.

Spectator

(from English Synonymes, George Crabb, New York, Harper Brothers,
Publishers, 1849)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Trruffles (A Chocolate Orgy)

She stood behind the counter, feet spread wide
Her hair neatly tied in a bun that the netting tried to hide.
Smiled when I entered, hands covered with sugar dust
So she wiped her hands on the apron. That she must.
Standing behind the display of truffles galore
She seemed to be offering so much more.

The names of each on a card was printed
With the truffles, carefully presented
So they stood out in all their glory
As if to tell a life's story
Each was held like a newborn at the baptismal font
To be blessed by the mistress who was about to anoint.

"Do you like truffles, ' she asked with a toss of her head
"Some come here thinking, they're just high priced chocolate., " she said.
"And they don't appreciate the taste and aroma
That each offers to the knowing consumer
As he savors the chocolate as it melts in his mouth
Releasing aroma's history in flavors, run rout."

Then she carefully selected one and placing in on a marble square
Carefully, carved sections with knowing care.
As she buisied herself I couldn't help notice
What a beauty stood before me with chocolates to entice
To sample what was offered. Never mind the price
For this was a meeting between two, that never happens twice.

Taking a small piece and placing it between her lips,
She slowly explained her chocolate, eating tips.
"Notice how I place it on my tongue and hold it there
Before I place against mouth's roof, the essence to share.
The chocolate melts at body temperature, just like yours and mine
And as it melts, cools the surface, a feeling, Oh so sublime."

She shifted her feet as if to acknowledge that more was to come
Tasting chocolate is permissive seduction to some.
"Now" she continued and as she slowly inhaled through her nose
She seemed to be in another world, yet she was so close,

With lips together so the nose took command
She reached out and offered a piece with her exquisite, gloved hand.

"After the coolness, "she continued, "You are about to discover
That this bit of chocolate has a history only you can uncover,
The dark chocolate has an earthy aroma that comes from its distant past."
And with eyes closed (as hers were) "you can imagine the forest vast.
Chirping of birds and calls of animals wild
Those are the memories that the chocolate cannot hide."

Too soon it was over and she carefully selected just a few
Into a pretty box which from the counter she drew.
Each nestled in its bed of paper like a child
Asleep for the moment but will awaken in a while.
Closing the box with a bit of ribbon and tying it with love
She offered the box to me with a gentle, yet knowing shove.

That will be thirty dollars, she said with a knowing smile
As if to suggest that more had been offered in this little while.
So as it paid up and was about to leave,
I took another sample that she had offered me
And placing it in my mouth with a knowing grin,
I hoped that I would be seeing her again.

Back at the office, I shared my bounty of truffles
Among those who worked with sometimes small rewards
And explained carefully the secret of eating chocolate
Known to some of authority, who indulged in what they ate
Savoring the essence and letting the chocolate melt in the mouth
Was a secret worth sharing with all who were about.

The next day at lunch, I returned to the shops
And wondered what I would do in this second encounter, (romance has its
hopes)
As I walked along the sidewalk counting the addresses as I went
I soon reached the block where I anticipated the event
There was 1020,1022,1024, and 1026
But where was the truffle shop, number 1024, as I remembered the number
distinct.
Instead was a shop that offered fresh coffee, much like Starbucks sold
But no candy store stood out, to behold.

Today I wonder but am too afraid to ask,
My coworkers if they enjoyed the chocolate repast.
For maybe I am dreaming of another time and place
When the world was a moving at a very different pace
But I will remember and tell all that I can
The proper way to enjoy chocolate; that's my plan.

sjm

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Two Buzzards - A Fable In Modern Times

Two friendly scavengers
were sitting by the roadside
awaiting the next gift
of manna from above,
(or at least from passage
under the wheels
of a sixteen wheeler)
when they were joined
by another of their kind.

The first was sitting
on a fence-post,
wings extended gathering
a bit of cool
while keeping a look out
for the next meal,
his friend meanwhile
hopped about on the ground
looking for some tidbit
that might have been
overlooked in the last foraging
of the carcass of the dog
that had become
a bit ripe even for their gentle taste.

Along comes something in the brush,
rattling the leaves
and with a slow shuffling motion,
emerged as a good sized possum
who sensed that there
was a ready and ripe meal
there for the taking.
He followed his nose
and was soon deep
into the guts of the matter
enjoying bits of liver and spleen
left over from
the buzzard's hasty meal.

He joined right in
with the buzzard on the ground,
neither giving a bit of notice
of the other as they both
sought the tastiest parts.

Said the post sitting buzzard,
'Why do we have to share
with such a low life marsupial
that goes about on four legs
while we can fly?

It's just not right
and I think we should
do something about it.
Sharing is ok
if the other side
is making the offers,
but this carcass is ours
and the possum
should just butt out
and leave us alone
to our business
which is after all a public service
as we dispose of the bounty
that is left
by the side of the road.'

The possum noticed not at all
this attempt to marginalize
his efforts and he continued
to feast on the plunder.

The second buzzard thought,
'Maybe my friend is right,
we shouldn't have to share,
after all didn't we
spot this from above
and claimed it first? '

'Away with you, ' he said.
And tried to poke out the eyes

of the offending possum,
but unsuccessful was his thrust
since the possum was feasting
with eyes closed,
head deep in the dog's body cavity.

'Attack him,
don't let him have another bite, '
his companions cried.
And with a swoop,
he landed on the possums back
and began to peck at his tail.
All this was to no avail.

After a while,
the possum annoyed
by all the commotion,
or perhaps having sated
his first hunger pangs
gave up and started to walk away.

'We have won, '
cried the first bird
and they both in joy
leapt into the air,
right into the path of a semi
that discriminated not
against those who
came into its path.

With a rush,
both buzzards were struck dead
and fell at the feet of the possum,
who seeing
this latest gift from heaven,
gave a quick sniff
of the still warm bodies,
and thought,
best to leave them for tomorrow
when they will be ripe,
and he rustled back into the brush.

Moral:

(?)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Ugly

It's not the best
Of neighborhoods
But why throw her out
In this weather
Just because she's
Old, ugly and white.
Probably cost
Too much
To maintain
In the style
To which she
was accustomed.
Now brutishly
Tossed out,
She's probably
Broke as well.

No doubt replaced
By a young pretty thing
With complexion
Clear and clean
And if that's not all
To tell,
One that's cheap and
Tawdry as well.

So there she sits
On the curb
Waiting
For the end.
Will someone
Pick her up
And use her as she's
Been used before.

Or will she be
Tossed aside
On the heap
Of waste

Like so much
Fodder
For society's
mill.

Some will say
This is the fate
To which
she was born
Nature designed her
To be nothing but a vessel
Scorned and kept away
from prying eyes
Always serving her master
and his needs
to the very end.

The society's unkind to a water closet.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Unintended Consequences

A country typically raises a trade barrier to protect its own
So that they can compete more, not against foreigners,
but those at home.

While an airport carbon tax serves nothing like this
For it is simply a tax, no more or less.

Now landing fees seem justified if you think about it
Cause they're about use of the airport as managers see fit.
But a carbon tax gives neither relief nor pain
As it is there for one purpose only, revenue to gain.

Will the air be cleaner with the imposition of tax?
Hardly, for the objective has nothing about it in fact.
So with travel to Europe lagging behind
Because, the economy's in a bind,
Exemptions and exceptions are what all have in mind.

As airplanes spew forth pollution in greater amounts
The Tax Mongers see only the balance sheet, as what counts.
Would not the better solution for all -
Reduce travel is the call?

And knowing it or not, that is exactly what they are doing!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Up Elevator

Up Elevator

Was on my way to my apartment on the thirty-third floor.
Pushed the floor button and stepped to the rear, facing door.
Just before the doors closed,
An attractive blonde in fashion-statement clothes,
Rushed aboard
And pushed her button on the board.

I gave her my "mule-eating" grin,
Puffed out my chest and pulled my belly in.
She looked me over, top to down
Saw my tweed jacket, university tie and weathered case, narry a frown.
Smiled, eyes expressive as if to say,
"I'm going to make your day."

As the elevator began to move
She turned to face the operating panel
And pushed every button
From top to bottom.

Then as the elevator
Came to a stop on the next floor,
The doors opened, for the hall to see
She turned toward me
And flashing a smile as big as before
Stepped outside, through the door.

Down the hall, gone in a flash,
The doors closed again, at last
And I began my trip up, up and away
To stop on each floor - this wasn't going to be my day.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Varicose Veins

There they be
Plain for all to see,
Bulging out
Unsightly in a rout.
Tinged with purple
Without scruple
Emerging from thin skin
Barely containing what's within.
Caused by age
Bad posture's wage.
Unpleasant to behold
Ugly, unsightly, blue lines
Traced like road map's
Record of man's journey
To destinations' unaccounted
Reminders of what never was
And what is not to be
If care isn't taken to control spread
Of this malicious disease.
A disease you say?
Yes, if they are allowed to have their sway.

But is it necessary to continue
Along the way of this venue?
No, there is a possible correction
That can be made by election.
Surgically remove the offending vein
Striping it's called; in the main.
Let others take the new direction
Of the vessels insurrection.

The heart pumps, by the second, a new
Fresh charge of life giving blood (not blue)
Carrying oxygen and nutrients
To the supporting members;
Taking away that which is waste
From the activities of whatever task.

Blue veins, varicose veins, politic

Answer to the body public.
The skillful surgeon performs his task,
Removing the spoils from the mishmash.
Now revealed for all to see
What nature intended to be.
The Democratic process does restow
Blue to Red with a healthy glow.

Circulation is improved, as is
The health of the proprietor or proprietress
Status quo feels the knife
Correcting the years of debauched living and strife.
The downward spiral of blue states is assured.
As people, for too much time; have endured
That web, woven by politicians; disregarding
The Body's health by their palavering.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Villifying And Denigrating

He's at it again
Lecturing on a whim,
Confusing the issues with words
That have no meaning to the assembled herds.

Gathered there, hanging on his message
As if he, Oz, knows all; the sage.
Then he spouts villifying
And denigrating.

Which they little understand
That what he means is, to belittle is opposition's plan,
And, when that's not enough
They make false accusations, in the rough.

So if the opposition is so enabled,
Why not simply say they're evil, motivated.
They lie and scoff at our loyal followers
Who are, as we know, Idolizers.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Visions Of Food

The smell of spring's in the air
And soon the taste sensations will all be there
But until the equinox arrives in June
We'll all be drooling, it can't come to soon.

(Written in response to STEPHEN BRIAN Brady's Supermarket Spring)

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Visions Of Loveliness

Close your eyes
The vision soon arises
Of the one you left behind
Whose smile reminds
That Dreams are made
Not by de Sade
But by the one who sees
The past as he (or she) pleases
And can be replayed
Each and every day.
s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Waitin' For The Cool*

Up at four
And out the door
Get things done
For' th' rising sun

Day break
Making rounds closin' gate(s)
Time's come
Cattle in pens waitin' for some

Select those with big balls
Heifers and babies not on call
Trucks ready for long haul
Fore th' heat melts road tar and all

Auction sparse like before
Drought here and evermore
Cows thin and get'n thinner
Grass is done for th' summer

Few who brought cattle here
Wait to hear the auction'er
Will get the check in the mail
Can't bear to hear the Missus wail

Why, why, why she sez, why
Do we put up with this way
Cousin in town's got gov'ment pay
No need to work day after day

Sell rest of stock
And pay off most of "hock"
Load up the truck
An say goodbye to this circle f..k

In the city no friends anywhere
No body seems to care
Get the card to pay the groc'ries
Free med, food and rent supporties.

Riot on street next to ours
People out night to all hours
Take it, it's free
Seems to be the cry of "liberty";

Then I woke up and looked
Livin' here by the book.

* Forecast was wrong
Broiling sun's begun
Back in the shade
With Marcus de Shade

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Walking Up The Down Escalator

Walking Up the Down Escalator

Along comes John ...
Ash(k) not what...
You remember that today is...
Time to do the ...
Laundry is full of dirty...
Secrets that only he...
Is no longer ...
Hear ya! , Hear ya! , the Judge...
Not what you can do for your...
Country fried steak and potato...
Blight brought the immigrants to...
(sing) America, the beautiful...
Rainbow colors after a flood...
Over flowing the spill...
Way to remember his ...
Poet(ry) takes many...
Style(s) is a matter of...
Taste the bitter and the...
Sweet memories of he that is...
Gone fishing amongst the bery...
Patch, cause that's how he...
Spelt his name.

John Ashbery 2017

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Was Once A Poet Named George Hunter

Once was a poet named Hunter
Who when couldn't rhyme, would punt'er
And come back next day
As if to say,
Sorry but I just coundn't do'er.

So as calendar pages turned,
His writing he'd spurn
Until finally, it seemed so proper
Just put pencil to paper
And, nothing could stop'er.

So Hunter, George by name
Is the one and the same
Who'll tease ye
With poems quite easy.
That after a beer (or more) will seize ye.

Putting words into play
The thought for the day -

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Wayward Mouse

First we saw him in the middle of the living room floor
Quiet as a mouse is what came to mind
We looked away and he was gone
What to do?

With two cats,
Better to let things
Take their course.
But where were the cats?

The books on the lower shelf of the case in disarray
Tossed on the floor in a heap.
Mystery solved, one of the cats had crawled behind
And was pushing them out in a fever.

Was the mouse behind or under the case?
No mouse in sight
And yet here was the big cat.
Suddenly he too was gone.

There under the coffee table made of ancient grape vines
Forming a twisted support for the glass top.
The large cat forcing himself through openings too small,
Searching, paws extended into hidden spaces.

Where is the mouse?
No sighting, no sound; yet diligent pursuit
Then an occasional mew, calling out the mouse,
'Come and be Captured.'

This too came to a close
Both cats in the window looking out
Giving the mouse a respite
Before the chase to be renewed.

Late at night, a soft pounding
The big cat is at it again
Pulling books from the case
Searching, searching.

Then quiet.
The cats join us in our quilts.
Snuggling. All is well.
In the morning, the mouse is found.

There amongst the covers
The mouse,
Omar's mouse
Somewhat chewed upon.

But still soft, tail extended
Sparkles of color, flower
Designs on the soft fabric
A mouse that only a cat could love.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Wendy Tap-Tap

A good impression, that's her game
Knowing no two people are the same.
So she goes about her way
Seeking a better fit, for what? Some would say.

Hair all askew
Nothing she can do.
Both hands committed to the task
(Can't see what she's thinking behind the mask.)

A bit of sweat upon her brow
Can't be bothered just now
For the time together is set,
Another minute yet.

Later, "tap-tap-tap," she says
The contact between is sure to please
A glance, a smile, and it's all done
Time with her, wasn't it fun?

At last, she's happy standing there
Shoulders hunched to show the wear
Missed lunch again today
Not important, she will say.

The impression she hoped to make
Is finished, for goodness sake.

Tap-tap-tap

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Where The Gods Sleep

Climbing, climbing ever upward
Entering the kingdom of the Gods
This is where they sleep.
First the growth of trees
Thickness like before never seen
Then verdant to extreme.

□

This is the place where orchids grow free
Never seen by man in his quest for them
Butterflies so thick that one stops
And waits for the migration to proceed
One could imagine how buffalo, like these
Once ranged in numbers without count.

This flight of yellow ones
Intent, they move as one
Quickly with the wind.
Then they are gone
And the silence of the trees
Captures again the senses.

Look up, look up!
And above, not far away
Clouds like steam billowing
So close that you can touch or taste.
Breath them in,
It is the elixir of the Gods.

Move on, move on and upward
And then above the clouds.
Below is like the sea
Waves cascading against the rocks and crags
Sometimes a tree top like driftwood
Cast into view then submerged in white surf.

Mexico, how I love you!

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Which Witch?

□

Which Witch?

Is the one that looks over your shoulder
And gives your back an itch
Before growing bolder.

Then the light dims
And the sound of music
Summons her (or him)
To provide a bit of magic.

And you try to scratch the itch
But it's just out of reach
And so you do the next best thing
You ask the witch for helping.

As if by magic the itch goes away
Now which Witch was it that refused to play?
But instead has moved the tingle to your nose
And makes you sneeze, God Bless You, I suppose.

Can't you feel the fingers moving up and down your spine
Ice cold and not at all sublime
As you pull the covers over your head
Knowing full well that the Witch is now in your bed.

So you make the best of the occasion
And put your ice cold feet up against the back of your companion.
Then when asked, What the hell!
Just say the Witch made me do it. Well?

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Who's In Favor Of Global Warming?

Those in favor of Global Warming, raise your hand.
What no hands? Everyone's bought the environmentalist stand.
How can that be? We need to protect the planet
But is this the way; the best plan for it?

Except for ugly legs and buns exposed by those who wear shorts,
Would not we all agree that being warm is better than having cold parts?
So now we vote again. Who likes being warm rather than cold?
Look, a few hands are raised, breaking away from the fold.

Why the emotional plea against Global Warming?
Could it be that it's just another politic forming?
You say they have my interest at heart.
Oh really. It's their interest, that's behind the effort.

So we vote again. Are these the people you'd like to have as friends?
Are you willing to have them dictate how any means justify the ends?
A few more hands are raised. Seems that being independent
Wins converts against the cause that at first appeared, Heav'n sent.

Of course taxes will as a consequence increase, but it's a trifle of a raise.
So what they say. It's for the good and anyhow, someone else pays.
Perhaps but when that someone else is you,
Self interest emerges and that's what you pursue.

We vote again. Let's keep taxes as they are.
Perhaps then we can afford a vacation, boat or car.
What's this, more hands in the air?
We may be on to something, people do care.

Panic now pervades the environmental crew
Who just moments before had opponents few.
With people beginning to think this way,
They'll have to find another method for the population to sway.

Health's a ready target. They say sun's exposure
Will short'n life expectancy and cause cancer for sure.
However, staying in a cave is hardly a life.
That's not living; we need balance between pleasure and strife.

Again we vote. Enjoy the out-of-doors, as you did when a kid.
Those heavy clothes, coats, scarfs and gloves, you now can rid.
More hands in the air, not less,
Oh woe, th' environmental crowd's in distress.

They say this is serious, how can we let it go on.
But wait, it's over a hundred years this declining eon.
Industrialization's influence is minimal
It's nature, not man's acts that're criminal.

Th' temperatures scientist 've been taking,
Are warmer now, are deserts in the making?
But Earth's much cooler than before
And naturally; higher temperatures are in store.

Perhaps it's the seashore slipping away,
That has raised the ire of many with dismay.
Respectively, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and San Fran
Have all sunk,12,10,8 and 6 inches beneath the waves and sand.

Well, perhaps Atlanta, St. Louis and Fargo
Would like a nice sandy beach to show.
If it should happen, be not dismayed,
It wont happen as our children's lifetime is played.

Is sanity entering our heads?
Global warming's a boggy-man under our beds?
Why vote again? The reasonings done
We all prefer baskin' in the sun.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Why

Why?

Why?

Why did she do it?

Did the decision come about, bit by bit?

On Being Alone

Why?

Now with friends abound

Is she afraid, she'll be left alone in this elysian town?

Why?

Is she afraid, when beauty's gone

She'll grow old like others, and be left alone?

Why?

When with others, laughing

But alone, is she crying?

Why?

Another birthday, gone,

Does she look back and feel alone?

Why?

Is she afraid to be left alone

Alone, alone, alone, when others 're gone?

On Old Age:

Why?

Is she afraid, when beauty's gone

She'll grow old like others, and be left alone?

Why?

Feeling age's, aches, chills and pains when awake,
Is she seeking pleasure for pleasure's sake?

Why?

Is she afraid when old and gray
No one 'll be here to with her stay?

Why?

Why did she just decide
Is she afraid, Life's passed her by?

The Empty Womb

Why?

Is she afraid, there'll be no heir
To remember her, or even care?

Why?

Dying with an empty womb
Is she afraid, that there's nothing to be writ on her tomb?

The Empty Bed

Why?

With no one to share her bed
Will she go seeking pleasure, vowing not to wed?

Why?

Feeling age's, aches, chills and pains when awake,
Is she seeking pleasure for pleasure's sake?

Winter

Why?

With gold and silver a'plenty
Does she fear the coming winter?

Why?
Winter's chill's in the air
Does she feel the crush of despair?

Why?
With Christmas near
Is being alone, a deathly fear?

Why?
Christ's Birthday's gone,
Does she look back and feel alone?

Why?
Why with the breath of Spring anew
Does she look back, not forward to the coming skies of blue?

Why?
Summer's here at last
Does the sun warm the bones of the cold, just past?

Why?
Autumn and the leaves fall from the trees
Does this remind her that it will soon her fate, to be?

Sonnet (Why?)

Why?
Standing in a crowd of friends
Does she want to be without, seeking better ends?

Why?
Is she angry that she's been delt
A hand, through which the sands of time escapes, unfelt?

Why?
She asks, Is it too late to seek anew

A window, with a different view?

Why?

When others seek solace in the grape,
Does she see only the drying seeds of life's mistakes.

Be not afraid.

Love's Labor is not Lost.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Why Do Baseball Players Spit?

Is it for a dry mouth?
If tha's the cause
Then there's more to the truth
That they fear the knife that falls.

When their performance is
Less than they were paid to do?
Haps, something's amiss
And they haven't a clue?

But, my suspicion is, they
Are trying to look masculine
In the game's lopsided fray,
And it's an easy line.

Like growing stubble
On chin and cheek
A testosterone fable
Suggesting they're strong, not weak.

Regardless of the what's and why's
One has to wonder if they even try
To avoid stepping where others before them came
And covered the field with man-made slime.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Wile E Coyote

A Wile E Coyote moment -
When the Road Runner ran him off the cliff
By taking an abrupt turn
The coyote continued, reality spurn(ed) .

Until he ran out of momentum
And there, suspended in air
He remained, no forward progress
And yet, on the plane he remained

Was only when he happened to look down
And saw there was no nearby ground
As he was suspended far above
With no other way to go

Then he slowly fell
Gaining momentum as he in space dwell(ed)
Until, as we all know
He crashed to the ground below.

beep, beep

^^^ ^^

So it is, Helicopter Ben
Has lost his momentum
And like the fleas on his back
All will crash even as he appears (in sailing terms) to tack.

Fleas will survive to find another host
But for the rest, all is lost
And like Wile E Coyote; too big to fall
Discovers Newton, was right after all.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

William Blake's Poison Tree

Alas, it had to end
For you see, it was my friend
That stole into my garden near
And took down the fruit, so dear.

A friend, a friend no more
That harvested from my daily store
And kept that which he felt to be his
Giving nothing in return, nay even a kiss.

So friend or foe, begone I say
If you have nothing to give, in any way
But see my art (and that of my wife so dear)
As nothing but etchings on plate, unclear.

For they offer a look into my soul
Which alas, in dirt grows cold
Still reveals the workings of the heart
In bringing forth, a masterpiece of art.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Willow Springs Cemetery

A cemetery is more than a resting place for bones
Or where at last silence comes
To quiet the ravages of time
Upon a body past its prime.

It's a place for celebration
Where ends this bit of Nature's creation
Doing what could be done
To address the trials faced by this one.

Placed here on earth as was intended
To enjoy life, never ended
But somehow problems always seemed to be
Greater than could be solved by him (or she) .

So at the cemetery where the funeral ends
Life goes on, for both enemies and friends.
Both groups can call it a celebration
For they have buried one who in summation
Represented what was of good heart and mind
Who loved and respected his fellow kind.

So lift up your glass and cheer
For this is the passing of one so dear
That while dirt the remains do cover,
His (or her) presence remains with us for ever.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Winter Snow

The crunch of snow beneath our feet
Is a wintery treat
That reminds us that we share
The love that is always there.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Winter's Night

I tumbled from my bed,
for this is the place where dreams end,
with horror's dread.
Wet with soaking sweat from the thought,
that I wasn't dead,
and over wrought,
that I was here instead.
For on the hill where the tale began,
'd met my true love,
who with me ran,
until she was summoned from above.
Carried away by the howling wind,
into another time and place,
where terrors end;
there is no saving grace.
And I made a hasty trip to the bathroom,
for nature calls,
regardless of the time,
but soon!

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Women's Hats

Why doesn't a woman wear a hat?

On the wall, closet or shelf
A man has hats to please himself.
And on the occasion make a statement.
His hat, a personal embellishment.

But a lady, woman, girl or princess
Never (or almost never) , a hat covers her tresses,
Venturing out, for all to see,
She wants others to "look at me";

Hours spent to get hair just right,
But never a thought of a hat sitting tight.
Shoes, belt, watch, jewelry aplenty
Yet no hat to top the assembly.

Dior, Lauren, Kroell, Gucci, Barneys, Netaporter,
Givenchy, valentino, armani, giambatista, atelier,
gaultier, elie saab; all miss the mark
For a hat to top it all, they're in the dark.

This statement, of self they scorn
Something so easily worn.
A fortune lies there for the taking,
Yet, the hat, they have forsaken.

It's time to cover this beauteous one
Who never before, a hat's adorned
Topping anew those beautiful tresses
A hat for all seasons, the market blesses.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Work

Omar, the cat,
Admires hard work
He can watch it for hours.

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Worms In A Can - A Poem To Göran Gustafsson

A simple twist of fate -

A simple twist of fate
is it love or is it hate?
You'll come to understand -
Life's simply worms in a can
And each will wiggle out.
For this, I have no doubt
Until you come to see
That it's your fate and destiny.

S

Sidi J. Mahtrow

Yesterday

Smell of drying tobacco in the barn
Fresh cut hay, in the warm.
Soon summer's heat is ended
First cold snap, outside play's suspended.
Smoke from potbellied stove
Curling upward, high above.
Winter's coming anew
Sister'll be back home with you.

s

Sidi J. Mahtrow