

# **CHRISTMAS PUDDING**

**2013**

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**Robert Middleton**

*Christmas Pudding* is an anthology devoted essentially to aspects of the use of language, particularly in poetry but also in wit and humour. Poetry is a vehicle for sharing ideas and emotions and, as such, is a mark of our civilisation and collective intelligence: it also promotes an understanding of the nature and importance of language, man's highest natural attribute. I am concerned that few people read poetry today and that the contemporary dominance of the visual media poses a threat to our command (and even understanding) of language and to a decline in writing skills.

I was deeply influenced by the teaching and literary criticism of Yvor Winters at Stanford University in the early 1960s, by his rigorous insistence on the distinction between connotation and denotation in poetry and by his moral crusade against the decline of reason as a precept in art and literature (and life) since the end of the eighteenth century. The accompanying relaxation of content and meaning that characterise verse for the last two hundred years is, at least in part, responsible for a breakdown in communication between writer and reader: today, 'anything goes' - much verse is obscure and, if it were not divided into lines, would be indistinguishable from prose. I share Winters' view that the late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century was a golden age for poetry and that several poets of this age developed a 'timeless' medium for poetic expression characterised by the clear communication of ideas and emotion, using words not only for their sound, rhythm and imagery but also to convey meaning. I recognise, however, that the poetry of this period may not be easily accessible to the general reader as a result of unfamiliar poetic conventions and shifts in the meaning of words. I also dissent from Winters' rather pessimistic view that not much of comparable quality has been produced since. Until 2011, *Christmas Pudding* drew heavily on poetry of the 'golden age'; since then I include much modern and contemporary verse that, in my opinion, meets Winters' strict criteria. If I no longer insist on form, my criterion remains nevertheless quality of language and content - and, a new ingredient: wit.

In addition to the desire to entertain and amuse, *Christmas Pudding* has thus a serious intent: I aim to include poems that use language in a rational and comprehensible way, that have a clear meaning with a minimum of decoration and cliché and that express feelings we can share. My choice is intended to show that poetry can be (I would even say, should be) a means of communication between normal rational people.

The inspiration for *Christmas Pudding* is *Christmas Crackers*, an anthology of wisdom, wit and linguistic surprise collected by the distinguished scholar John Julius Norwich. I have tried to emulate his mixture of humour and erudition, although a significant part of my raw material is drawn from the more mundane spheres of e-mail and the Internet. My title seems to me apposite: a Christmas pudding is full of varied, interesting and sometimes surprising ingredients, is well-rounded, requires a considerable amount of stirring in its preparation, is still good a long time after the first serving and is not heavy if enjoyed sparingly. Moreover, a pudding is the least pretentious of dishes and acknowledges Norwich's superior recipe.

All previous editions of *Christmas Pudding* can be found on  
<http://www.pamirs.org/Christmas-Pudding.htm>



Fall of Felix Dzerzhinsky in 1991 - Moscow (l.) - Warsaw (r.)

We stand for organized terror - this should be frankly admitted. *Felix Dzerzhinsky*, 1918

A thing is funny when it upsets the established order. Every joke is a tiny revolution. *George Orwell*, 1945

Often a government hears only its own voice. It knows it hears only its own voice and yet it deceives itself that it hears the people's voice. *Karl Marx*, 1842

....the future of Soviet power may not be by any means as secure as Russian capacity for self-delusion would make it appear to the men in the Kremlin. *George Kennan*, 1951

We then realized that there was no socialism with a human face, but only totalitarianism with broken teeth. *Adam Michnik*, 1988

By 1989, East German foreign debt reached DM 49 billion, or \$26.5 billion. The annual cost of servicing this obligation was \$4.5 billion, nearly 60 percent of export earnings. .... Living well beyond its means, the GDR had essentially lost its sovereignty. *Stephen Kotkin*, 2009

If nothing else, the history of postwar Stalinization proves just how fragile civilization can turn out to be. *Anne Applebaum*, 2012

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 e-mail [robert@middleton.ch](mailto:robert@middleton.ch)  
 Visit my website [www.pamirs.org](http://www.pamirs.org)

# CHRISTMAS PUDDING 2013

I had the privilege to be in Berlin just before the erection of the Berlin wall and in Moscow just after the fall of the Soviet Union. One of the most symbolic moments of my work in Tajikistan for the Aga Khan Foundation was to participate in the dismantling and privatisation of the Felix Dzerzhinsky State Farm in the district of Ghunt in Gorno-Badakhshan, the first act in the reform of the local farming system that the Foundation undertook to save the people of the Pamirs from certain famine.

In late 1960, who would have thought that only a few months later Berlin would be divided by a hideous concrete wall? In early 1989, who (apart from George Kennan - see quotation opposite) would have thought that the wall - and the whole repressive system behind it - would come tumbling down? Unlike the pulling down of Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad, staged for the media, there are surprisingly few published pictures of the toppling of Felix Dzerzhinsky's statue on the Lubyanka square, suggesting the total spontaneity of the act.

It is now nearly twenty-five years since the fall of the Berlin wall, and I have taken it (and the consequential events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Republics) as one of my themes for this year's *Christmas Pudding* I include also reflections on state surveillance and secrecy, and more on hoaxes and frauds. My choice of poetry this year - apart from a section devoted to animals - is deliberately eclectic and includes several (mainly contemporary) poets unknown to me until recently.<sup>1</sup>

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## Seasonally appropriate

**Asides - Richard Wilbur (\*1921)**

Though the season's begun to speak  
Its long sentence of darkness,  
The upswept boughs of the larch  
Bristle with gold for a week,

And then there is only the willow  
To make bright interjection,  
Its drooping branches decked  
With thin leaves, curved and yellow,

Till winter, loosening these  
With a first flurry and bluster,  
Shall scatter across the snow crust  
Their dropped parentheses.

**New Year's Poem - Margaret Avison (1918-2007)**

The Christmas twigs crispen and needles rattle  
Along the window-ledge.  
A solitary pearl

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<sup>1</sup> With thanks again to Luisa Orza for the anthologies *Staying Alive*, *Being Alive* and *Being Human*.

Shed from the necklace spilled at last week's party  
Lies in the suety, snow-luminous plainness  
Of morning, on the window-ledge beside them.  
And all the furniture that circled stately  
And hospitable when these rooms were brimmed  
With perfumes, furs, and black-and-silver  
Crisscross of seasonal conversation, lapses  
Into its previous largeness.

I remember

Anne's rose-sweet gravity, and the stiff grave  
Where cold so little can contain;  
I mark the queer delightful skull and crossbones  
Starlings and sparrows left, taking the crust,  
And the long loop of winter wind  
Smoothing its arc from dark Arcturus down  
To the bricked corner of the drifted courtyard,  
And the still window-ledge.

Gentle and just pleasure

It is, being human, to have won from space  
This unchill, habitable interior  
Which mirrors quietly the light  
Of the snow, and the new year.

**Chloe in late January - *David Young* (\*1936)**

Midwinter here, a frozen pause, and  
now some nineteen years since cancer took your life.  
This month's old god, they say, faced opposite directions,  
backward and forward. May I do that, too?  
It's much the same. Deer come and go, as soft  
as souls in Hades, glimpsed at wood's edge toward dusk;  
their tracks in daylight show they come at night  
to taste my neighbor's crab trees, last fall's fruit  
shrunk down to sour puckered berries.  
And where, in this arrested world, might I expect to meet your cordial spirit?  
You would not bother with that graveyard, smooth  
below its gleaming cloak of snow. You'd want  
to weave among the trees, beside the tiny kinglet,  
gold head aglow, warming itself  
with ingenuities, adapting, singing,  
borne on the major currents of this life  
like the creek that surprised me yesterday again,  
running full tilt across its pebbled bottom  
even in this deep cold.

**Merry Christmas, allerseits - *Walter Hofer* (\*1950)**

When the snow falls wunderbar  
And the children happy are,  
When the Glatteis on the street,

And we all a Glühwein need,  
Then you know, es ist soweit:  
She is here, the Weihnachtszeit

Every Parkhaus ist besetzt,  
Weil die people fahren jetzt  
All to Kaufhof, Mediamarkt,  
Kriegen nearly Herzinfarkt.  
Shopping hirnverbrannte things  
And the Christmasglocke rings.

Merry Christmas, merry Christmas,  
Hear the music, see the lights,  
Frohe Weihnacht, Frohe Weihnacht,  
Merry Christmas allerseits...

Mother in the kitchen bakes  
Schoko-, Nuss- and Mandelkeks  
Daddy in the Nebenraum  
Schmücker a Riesen-Weihnachtsbaum  
He is hanging auf the balls,  
Then he from the Leiter falls...

Finally the Kinderlein  
To the Zimmer kommen rein  
And es sings the family  
Schauerlich: "Oh, Christmas tree!"  
And the jeder in the house  
Is packing die Geschenke aus.

Merry Christmas, merry Christmas,  
Hear the music, see the lights,  
Frohe Weihnacht, Frohe Weihnacht,  
Merry Christmas allerseits...

Mama finds unter the Tanne  
Eine brandnew Teflon-Pfanne,  
Papa gets a Schlips and Socken,  
Everybody does frohlocken.  
President speaks in TV,  
All around is Harmonie,

Bis mother in the kitchen runs:  
Im Ofen burns the Weihnachtsgans.

And so comes die Feuerwehr  
With Tatü, tata daher,  
And they bring a long, long Schlauch  
And a long, long Leiter auch.  
And they schrei - "Wasser marsch!",  
Christmas is now in the ù♫a ô!

Merry Christmas, merry Christmas,  
Hear the music, see the lights,  
Frohe Weihnacht, Frohe Weihnacht,  
Merry Christmas allerseits...<sup>2</sup>

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## Uncivil Society

The best book I have read on the collapse of the Soviet Bloc is *Uncivil Society* by Stephen Kotkin (New York 2009). In less than 150 pages, Kotkin offers careful analysis and convincing arguments.<sup>3</sup> Here are a few extracts:

In the late 1940s, the Communist establishments across Eastern Europe formed small minorities, yet their members seemed deeply assured. They had resisted and defeated fascism; they were part of the movement of history; therefore, their theories and actions were right, even if majorities of their compatriots did not appreciate it, and in the name of the cause they could (and did) lie at will. By the 1980s, the Communist establishments had become enormous and possessed massive force, well-developed censorship mechanisms, and tight border controls. But the much bigger Communist establishments of the 1980s displayed the opposite sense of what the minuscule Communist establishments had in 1948: namely, that history was moving in the wrong direction, that defections could not be ignored, that the pervasive lying was sapping the system's own functionaries. "All it will take to bring the entire house down," remarked one anxious Soviet general in the world's biggest armed force, "is just one spark." In other words, sometime between the late 1940s and the 1980s, uncivil society suffered a psychological blow, a loss of arrogance. That shift occurred not primarily because of the Hungarian events of 1956 or even the Czechoslovak events of 1968 but because of economic shortcomings, against the backdrop of Western capitalist successes. Eastern European elites who had come to power with Communist systems viewed the latter as instruments to force a modernization leap (of a particular non-market kind) on their "backward" countries. That was indeed what had happened, with great violence, but it had failed to close the gap with the West. ....

After World War II, and particularly from the 1970s, profound structural changes radically altered the global geopolitical context for Eastern Europe, demanding a response from its uncivil societies. Having built socialism, they responded essentially with two opposed versions of trying to make it better. One involved the reformers' dream—socialism with a human face—which, however, had repeatedly shown itself to be not a renewal of socialism but its unwitting liquidation. Party conservatives were properly wary of Gorbachev's 1980s revival of socialism with a human face. But their alternative, conservative

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<sup>2</sup> With thanks to Vanessa Grampp and Renate Gembler. Walter Hofer is best known as a songwriter for Udo Lindenberg. This "macaronic" verse (see *CP 2012*) is one of their best-known joint productions.

<sup>3</sup> We should not be complacent. The recent behaviour of the editors of *The Daily Mail* towards the Milibands suggests that there are powerful uncivil elements in our societies too. See <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2013/oct/05/daily-mail-battle-labour-lord-rothermere>

modernization—meaning a further tightening of “discipline” as well as profligate investment in technological panaceas—also failed to reenergize the systems. This left just muddling through, which held out great appeal. After all, the system had raised up the members of uncivil society, and they hoped the system would somehow save them, especially if capitalism finally descended into the second great depression that Communists had long predicted for it. But someone forgot to tell the post-World War II capitalist world to go into a death spiral. Instead, the competition in living standards all but bankrupted the Communist systems economically, because they were politically and morally bankrupt. ....

From the 1970s, after having long paid below-world-market prices for imports from Eastern Europe while extracting higher prices for Soviet exports, Moscow found itself providing its satellites with raw materials at below-world prices, while importing shoddy goods in return. Worse, after the world price of oil tumbled precipitously in 1985-86, the Soviet Union—which could not beg itself for more money—eventually became contaminated with the “Polish disease,” too, borrowing from the capitalists to satisfy consumer desires in a socialist country. Meanwhile, Moscow fumed that the inhabitants of the satellites were living better than the Soviets, yet these beneficiaries were not even satisfied. But rank-and-file Eastern European dissatisfaction could not be directed at abstractions such as “the market” or “globalization”; the regimes were held responsible. .... And yet, even the dim-witted comprehended the depth of the trap: If socialism was merely aiming to placate consumers just like capitalism, only not as well, was socialism’s existence even justified? To put the matter in its starkest terms, how long could muddling through continue if Western bankers refused to roll over the loans?

What to do? Communist rulers in China—who endure as of this writing—discovered a solution: a police-state market economy. On June 4, 1989, when multicandidate elections took place in Poland that would culminate in the formation of a Solidarity-led government, the tanks rolled into China’s Tiananmen Square. It was a coincidence, but an extraordinary one: one Communist uncivil society capitulated, the other stood firm. ....

Supplication before the Soviets never ceased, but Ulbricht turned to the enemy, too. In 1970, the year before his ouster in a palace coup, he told the head of the USSR Council of Ministers that because the Soviets would not underwrite the GDR to the extent necessary, the GDR would have to borrow from the capitalist West. “We know the plan will be upset by it,” he admitted. The GDR would seek hard currency to make an industrial leap and, in theory, pay the debt back with a range of new manufactured goods for export. This, however, presupposed a Western demand for East German goods—as well as no competition from other low-price exporters. It also required expensive imports of components and raw materials, on top of the consumer imports necessary to placate a populace aware of West German lifestyles. And unless the GDR’s export earnings kept ahead of these import expenditures, the country would suffer a trade imbalance and be unable to pay back the hard-currency loans. ....

“The events in Eastern Europe,” Jacques Levesque has written, constituted “the breaking point between the success and failure of Gorbachev’s great, historic



endeavor.” This is an exaggeration. Gorbachev’s “socialism with a human face” was a bundle of contradictions that were impossible to reconcile. But the bloc’s implosion vastly accelerated the exposure of those contradictions and emboldened many people, from the Baltic states to Ukraine to Russia, to seek the formerly unthinkable: namely, full emancipation. Gorbachev had introduced—absent any societal pressure to do so—competitive multicandidate elections for the all-Union and then the republic Supreme Soviets, empowering new popular leaders such as Russia’s Boris Yeltsin (1931-2007). Until that point, uncivil society had lacked any corrective mechanisms of its own. But it had long been subject to some not of its own creation, such as the capitalist world economy. Another important factor was the steadfast Western containment stance—whatever the mistakes and excesses, a united West properly opposed communism in the Cold War—and the powerful example of post-World War II capitalist democracy and prosperity. Uncivil society’s own media transmitted information about the capitalist world, and so did the Western media that penetrated uncivil society’s airwaves. The latter included not only West German broadcasts into East Germany, which were unimpeded, but also Voice of America, the BBC, and others, which managed to circumvent jamming and restrictions, especially during the spiraling year of 1989. Then, just as Eastern Europe was about to break away, the elections in the USSR added an additional impulse to the popular mobilization and sovereignty drives of the Soviet borderlands. Still, what most facilitated the stunning Soviet crackup was the circumstance that the Soviet Union was organized as a conglomerate of national states. ....

Before Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the bloc was not in upheaval—not even in Poland, where in 1980-81 the system had been clinically dead for sixteen months until reanimated by martial law. The new Soviet general secretary caused the destabilization. Underlying it were momentous structural shifts. Germany and Japan’s huge shift from Great Depression and goose-stepping militarism to middle-class prosperity and democracy, followed by the re-entry of some 400 million Chinese (in southern and coastal China) into the capitalist world economy beginning in 1978, was earth-shattering. Soviet-style socialism—the supposed antidote to capitalism—did not decline; it was crushed in a competition that was its *raison d’être*. The uncivil societies began to lose the courage of their convictions. .... Every uncivil society had plenty of police and loyalists, yet none could find—in the face of the post-war capitalist challenge—a stable equilibrium between sclerosis and dissolution. Reform was destabilizing; lack of reform, self-entrapping. Both were predicated on ideological adherence to socialism in the economy, meaning rejection of the market. In the end, the collapse of communism was a collapse of the establishments, and the establishments’ collapse was rooted in the world conjuncture—the success of capitalism and the failure of socialism.

Could it have turned out differently? .... reform impulses were constantly generated by the system itself, flowing from the comparisons with the West and the social perfecting inherent in Marxism-Leninism. The conservatives’ warnings about reform being autoliquidation were correct, but the conservatives had no

answer to the competition with post-World War II capitalism either. They pushed greater discipline and refinement of planning, throwing money at panaceas such as technology, but mostly the conservatives held on, waiting for the West to nose-dive again, as in the 1930s. Trends in the outside world, however, especially in East Asia, moved against the conservatives. The East Asians helped clobber the East bloc manufacturers, undercutting the quixotic borrowing-and-export gamble that Gierek in Poland and Ulbricht in East Germany had launched in the early 1970s, and that others, such as Ceausescu in Romania, had emulated. The resultant “Polish disease”—massive convertible-currency debt—was compounded by deficits in political legitimacy. At the same time, however, it was East Asia that seemed to have the cure. The persistence of Communist regimes well past 1989 in China and Vietnam (not to mention North Korea) showed how “market Leninism” could save the party. And yet, even had the East bloc uncivil societies realized that police-state market economies might work, they were ideologically opposed. Moreover, such a strategy was utterly out of the question for East Germany, given West Germany’s existence (North Korea, facing South Korea, has hesitated to follow the China-Vietnam marketizing course). Keep in mind also that China’s market Leninism was predicated on integrating into the capitalist global order, which required acceptance of the dominance of U.S. power. Unlike China, the Soviet Union was an alternative global order, a status it could not simply walk away from. And the USSR’s fate was intimately tied to the disposition of its clone-regime satellites formed in the wake of World War II. The bind was nearly total.

The endgame could have been catastrophic. Driven by an idealistic belief in the viability of socialism, notwithstanding everything, Gorbachev sought to democratize the Soviet system, helping take it down peaceably. Of course, Leninist regimes were dictatorships, and the survival of dictatorships depends on the perception that they remain ready and able to “show their teeth.” As soon as they waver in using force when challenged, their subject peoples can begin withdrawing their fear, and a political “run” on the system can escalate geometrically. In the Leninist cases the monopoly vanishes, bringing an end to the system seemingly overnight. So it was in Hungary in 1956. So it was in East Germany and Romania in 1989. As for Poland, most observers had long understood that the country was different; it had a peasantry with its own land, churches controlling public spaces, a pious populace for whom authority signified the local priest and the Polish pope, a working class with its own organizational forms, and a varied opposition that became the East bloc’s only counterelite. But in Poland in 1989, the exact same cause as elsewhere in the bloc—a debt spiral that was unfixable because of the political bankruptcy—pushed the uncivil society to invite the opposition to a roundtable. .... The people fumed as they watched Communist regimes fold the same way they had originally unfolded: namely, in a spasm of asset and property redistribution. ....

Communist systems combined an all-encompassing idea (a new world that transcended capitalism) with a novel organization (monopoly over the economy and public life)—a heady mix that held awesome power but then disintegrated with uncanny velocity. Their most vulnerable aspect was the endemic lying,

which magnified the power of Leipzig's Lutheran Church, Timisoara's Reformed (Calvinist) Church, and Poland's Catholic Church. The paragons of uncivil society certainly can be scorned for their prevarications and casuistry, as well as, in many cases, their devotion to the cause even after their own imprisonment for nonexistent crimes (Gomulka, Nagy, Kadar, Husak). Teresa Torańska (1944-), a Polish journalist, used Solidarity's breakthrough in 1980 to interview and disparage five of the highest surviving officials from Stalinist-era Poland (1945-56). Exemplary in her lineup was Jakub Berman, whose Jewish father had died in Treblinka and who became part of Poland's ruling troika with economic boss Hilary Minc and party chief Boleslaw Bierut. Berman lorded over Polish culture as Politburo overseer of state security, with an office that had a direct phone line to Stalin. But in 1956, following Bierut's fatal heart attack (some two weeks after Khrushchev's secret speech), Berman was ousted from the leadership and, the next year, from the party for "distortions and errors." He got a lowly publishing-house job, petitioned the party for reinstatement, was twice refused, and gave up petitioning—but evidently not believing. Berman conceded to Torańska that "these things aren't simple," but he insisted that after the Soviets ejected the Germans from Poland "we wanted to get this country moving, to breathe life into it; all our hopes were tied up with the new model of Poland, which was without historical precedent and was the only chance it had throughout its thousand years of history." And, Berman concluded, "we succeeded. In any case, we were bound to succeed, because we were right—History was on our side." Only it wasn't, and they failed.

T T T T

### **Every joke is a tiny revolution**

What are the four degrees of comparison in Czech? Good, better, best, Soviet.

Q: Is it true that the Soviet Union is the most progressive country in the world?

A: Of course! Life was already better yesterday than it's going to be tomorrow!

Five precepts of the Soviet intelligentsia:

Don't think.

If you think, then don't speak.

If you think and speak, then don't write.

If you think, speak and write, then don't sign.

If you think, speak, write and sign, then don't be surprised.

Three workers find themselves locked up, and they ask each other what they're in for. The first man says: "I was always ten minutes late to work, so I was accused of sabotage." The second man says: "I was always ten minutes early to work, so I was accused of espionage." The third man says: "I always got to work on time, so I was accused of having a Western watch."

Three men sit in a jail in Lubyanka. The first asks the second why he has been imprisoned, and he says, "Because I criticized Karl Radek." The first man responds, "But I am here because I spoke out in favour of Radek!" They turn to the third man who has been sitting quietly in the back, and ask him why he is in jail too. He responds, "I'm Karl Radek."

Q: Why do the People's Police go out on patrol in groups of three? A: One can read, one can write, and the third is there to keep an eye on the two intellectuals.

Two soldiers are patrolling the Berlin Wall, looking westward: "What are you thinking of when you see the enemy state of our homeland?" "The same as you are, comrade." "Then, unfortunately, I must arrest you!"

At the 1980 Olympics, Brezhnev begins his speech. "O!"—applause. "O!"—more applause. "O!"—yet more applause. "O!"—an ovation. "O!!!"—the whole audience stands up and applauds. An aide comes running to the podium and whispers, "Leonid Ilyich, that is the Olympic logo, you don't need to read it!"

After a speech, Brezhnev confronts his speechwriter. "I asked for a 15-minute speech, but the one you gave me lasted 45 minutes!" The speechwriter replies: "I gave you three copies..."

A man is limping across the Piata Revolutiei in Bucharest, wearing only one shoe. A friend sees him - "Have you lost a shoe, Dumitru?" "No, I found one."

How many Latvians do you need to screw in a light bulb? Only one. Obtain light bulb is hard part.

A man goes into a butcher's in Warsaw and asks for pork, "nie ma" [there isn't any]; for beef, "nie ma"; for lamb, "nie ma"; for veal, "nie ma"; for chicken, "nie ma". Finally, he leaves, defeated. "He was kind of crazy, wasn't he?" says the butcher's assistant. "Yes," sighs the butcher, "but what a memory!"

Q: What is the definition of socialism? A: The long, hard road between capitalism and capitalism.

Q: What's the difference between a capitalist fairy tale and a Marxist fairy tale? A: The capitalist fairy tale starts out; "once upon a time there was...." - The Marxist fairy tale starts out; "some day there will be...."

In 1939, a man is arrested in Berlin for shouting "Hitler is a fool". He is sentenced to one year in prison. In 1949, the same man is arrested for shouting "Ulbricht is a fool". He is sentenced to ten years. He says: "Under Hitler, I only got one year. It's not fair." The STASI officer answers: "Well, you only got one year for insulting Ulbricht. The other nine are for talking about a state secret in public."

Q: Where in Warsaw do you get the best view? A: From the top of the Soviet Palace of Culture?

Q: Why? A: Because that's the only place from which you can't see the Soviet Palace of Culture.

In an East German Party meeting, the Party Secretary attempts to create a debate amongst the members. Finally, one Party member, Kohn, stands up to speak. "Comrade Party Secretary, I've only got three questions for you: Why is there no sugar in our shops? Where's the meat? Where's the bread?"

The Secretary nods and replies: "Comrade Kohn, I will answer your question in the next Party meeting."

At the end of the next Party meeting one Party member stands up to speak: "Comrade Party Secretary, I've only got one question for you: Where is Comrade Kohn?"

What would happen if the desert became a socialist country? Nothing for a while, and then there would be a sand shortage.

Two small boys live on opposite sides of the Berlin wall. The one on the Western side leans out of the window and ostentatiously eats a banana: "Haha - we've got bananas over here ...."

The one on the Eastern side replies: "But we've got socialism over here."

The other one: "Haha - with Willy Brandt we're going to have socialism here too."  
"Haha - then you won't have any bananas either...."

T T T T

From **Les chansons de Bilitis** - *Pierre Louÿs* (1870-1925)



Une femme s'enveloppe de laine blanche.  
Une autre se vêt de soie et d'or.  
Une autre se couvre de fleurs,  
de feuilles vertes et de raisins.

Moi je ne saurais vivre que nue.  
Mon amant, prends-moi comme je suis:  
sans robe ni bijoux ni sandales,  
voici Bilitis toute seule.

Mes cheveux sont noirs de leur noir  
et mes lèvres rouges de leur rouge.  
Mes boucles flottent autour de moi  
libres et rondes comme des plumes.

Prends-moi telle que ma mère m'a faite  
dans une nuit d'amour lointaine,  
et si je te plais ainsi,  
n'oublie pas de me le dire.

### **Vers les yeux des sirènes**

Qu'on déserte la ville ! Que nul rallume  
L'autel ! Nous laisserons à tout jamais, ce soir,  
Les dieux horribles de la terre, et dans le noir  
Nous partirons, suivis par un frisson d'écume...  
La nef impérieuse à travers l'amertume  
Bondira, tranchant l'eau du fil de son coup  
Et nous nous pencherons sur la proue, à l'espoir  
De vos terribles voix, déesses de la brume !  
Grands poissons glauques d'où fleurissent des corps blancs,  
Nus miroirs de la lune et des flots nonchalants,  
Vous qui chantez vos yeux dans les algues, Sirènes !

Quand nous aurons touché vos bouches, vous pourrez,  
D'un signe seulement de vos doigts adorés,  
Délivrer dans la mort nos âmes plus sereines.

### **Le baiser**

Je baiserais d'un bout à l'autre les longues ailes  
noires de ta nuque, ô doux oiseau, colombe prise, dont  
le coeur bondit sous ma main.

Je prendrai ta bouche dans ma bouche comme un  
enfant prend le sein de sa mère. Frissonne !...  
car le baiser pénètre profondément et suffirait à l'amour.

Je promènerai ma langue légère sur tes bras,  
autour de ton cou, et je ferai tourner sur tes côtes  
chatouilleuses la caresse étirante des ongles.

Ecoute bruire en ton oreille toute la rumeur de la  
mer... Mnasidika ! ton regard me fait mal. J'enfermerai  
dans mon baiser tes paupières brûlantes comme des lèvres.

*Les Chansons de Bilitis* were published by Pierre Louÿs in 1894. In his introduction, he claimed they were found on the walls of a tomb in Cyprus, written by a woman of Ancient Greece called Bilitis, a courtesan and contemporary of Sappho. The volume deceived many expert scholars. Even though the poems are actually clever fakes, authored by Louÿs himself, they are remarkably good poetry.

T T T T

### **Pass the Port**

There was a bit of confusion at the **store** this morning. When I was ready to pay for my groceries, the cashier said, "Strip down, facing me."

Making a mental note to complain to my congressman about Homeland Security running amok, I did just as she had instructed.

When the hysterical shrieking and alarms finally subsided, I found out that she was referring to my credit card.

I have been asked to shop elsewhere in the future.

They need to make their instructions to us seniors a little clearer!<sup>4</sup>

T T T T

### **Lingua franca<sup>5</sup>**

"Celtic Mist" by James McCabe (*Die Welt*, 4 Jan. 2011):

"Each language divides up things, ideas, events and so on from a different viewpoint. As a result there are few one-to-one correspondences between English and German." Bruce Beaton never lived to see this opinion in book form, but he

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<sup>4</sup> With thanks to John Stokoe.

<sup>5</sup> With thanks to Helga Hoppe.

was surely one of the few people who ever understood the differences between Europe's top two languages. English, which shares 80 percent of its spoken vocabulary with German, remains remarkably foreign from its grandmother tongue. Take false friends, for example.

Perhaps you are familiar with the word "event" meaning party, but would you use it to describe 9/11? Because the destruction of the twin towers was very much an event in the English sense of "neutral" happening. Are you being mobbed at work? You mean surrounded by adoring fans, right? Because mobbing in English is what fans do with their idols. If I want a handy gift for my wife in English, I am looking for a convenient present - not a mobile phone. My woman and my wife, meanwhile, may not be the same person. Altogether, about one or two hundred of these "faux amis" clog up the lines of communication - and commerce - between German and English. Actual figures are real, not current. A chance in English is not automatically positive. An argument is not something you want to encourage in sales. Being competent and being excellent are two different things. A compromise is not a win-win situation, but always somehow a win-lose one. A concept is not a finished model, but a simple idea. You're not looking for a job with perspectives (nice views) but prospects.

Ah yes, false friends are slippery indeed, and can make a fool of you even when your grammar's word-perfect. Remember, everything doesn't have to be consequent, but it does need to be consistent. If you're sensible in English, it doesn't automatically mean you are sensitive. If you are sympathetic, it doesn't automatically mean you are nice. Bodybags are for corpses, not personal effects. Oldtimers are people, not cars. If you're engaged, you are going to get married, not necessarily do a good job. You can check something, even if you don't control it.

We should remember the words of Greek philosopher Epictetus (Epiktet): "First learn the meaning of what you want to say, and then speak." And don't try to sell a perfume in Germany by the name of Celtic Mist.

T T T T

**NSA etc.**

Of course, after criticizing and, more recently, ridiculing the former Soviet Union, it is somewhat embarrassing for citizens in the West to discover that several of their governments not only vigorously (if surreptitiously) suppress dissent<sup>6</sup> but also set up secret courts and systems for surveillance of their own societies at a level of sophistication beyond the wildest dreams of the STASI. Our government officials have also shown great talent in "Newspeak" of which the most egregious recent example was provided by the director of US national intelligence, James Clapper, in an NBC interview on 9 June 2013, who said that he had responded in the "least untruthful manner" possible when he denied (untruthfully) in congressional hearings in 2012 that the NSA collected data on millions of Americans. Clapper was awarded three "Pinocchios" by the Washington Post *Fact*

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/24/how-trust-state-spies-citizens> and <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/jun/23/stephen-lawrence-undercover-police-smears>



*checker* (motto a 1921 quote from C.P. Scott, editor of the *The Manchester Guardian*: “*Comment is free, but facts are sacred*”).

Suzanne Moore commented in *The Guardian* of 3 July:

What Snowden, who is no spy, has revealed is the nature of the game: that surveillance is a huge private industry; that almost full control of the internet has been achieved already; that politicians here and in the US have totally acquiesced to industrial-scale snooping. There is a generation now made up of people who will never have had a private conversation online or by phone. These are my children. And should they or anyone else want to organise against the powers that be, they will be traceable. We have sleepwalked into this because liberty remains such an alien concept, still. But the US has the fourth amendment: “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizure, shall not be violated.”

It has been violated. Bradley Manning is in prison, Guantánamo remains open, CIA agents who spoke out about waterboarding are banged up. And there are other kinds of whistleblowers who conveniently kill themselves. The letter from Daniel Somers, who served in Iraq, says he was made to do things he could not live with. He described his suicide as a mercy killing and reminded us that 22 veterans kill themselves every day. This is not whistleblowing. It is screaming into a void.

But we remain passive while other European countries are angry at what Snowden has told us. We maintain the special relationship. For Snowden, the truth will not set him free, it will imprison him for ever. We now debate whether we should exchange liberty for security, but it is too late. As John Locke said: “As soon as men decide all means are permitted to fight an evil, then their good becomes indistinguishable from the evil they set out to destroy.” He could have been talking about our passivity.

When did you surrender your freedom to communicate, something that was yours and yours alone, whether an email to a lover or a picture of your child? Ask yourself, do you feel safer now you know that you have no secrets? Now, the intimacies that are of no import to anyone but you have been subject to virtual extraordinary rendition. Because, fundamentally, your government does not trust you. Why therefore should you trust it?

John Le Carré mused on the same subject (*The Guardian*, 14 June 2013):

In my recent novel *A Delicate Truth*, a retired and patently decent British foreign





servant accuses his old employers of being party to a Whitehall coverup, and for his pains is promptly threatened with the secret courts. Yet amid all the comment that my novel briefly provoked, this particular episode attracted no attention.

What are secret courts? Why do we need them? To protect Britain's special relationship with the United States, we are officially told; to protect the credibility and integrity of our intelligence services. Never mind that for decades we have handled security-sensitive cases by clearing the court whenever necessary, and allowing our secret servants to withhold their names and testify from behind screens, real or virtual: now, all of a sudden, the credibility and integrity of our intelligence services are at stake, and need urgent and draconian protection.

Never mind the credibility and integrity of parliament and centuries of British justice: our spies come first. And remember, these aren't criminal courts. These are civil courts where anyone attempting to obtain redress for a real or perceived injustice perpetrated against him by British or American secret agencies must have his claims heard and dealt with in secret.

A loyal British soldier sees his comrades being mown down by friendly fire? From now on, he will have to air his grievance in the secret courts. Compensation for the afflicted families? Maybe. But no apology or explanation. That's "policy" or, in plain English, you can't argue.

You have made an enemy of Colonel Gaddafi and are on the run from him? Your wife is pregnant, you constitute no danger to the west, but British intelligence has decided to organise your rendition to Libya as a favour to its old pal the colonel? And you were tortured, and now you'd like redress? Money, yes, you want money, of course you do. Like all your kind, you are grasping.

In reality, Abdel Hakim Belhaj and his wife are offering to settle their case for the princely sum of £1 per person sued plus an apology and a public admission of liability for what was done to them, something they can hold up and share with their friends, some decent gesture of humanity and regret that will provide closure of a sort.

Well, in the view of the British government, Mr and Mrs Belhaj can sing for their terms, because an apology sheds no glory whatever on our special relationship with the United States, or on the credibility and integrity of our intelligence services. MI6 did not render Mr and Mrs Belhaj to Colonel Gaddafi under their proper names, but only as "air cargo". And the plane that flew the hijacked couple to Tripoli was provided by the CIA. And the credibility and integrity of both services are of course paramount, and must be kept that way at any cost.

The true reason for the existence of these gruesome secret courts, I suggest, beyond the desire to protect our state from embarrassment about the nature of our wrongdoing, is twofold: the disproportionate influence of the US/UK intelligence community on our democratic institutions, and the urgent need of our respective political establishments to import a Bush-style secret state to Britain. For Barack Obama, far from dismantling Bush's secret state when he took power, has diligently recrafted and extended it. In consequence, the CIA has become a fully fledged, unaccountable fighting arm, big on extrajudicial killing and derring-do, but short on

the hard grind of intelligence gathering, which is where the Brits traditionally believe they have the edge. As part of his deal with the CIA, Obama, on taking office, promised not to rake up the past, which meant not naming or shaming the agency's torturers, or those at the highest level of the administration who had guided their henchmen's work down to the smallest, awful detail. But the past doesn't go away that lightly, and the most pressing task for our secret courts will be to keep the lid on the CIA's unlawful activities under Bush, and our own complicity in them, thereby incidentally clearing a path for them in the future. ....

Does anyone remember how we got dragged into the Iraq war – apart obviously from the dodgy dossier composed with the complicity of MI6? We went to war on the strength of information supplied by two ingenious fabricators. One of them, aptly named Curveball, was a fast-talking Iraqi refugee flying on the seat of his pants who, assiduously cultivated by his German keepers, provided us with Saddam's nonexistent mobile bio-labs – the same illusory vehicles that Colin Powell presented to the United Nations with much panache and the help of the CIA's colourful visual aids. Remember “slam-dunk”? That was the happy phrase with which George Tenet, at that time director of the CIA, personally verified the fabricated intelligence to his president, George Bush. Yet, when it came to the vote in parliament, what was being whispered to the doubters in the corridors? Let me guess: “If you'd seen the papers I've seen” – spoken with menace and conviction, and no doubt a hint of honest fear – “you'd know which door to go through!”

And I don't mind betting you, that's what was being whispered this time round. And that's the whole trouble about now. We're sliding back to where we started. We're either with them or we're with the terrorists. And of course, like other writers in the field, I have contributed to the spies' mythological status, even if my characters are divided about the things they do. And sometimes I feel a bit shift-y about that. But I'm not alone. And I'm certainly not the first. And politicians are not dupes. Fifty years ago, I seem to remember, when covert action was the flavour of the hour, and politicians were being brought to the table to sign off on it, it was the pols as often as not, and not the professional spies, who bayed for blood. ....

T T T T



“I wish they would just go back to tapping our phone lines”



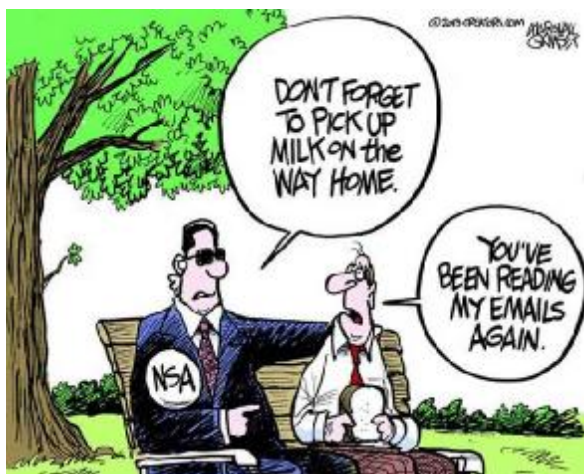
“I don't mind giving up the appearance of privacy to live with the illusion of safety”



"You never call, and the federal government will back me up on that"



"I want to spill the beans, but I'm waiting till I have access to classified or sensitive beans"



"After we read every e-mail ever written, I'm gonna start on that new Dan Brown novel"

T T T T

## Pass the Port again

God is resting in his heaven reading *Pravda* when he hears someone crying. He looks down and sees Putin.

God moves in his mysterious way and goes to sit beside Putin, asking him why he's crying: "The opposition is becoming more vocal, I have deadline problems for the Olympic games and am being accused of corruption." God soothes Putin and tells him all will be well with a little patience. Putin stops crying. God returns to heaven.

He's hardly opened the *China Daily* when he hears crying again. He looks down and sees Xi Jinping.

Again he goes down and sits beside him. "Oh God," Xi says, "My senior party officials are being accused of corruption, I have problems with Muslims in Xinjiang and our economy is slowing down." God soothes Xi and tells him all will be well with a little patience. He stops crying. God returns to heaven.

He is just picking up *The New York Times* when he hears crying again. Down below he sees Obama and quickly descends to Washington, where Obama explains his

problems with Congress. God starts crying.

T T T T

**Sestina<sup>7</sup> - Ciara Shuttleworth**

You  
used  
to  
love  
me  
well.

Well,  
you –  
me –  
used  
love  
to ...

to...  
well...  
love.  
You  
used  
me.

Me,  
too,  
used...  
well...  
you.  
Love

love  
me.  
You,  
too  
well  
used,

---

<sup>7</sup> A sestina (also, sextina, sestine, or sextain) is a highly structured poem consisting of six six-line stanzas followed by a tercet (called its *envoy* or *tornada*), for a total of thirty-nine lines. The same set of six words ends the lines of each of the six-line stanzas, but in a different order each time; if we number the first stanza's lines 123456, then the words ending the second stanza's lines appear in the order 615243, then 364125, then 532614, then 451362, and finally 246531. This organization is referred to as *retrogradatio cruciata* ("retrograde cross"). These six words then appear in the tercet as well, with the tercet's first line usually containing 6 and 2, its second 1 and 4, and its third 5 and 3. The inventor of the sestina, Arnaut Daniel, belonged to a group of twelfth-century poets--the troubadours..... They competed with one another to produce the wittiest, most elaborate, most difficult styles. This difficult, complex style was called the *trobar dus*. The easier one was called the *trobar leu*. The sestina was part of the *trobar dus*. It was the form for a master troubadour. (From *The Making of a Poem*, by Mark Strand and Eavan Boland.)

used  
love  
well.  
Me,  
Too.  
You!

You used  
to love  
me well.

**Sestina - Elizabeth Bishop**

September rain falls on the house.  
In the failing light, the old grandmother  
sits in the kitchen with the child  
beside the Little Marvel Stove,  
reading the jokes from the almanac,  
laughing and talking to hide her tears.  
She thinks that her equinoctial tears  
and the rain that beats on the roof of the house  
were both foretold by the almanac,  
but only known to a grandmother.  
The iron kettle sings on the stove.  
She cuts some bread and says to the child,  
*It's time for tea now*, but the child  
is watching the teakettle's small hard tears  
dance like mad on the hot black stove,  
the way the rain must dance on the house.  
Tidying up, the old grandmother  
hangs up the clever almanac  
on its string. Birdlike, the almanac  
hovers half open above the child,  
hovers above the old grandmother  
and her teacup full of dark brown tears.  
She shivers and says she thinks the house  
feels chilly, and puts more wood in the stove.  
*It was to be*, says the Marvel Stove.  
*I know what I know*, says the almanac.  
With crayons the child draws a rigid house  
and a winding pathway. Then the child  
puts in a man with buttons like tears  
and shows it proudly to the grandmother.  
But secretly, while the grandmother  
busies herself about the stove,  
the little moons fall down like tears  
from between the pages of the almanac



into the flower bed the child  
has carefully placed in the front of the house.

*Time to plant tears*, says the almanac.  
The grandmother sings to the marvelous stove  
and the child draws another inscrutable house.

T T T T

### Tortoise Stove

On the subject of stoves .... The *Marvel Stove*, to which Elizabeth Bishop refers, was a patented North American wood-burning stove.

*CP 2012* contained a poem by John Betjeman, the second line of which was “The Tortoise stove is lit again ...” The *Tortoise Stove* dates from 1830, when the first was hand-built by Charles Portway to heat his ironmongery store in Halstead, Essex. After he had made a second stove for a neighbour, his wife suggested he go into business manufacturing and selling them, so he established a small foundry and went to work. This proved so successful that in the next 50 years over 17,000 of his stoves were sold and provided low-cost and economical heating to many thousands of people.



A solid-fuel stove may be judged by how slowly it consumes the fuel, and these first stoves were successful simply because they took so long to burn one filling, thus extracting the maximum amount of heat from the fuel. So slowly did Portway’s stoves burn that they were named Tortoise stoves, and each was produced with the motto ‘Slow but sure’ proudly displayed with the trademark. This made them possibly the first heating appliances where economy was a featured selling point.

The basic Tortoise was adapted for other uses. Catalogues of the day show heating stoves, laundry stoves and harness-room stoves. They also found favour for heating of churches, halls and domestic premises. Over the period to the turn of the century the stove was improved and refined to make it even more efficient and economical. Production continues until today, including a Tortoise Firebox.

T T T T

**James Mercer Langston Hughes** (1902-1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist. He was one of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form *jazz poetry* and was a leader of the “Harlem Renaissance”. Both of Hughes’s paternal and maternal great-grandmothers were African-American, his maternal great-grandfather was white and of Scottish

descent. A paternal great-grandfather was of European Jewish descent. Hughes's maternal grandmother Mary Patterson was of African-American, French, English and Native American descent. One of the first women to attend Oberlin College, she first married Lewis Sheridan Leary, also of mixed race. Langston Hughes was raised mainly by Mary Patterson Langston, in Lawrence, Kansas. Through the black American oral tradition and drawing from the activist experiences of her generation, Mary Langston instilled in the young Langston Hughes a lasting sense of racial pride.

**Mother to Son - *Langston Hughes (1902-1967)***

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor—  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I've been a-climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps.  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—  
For I've still goin', honey,  
I've still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

**Children's Rhymes - *Langston Hughes***

By what sends  
the white kids  
I ain't sent:  
I know I can't  
be President.  
What don't bug  
them white kids  
sure bugs me:  
We know everybody  
ain't free.  
Lies written down  
for white folks  
ain't for us a-tall:  
*Liberty And Justice--*  
*Huh!--For All?*

**Harlem - *Langston Hughes***

What happens to a dream deferred?  
Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore—  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over—  
like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*

**Bad Morning - *Langston Hughes***

Here I sit  
With my shoes mismated.  
Lawdy-mercy!  
I's frustrated!

**Dream Variations - *Langston Hughes***

To fling my arms wide  
In some place of the sun,  
To whirl and to dance  
Till the white day is done.  
Then rest at cool evening  
Beneath a tall tree  
While night comes on gently,  
    Dark like me—  
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide  
In the face of the sun,  
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!  
Till the quick day is done.  
Rest at pale evening . . .  
A tall, slim tree . . .  
Night coming tenderly,  
    Black like me.

**I, Too, Sing America - *Langston Hughes***

I, too, sing America.  
I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.  
Tomorrow,



I'll be at the table  
 When company comes.  
 Nobody'll dare  
 Say to me,  
 "Eat in the kitchen,"  
 Then.  
 Besides,  
 They'll see how beautiful I am  
 And be ashamed—  
 I, too, am America.

T T T T

## More musical instruments



In *CP 2012* I described the glass harmonica. The *theremin* is even more unusual. Named after its Russian inventor, Professor Lev Sergeyevich Termen, who patented the device in 1928, the *theremin* is an early electronic musical instrument controlled without contact from the player. The controlling section usually consists of two metal antennas which sense the position of the player's hands and control oscillators for frequency with one hand, and amplitude (volume) with the other. The electric signals from the theremin are amplified and sent to a loudspeaker.

Termen was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1896. Like many inventors, he was also a musician (he played the cello). After enrolling at the University of Petrograd, he concentrated his studies in the nascent field of electrical engineering. There, he was repairing a radio when he conceived the idea of an essentially electronic musical

instrument: not just an acoustic instrument embellished or amplified electronically, but an instrument that would produce purely electronic music.

The *theremin* was the first electronic instrument with virtuoso performers playing solo and a concert repertoire written specifically for it. Dmitri Shostakovich was one of the first composers to include parts for the *theremin* in orchestral pieces, including his score for the 1931 film *Odná*. The instrument subsequently found great success in many motion pictures.

The *theremin* was originally the product of Russian government-sponsored research into proximity sensors. After a lengthy tour of Europe, during which time Termen demonstrated his invention to packed houses, he found his way to the United States, where he patented his instrument.

Although the RCA *Thereminvox* (released immediately following the Stock Market Crash of 1929), was not a commercial success, it fascinated audiences in America and abroad. Clara Rockmore, a well-known thereminist, toured to wide acclaim,

performing a classical repertoire in concert halls around the United States, often sharing the bill with Paul Robeson.

In 1938, Termen left the United States, though the circumstances related to his departure are in dispute. Many accounts claim he was taken from his New York City apartment by KGB agents, taken back to the Soviet Union and made to work in a laboratory prison camp at Magadan, Siberia. He returned to the United States in 1991.

After a flurry of interest in America following the end of the Second World War, the *theremin* soon fell into disuse with serious musicians, mainly because newer electronic instruments were introduced that were easier to play.

T T T T

### **Every joke is a tiny revolution (bis)**

Honecker goes to his office, opens the window and says "Good morning Sun" - the sun replies: "Good morning comrade Honecker."

In the afternoon he opens the window again and says "Good afternoon Sun." The sun replies: "Good afternoon comrade Honecker."

Just before leaving his office, Honecker opens the window and says "Good evening Sun." No reply. Honecker gets mad - "I said good evening to you, Sun." "I know" says the sun, "To Hell with you, I'm in the west now."

Q: When does a Trabi<sup>8</sup> reach its top speed? A: When it is towed away.

Q: How do you measure the acceleration of a Trabi? A: With a diary.

Q: Why do some Trabis have heated rear windows? A: To keep your hands warm while pushing!

Walter Ulbricht is drinking a beer in a restaurant in East Berlin. A pretty waitress serves him and he asks: "Do you know who I am?"

"Of course," she answers, "you are the Party General Secretary."

"Yes my dear, and I can grant any wish you desire."

"Do you really mean that, comrade General Secretary?"

"Of course, my dear, and it will remain a secret between us."

"Then, please open the Berlin wall for just a day."

"Aha - I see you are longing to be alone with me ....."

A pollster asks an American, a Russian, and a Czech: "What do you think about standing in line for meat?"

The American says: "What do you mean, 'standing in line'?"

The Russian says: "What do you mean, 'meat'?"

The Czech says: "What do you mean, 'think'?"

Hello do you have milk? - No, this is a bread store, we don't have bread. If you

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<sup>8</sup> The Trabant (or Trabi, as it was nicknamed) was the most common car in the GDR, and its lack of power and general unreliability made it the target of many jokes.

want no milk, try the milk store right across the street.

Q: Are Russians to Czechs, friends or brothers?

A: Brothers of course, you get to choose your friends.

Q: Why is the Russian army staying in Czechoslovakia so long?

A: They're still looking for the person who called for their help.

A father and son are driving on a Russian road. Son to father: "Dad, is a Ferrari a red car with a small horse?"

Father: "Yes, but why do you ask?"

Son: "I think there's one trying to pass us on the right..."



What's small, dark and knocking at the door? The future.

T T T T

**The hands – Kathleen Raine (1908-2003)**

As I was most alone  
with troubled thoughts,  
A pair of hands held mine  
Like folded leaves,  
Closed over me  
The palms on which are traced  
The veins of history.

Held me - as between father and mother  
A child lies  
Healed me - as between lover and lover  
There is peace  
Ruled by me - as they rule the suns and stars  
And saintly journeys.

Held between sorrow and joy, between dark and light,  
My hand passes  
Across the hours, across the fields, across the pages  
Of day and night  
And like the Northumbrian boy who could not write,  
I'll learn my letters from the angels.  
For the words in my heart.

**The Night Has a Thousand Eyes - Francis William Bourdillon (1852-1931)**

The night has a thousand eyes,  
And the day but one;  
Yet the light of the bright world dies  
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,  
And the heart but one;  
Yet the light of a whole life dies  
When love is done.

**April och Tystnad (April and Silence) - Thomas Tranströmer (\*1931)**

Våren ligger öde. Det sammetsmörka diket krälar vid min sida utan spegelbilder. Det enda som lyser är gula blommor. Jag bärs i min skugga som en fiol i sin svarta låda. Det enda jag vill säga glimmar utom räckhåll som silvret hos pantlånaren.	Spring lies deserted. The dark velvet ditch creeps by my side not reflecting anything. All that shines are yellow flowers. I am carried in my shadow like a violin in its black case. All I want to say gleams out of reach like the silver in a pawnshop.
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**So many summers - Norman MacCaig (1910-1996)**

Beside one loch, a hind's neat skeleton,  
Beside another, a boat pulled high and dry:  
Two neat geometries drawn in the weather:  
Two things already dead and still to die.

I passed them every summer, rod in hand,  
Skirting the bright blue or the spitting gray,  
And, every summer, saw how the bleached timbers  
Gaped wider and the neat ribs fell away.

Time adds one malice to another one—  
Now you'd look very close before you knew  
If it's the boat that ran, the hind went sailing.  
So many summers, and I have lived them too.

**Process - Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004)**

Just when you give up  
the whole process  
begins again  
and you are as pure  
as if you had confessed

and received absolution.  
You have done nothing  
to deserve it,  
you have merely slept  
and got up again,  
feeling fine  
because the morning is fine;  
sufficient reason surely  
for faith in a process  
that can perform such miracles  
without assistance from you.  
Imagine what it would do  
with a little assistance from you!

**Comparisons - R.S.Thomas (1913-2000)**

To all light things  
I compared her; to  
a snowflake, a feather.  
I remember she rested  
at the dance on my  
arm, as a bird  
on its nest lest  
the eggs break, lest  
she lean too heavily  
on our love. Snow  
melts, feathers  
are blown away;  
I have let  
her ashes down  
in me like an anchor.

T T T T

**More Frauds and Hoaxes**

Frauds and hoaxes continue to provide a rich vein for journalism. One of the most interesting recent accounts appeared in *The New Yorker* of 26 August 2013. Extracts from "The Giveaway" by Alex Wilkinson:

In late May of 2008, a watercolor sketch of a woman in a yellow dress, with a red belt and blue shoes, arrived at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. The initials L.V., in the lower right-hand corner, stood for Louis Valtat, an acquaintance of Henri Matisse. The sketch came with a copy of a page from an auction catalogue, as evidence of the piece's provenance, and a letter from someone in Mississippi named Mark Landis. Landis asked that the work be accepted in memory of his father, Lieutenant Commander Arthur Landis, Jr., U.S.N. The museum already had a Valtat oil. To make room beside it, the curators took down a Renoir.

A month later, an older man, dressed in dark clothes and carrying a briefcase, appeared. He was frail, and he stooped; his ears stuck out; he was bald, with a high forehead and blue eyes; and he was very pale—Mark Landis. He had a feathery voice and talked so incessantly that his company was fatiguing. To Matthew Leininger, who oversaw the curatorial department, he seemed “weird and eccentric,” qualities characteristic of philanthropists, in his experience. “I took him for a typical unknown art collector,” Leininger told me.

In the briefcase, Landis had five works that he proposed to donate in honor of his father. He said that he was having heart surgery and wanted to disperse the pieces beforehand. He also suggested that he had more work to give. As a donor the museum hoped to cultivate, “he was treated like royalty,” according to Leininger. He stayed for two and a half days. ....

A couple of months later, Leininger began gathering information on the Landis donations in order to provide worksheets to the museum’s trustees, a formality that is generally observed before an object is added to the permanent collection. The first piece he considered was a watercolor by Paul Signac, an early practitioner of Pointillism. The painting didn’t have a title, but there were two boats in it, so Leininger did a search for “Paul Signac, double boat,” then “Paul Signac, Mark Landis,” but nothing came up. When he searched images, though, the painting appeared, in a press release issued by the Savannah College of Art and Design, as a gift from Mark Landis. “I didn’t think anything about it, because artists often do the same subjects,” Leininger said. “Think of Monet and his cathedrals.”

The next piece Leininger looked at was an oil on panel from the nineteenth century, by the French artist Stanislas Lepine. It depicted horses and a cart in a field, where hay was being harvested, on the outskirts of a town. Leininger found it in a press release from the St. Louis University Museum of Art, given by Mark Landis. ....

Leininger sent an e-mail to members of the American Alliance of Museums asking if anyone had received gifts from Landis. “In the first hour, I had about twenty people contact me,” he said. By the next day, he was able to determine that several museums held the same painting. ....

In July of 2011, Landis, as Father James Brantley, gave an oil on copper by the sixteenth-century painter Hans von Aachen to Cabrini High School, in New Orleans. In February of 2012, as Mark Lanois, he gave “Christ on the Way to Calvary,” an oil on copper, by Paolo Landriani, an artist of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to Loyola University New Orleans. For a long time, Leininger didn’t know where the drawings and paintings Landis donated came from, but not long ago he learned that Landis made them himself.

Forgers are often artists who imagine themselves unfairly overlooked. According to Henry Adams, a professor of art at Case Western Reserve University and an authority on American nineteenth-century art, “One of the motivations for forgery is ‘I’m as good as Vermeer. Why can’t people see that?’” The late Thomas Hoving, a director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, wrote, in *False Impressions: The Hunt for Big-Time Art Fakes*, that the community of forgers is also “populated by miscreants who say they fake only to show up how stupid, blind, and pompous the

art establishment is.” It may also be that, like many criminals, forgers realize that something illicit that they can do easily could make them rich.

As far as Leininger could tell, none of these traits applied to Landis. There was no evidence that he cared to be an artist; he seemed to prefer copying. If he had a grievance, he had never expressed it. His habit of repeating subjects was also atypical. Furthermore, he apparently had no interest in money: he had never sold a piece to a museum or requested the paperwork necessary to claim a tax deduction. If anyone has practiced a more singular deception in American art, it hasn’t come to light. ....

Several circumstances account for the longevity of Landis’s career. He tends to copy artists of secondary standing whom museum staffs are unlikely to know well. Also, museums scrutinize work they are given less thoroughly than work they pay for. Furthermore, it is a donor’s responsibility, not a museum’s, to vouch for a work’s provenance. Landis disposed of this obstacle by forging auction receipts and labels that he affixed to his works. ....

Forgers who hope to get rich have to find materials from the period of the original work, in order to fool the forensic analysts; they have to know which varnishes and powders will make new paint appear to be old, and how to draw hairline cracks on the surface with needles; they have to master gestures that suggest the hand of the original artist; and they have to invent a credible story to account for the history of a work not previously known. Landis grows bored easily; he likes to be done with a piece in an hour.

Landis doesn’t embroider his work with any rhetoric about actual versus perceived experience, and he doesn’t regard himself as a provocateur, a subversive, or as someone who violates conventions, although he has been described in that way. He doesn’t regard himself as an artist at all. Like many people, he has created a present that is designed to compensate for a deficient past. He believes that if something is beautiful it doesn’t matter whether it’s genuine; rather, the impression it engenders is what counts. He thinks that he has given work to small museums that couldn’t afford it, so that people who wouldn’t usually encounter such pieces can see them and be broadened. This attitude accords with the earlier philosophies of American museums, which often presented facsimiles of European sculptures in the form of plaster casts. At one point, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston had the third-largest collection of plaster casts in the world. “Initially, there wasn’t the mission among our museums that you needed to have original works of art,” Henry Adams said.

Some people consider Landis to be not so much a forger as a con artist, which is the epithet Leininger most often employs. Noah Charney, an art historian who is the founder of the Association for Research Into Crimes Against Art, in Rome, wrote me that he thinks of Landis as an adept impostor “more akin to identity fraudsters, like Clark Rockefeller.” Money isn’t what such people desire. They want to be treated as substantial citizens. “Social status and a feeling of belonging is their reward,” Charney wrote. In this context, the painting or drawing Landis spends an hour making is ephemeral: it needs to last only long enough to admit him to a sympathetic haven.

A few years ago, it occurred to Leininger that he might be able to make Landis stop

if he organized an exhibit of his work and exposed him, but he didn't have a place to hold one until the University of Cincinnati offered its walls. "Faux Real," for which he and a co-curator, Aaron Cowan, collected as many of Landis's paintings as they could, opened in April of 2012. (Landis is also being included in a 2014-15 exhibition of forgeries and originals called "Intent to Deceive," which will travel to Springfield, Massachusetts; Sarasota, Florida; Canton, Ohio; and, fittingly, the Oklahoma City Museum of Art.) Some museums refused to lend paintings, believing that showing Landis's work would only encourage him. Some didn't want to be identified as having fallen for his ploy. Cowan talked Landis into lending his priest outfit; he also lent sixty paintings and drawings.

T T T T

### **Animal Poetry**

#### **In the Beck - *Kathleen Raine (1908-2003)***

There is a fish, that quivers in the pool,  
itself a shadow, but its shadow, clear.  
Catch it again and again, it still is there.  
Against the flowing stream, its life keeps pace  
with death – the impulse and the flash of grace  
hiding in its stillness, moves to be motionless.  
No net will hold it – always it will return  
Where the ripples settle, and the sand –  
It lives unmoved, equated with the stream,  
As flowers are fit for air, man for his dream.

#### **The Devout Angler - *C.D.B. Ellis (1895-1969)***

The years will bring their anodyne  
But I shall never quite forget  
The fish that I had counted mine  
And lost before they reached the net.  
  
Last night I put my rod away,  
Remorseful and disconsolate,  
Yet I had suffered yesterday  
No more than I deserved from fate,  
  
And as I scored another trout  
Upon my list of fish uncaught,  
I should have offered thanks, no doubt,  
For solitary lessons taught.  
  
Alas! Philosophy avails  
As little as it used to do:  
More comfort is there still in tales  
That may be, or may not be, true.  
  
Is it not possible to pray  
That I may see these fish once more?  
-- I hear a voice that seems to say  
"They are not lost but gone before."



When in my pilgrimage I reach  
The river that we all must cross,  
And land upon that farther beach  
Where earthly gains are counted loss,  
May I not earthly loss repair?  
Well, if those fish should rise again,  
There shall be no more parting there –  
Celestial gut will stand the strain.  
And issuing from the portal, one  
Who was himself a fisherman  
Will drop his keys and, shouting, run  
To help me land Leviathan.

**The Smile Of The Walrus - *Oliver Herford (1863-1935)***  
The Smile of the Walrus is wild and distraught,  
And tinged with pale purples and greens,  
Like the Smile of a Thinker who thinks a Great Thought  
And isn't quite sure what it means.

**Unsatisfied Yearning - *R.K. Munkittrick (1853-1911)***  
Down in the silent hallway,  
Scampers the dog about,  
And whines, and barks, and scratches,  
In order to get out.  
Once in the glittering starlight  
He straightaway doth begin  
To set up a doleful howling  
In order to get in.

**The Pike - *Theodore Roethke (1908-1963)***  
The river turns,  
Leaving a place for the eye to rest,  
A furred, a rocky pool,  
A bottom of water.  
The crabs tilt and eat, leisurely,  
And the small fish lie, without shadow, motionless,  
Or drift lazily in and out of the weeds.  
The bottom-stones shimmer back their irregular striations,  
And the half-sunken branch bends away from the gazer's eye.  
A scene for the self to abjure!  
And I lean, almost into the water,  
My eye always beyond the surface reflection;  
I lean, and love these manifold shapes,  
Until, out from a dark cove,  
From beyond the end of a mossy log,  
With one sinuous ripple, then a rush,  
A thrashing-up of the whole pool

The pike strikes.

**The Hippopotamus - *Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)***

I shoot the Hippopotamus  
With bullets made of platinum,  
Because if I use leaden ones  
His hide is sure to flatten 'em.

**The Hippo - *Theodore Roethke (1908-1963)***

A Head or Tail - which does he lack?  
I think his Forward's coming back!  
He lives on Carrots, Leeks and Hay;  
He starts to yawn - it takes All Day -  
Some time I think I'll live that way.

**The Hippopotamus - *T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)***

The broad-backed hippopotamus  
Rests on his belly in the mud;  
Although he seems so firm to us  
He is merely flesh and blood.  
Flesh and blood is weak and frail,  
Susceptible to nervous shock;  
While the True Church can never fail  
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err  
In compassing material ends,  
While the True Church need never stir  
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach  
The mango on the mango-tree;  
But fruits of pomegranate and peach  
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice  
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,  
But every week we hear rejoice  
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day  
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;  
God works in a mysterious way -  
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing  
Ascending from the damp savannas,  
And quiring angels round him sing  
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.  
Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean  
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,

Among the saints he shall be seen  
Performing on a harp of gold.  
He shall be washed as white as snow,  
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,  
While the True Church remains below  
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

*Samuel Hoffenstein (1890-1947)*

There are strange creatures in the zoo,  
Like emu, zebra, auk and gnu –  
But stranger creatures I have seen  
Riding in a limousine.

**The Rabbit** (*Anon. 1925* - From *The Week-End Book*)

The rabbit has a charming face:  
Its private life is a disgrace.  
I really dare not name to you  
The awful things that rabbits do;  
Things that your paper never prints --  
You only mention them in hints.  
They have such lost, degraded souls  
No wonder they inhabit holes;  
When such depravity is found  
It only can live underground.

**The Disengaging Eagle** - *Robert Francis (1901-1987)*

There is a rumor  
the eagle tires of being eagle  
and would change wing  
with a less kingly bird as king,  
say, the seagull.  
With swans and cranes and geese,  
so the rumor goes,  
finding his official pose  
faintly absurd,  
he would aspire to unofficial peace  
and be, if possible, pure bird.  
There is a rumor  
the eagle nurses now a mood  
to abdicate  
forever and for good  
as flagpole-sitter for the State.  
Is it the fall of age  
merely, a geriatric complaint,  
this drift to disengage,  
this cool unrage?  
or rather some dark philosophical taint?  
There is a rumor

(God save us) the old warrior  
who screamed against the sun  
and toured with Caesar and Napoleon  
cavils now at war  
and would allegedly retire,  
resign, retreat  
to a blue solitude,  
an inaccessible country seat  
to fan a native fire,  
a purely personal feud.

**Early Bird - *Shel Silverstein (1930-1999)***

Oh, if you're a bird, be an early bird  
And catch the worm for your breakfast plate.  
If you're a bird, be an early bird,  
But if you're a worm, sleep late.

**Horses - *Richard Armour (1906-1989)***

They head the list  
    Of bad to bet on  
But I insist  
    They're worse to get on.

**Swans - *Leonora Speyer (1872-1956)***

With wings held close and slim neck bent,  
Along dark water scarcely stirred,  
Floats, glimmering and indolent,  
The alabaster bird.

Floats near its mate, the lovely one.  
They lie like snow, cool flake on flake,  
Mild breast on breast of dimmer swan  
Dim-mirrored in the lake

They glide - and glides that white embrace,  
Shy bird to bird with never a sound.  
Thus leaned Narcissus toward his face,  
Leaned lower till he drowned.

Leda leaned thus, subdued and spent  
Beneath those vivid wings of love.  
Along the lake, proud, indolent,  
The vast birds scarcely move.

Silence is wisdom. Then how wise  
Are these whose song is but their knell.  
A god did well to choose this guise.  
Truly, a god did well.

**After Tempest - *Percy MacKaye (1875-1956)***

Shell-less, on your slimey trail,

In mornless dawn, I meet you, snail;  
Sans house, sans home, sans bivouac,  
No arc of wonder spans your back.

Here, on time's storm-shattered shelf,  
Slug, you meet your crawling self,  
Reaching towards eternity  
All-unavailing antennae.

**Advice to Travelers - Walker Gibson (1919-1990)**

A burro once, sent by express,  
His shipping ticket on his bridle,  
Ate up his name and his address,  
And in some warehouse, standing idle,  
He waited till he like to died.  
The moral hardly needs the showing:  
Don't keep things locked up deep inside —  
Say who you are and where you're going.

**Advice to a Man Who Lost a Dog - Howard Baker (1905-1990)**

Don't hunt too anxiously a wilful hound;  
Don't hope to hear the hot expectant sound  
Or see him in the brush turn leaping round  
    To give a token of reply  
    Promptly to your cry.  
Things called must take their time about complying;  
Things summoned come, but as they come they're trying  
Each dangling scent, though it be false and dying:  
    Since blood has ancient ghosts to lay  
    Let's grant the blood its way.

The ranging dog is like the red leaves driven  
Over a wall, vine-covered and frost-riven,  
To the devouring cedar thicket given;  
    The woodbine's scarlet leaf compels  
    His wild autumnal spells.

Stop by the brook and take your thoughts to school,  
Scan your reflection in a quiet pool--  
Does the dog's quest mark him the greater fool?  
    What of the men who have thus gazed?  
    The wisdom they have praised?

Think when you hunt him on the windy brow  
Where the lean settler led his shaggy cow  
And questing yielded to the tranquil plow,  
    That that fine poise bequeathed alone  
    A cellar overgrown.

If you don't find him, for the spirit's sake  
Go get the blanket from the car and make

His bed where last he was. When you awake  
Tonight, you'll seem to see him there,  
Curled tight in flowing air.

Tomorrow try more habitable land.  
By a back-door perhaps he'll take his stand,  
Pleasant but cautious to the stranger's hand;  
As he had been unquenched and wild,  
Exhausted now and mild.

**Inscription for a Fly Swatter - *Richard Armour (1906-1989)***

The hand is quicker than the eye is,  
But somewhat slower than the fly is.

**A Green Crab's Shell - *Mark Doty (\*1953)***

Not, exactly, green:  
closer to bronze  
preserved in kind brine,  
something retrieved  
from a Greco-Roman wreck,  
patinated and oddly  
muscular. We cannot  
know what his fantastic  
legs were like--  
though evidence  
suggests eight  
complexly folded  
scuttling works  
of armament, crowned  
by the foreclaws'  
gesture of menace  
and power. A gull's  
gobbled the center,  
leaving this chamber  
--size of a demitasse--  
open to reveal  
a shocking, Giotto blue.  
Though it smells  
of seaweed and ruin,  
this little traveling case  
comes with such lavish lining!  
Imagine breathing  
surrounded by  
the brilliant rinse  
of summer's firmament.

What color is  
the underside of skin?  
Not so bad, to die,  
if we could be opened  
into *this*--  
if the smallest chambers  
of ourselves,  
similarly,  
revealed some sky.

**The Penguin - *Oliver Herford (1863-1935)***

The Pen-guin sits up-on the shore  
And loves the lit-tle fish to bore;  
He has one en-er-vat-ing joke  
That would a very Saint pro-voke:  
“The Pen-guin’s might-i-er than the Sword-fish”;  
He tells this dai-ly to the bored fish,  
Un-til they are so weak, they float  
With-out re-sis-tance down his throat.

**The Donkey - *G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936)***

When fishes flew and forests walked,  
And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood,  
Then surely I was born;  
With monstrous head and sickening cry  
And ears like errant wings,  
The devil’s walking parody  
Of all four-footed things.  
The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
Of ancient crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,  
I keep my secret still.  
Fools! For I also had my hour;  
One far fierce hour and sweet;  
There was a shout about my ears,  
And palms before my feet.

T T T T

**What’s in a name?**

What’s in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.  
(William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, II, 2)

According to *The Guardian* of 29 November 2012, a mother called her baby “Hashtag”.

This name, an apparent tribute to the ubiquitous # symbol in social media, has led

to predictable outrage in the Twittersphere.

The biggest objection is that the child will be lumbered with a name that will draw scorn in the playground. No one born in 1983 is called Amstrad or Pac-Man, after all. But fears of a life of cyberbullying for Hashtag are unfounded as she will be hanging out with Caligula and Boudicca if she lives in north London and Kaiden and Luca-Ky if she lives in Norwich. In a playground of weird names, Hashtag will fit right in.

As parents search for ever more original names, and assert their individuality by spelling them strangely, children are increasingly being named after ideas, trends or forms of communication. In Israel, Lior and Vardit Adler named their girl after the “Like” button on Facebook. Other couples named their babies Facebook in honour of the social media site’s role in the Arab Spring.

Of course there are frivolous names – the parents who pay homage to designer labels, alcohol or even drugs in their names are justly criticised ....

While Generation Hashtag and Facebook will certainly date – little Facebook could never have been born in 1999 – and so locate a person’s birth in a certain era, the same is true of popular names, which boom and bust over the decades. As the data on baby names in England and Wales helps show, Kevins and Tracys were probably born in the 1970s; Harrys and Jacks from the 90s onwards; and Bettys and Mabels were either born 80 years ago or last week.

For new parents who are kicking themselves they didn’t come up with Hashtag first, plenty of other cute names are synonymous with 2012: aren’t little Kindle, Leveson, Gangnam and Flood simply adorable?

Of course, some names are serendipitously just right: for example, the Motor Racing correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* is called Elmar Brümmer - and, after all the talk of scandals, it must be satisfying for Mr. Brümmer to report the activities of the new Swiss Formula 1 racing stable, whose founder’s name is “Sauber” (clean).

On 31 January 2013 *The Guardian* reported that a 15-year-old Icelandic girl had been granted the right to legally use the name given to her by her mother, despite opposition from the authorities.

A court ruled on Thursday that Blær (which means “gentle breeze”) can be legally used as the girl’s first name.

The decision overturns an earlier rejection by Icelandic authorities who declared it was not a proper feminine name. Until now, Blær Bjarkardóttir had been identified simply as “Girl” in communications with officials.

Like a handful of other countries, including Germany and Denmark, Iceland has official rules about what a baby can be named. Names are supposed to fit Icelandic grammar and pronunciation rules.

Her mother, Björk Eiðsdóttir, had fought for the right for the name to be recognised. Blær told the court she had no problems with her name.

Iceland remains the only European country that still uses family names based on



patronymics: Johan's son becomes Johansson and his daughter Johansdottir - she retained her name after marriage, as no woman could be a "son". In Sweden, the practice was abandoned by virtue of a 1901 law, *The Names Adoption Act*, and citizens were offered the opportunity to change their names. Those chosen at the time indicate the particular closeness that Swedes claim to feel towards nature. Hence many chose combinations of words such as:

<b>Lindberg</b>	Linden - mountain	<b>Almgren</b>	Elm - branch
<b>Lindgren</b>	Linden - branch	<b>Björkegren</b>	Birch - branch
<b>Lindström</b>	Linden - stream	<b>Boklund</b>	Beech - grove
<b>Lindblad</b>	Linden - leaf	<b>Eklund</b>	Oak - grove
<b>Lindblom</b>	Linden - blossom	<b>Grankvist</b>	Spruce - twig
<b>Lindqvist</b>	Linden - twig	<b>Hägglund</b>	Bird-cherry - grove
<b>Lundquist</b>	Grove - twig	<b>Sandberg</b>	Sand - mountain
<b>Bergman</b>	Mountain - man	<b>Sjöblom</b>	Lake - blossom
<b>Bergström</b>	Mountain - stream	<b>Sundkvist</b>	Sound/channel - twig
<b>Sjöström</b>	Lake - stream	<b>Söderlund</b>	South - grove
<b>Forsberg</b>	Rapids - mountain	<b>Törnkvist</b>	Thorn - twig
<b>Högman</b>	High - man	<b>Åberg</b>	Creek - mountain
<b>Lundmark</b>	Grove - land	<b>Östlund</b>	East - grove

which created a plethora of similar names, albeit less than the ubiquitous Johanssons and Anderssons.

On 31 January 2011, The New York Times reported that

.... growing numbers of young Swedes about to marry are not only choosing flatware patterns but also picking new names. Sometimes it is an older family name; more often it is one they simply concoct.

Sofia Wetterlund, 29, was born Sofia Jönsson, and when she decided to marry last year, she and her spouse-to-be, Karl Andersson, were simply tired of their names. "We both thought Andersson and Jönsson were very common," she said. "Karl wanted something different, I wanted something different. We just didn't want to be taken for the others."

The couple cast about in their families' past and Ms. Wetterlund discovered, well, Wetterlund, her grandmother's maiden name. "We thought it was pretty, and it was quite uncommon," she said. ...

In most cases, couples adopt a new name for the same reasons the Wetterlunds did: to rebel against the hegemony of traditional Swedish surnames ending in "-son" — Johansson, Andersson and Karlsson being the most common. And it does not end there. Of the 100 most common names here, 42 end in "-son." ...

While some Swedes like Ms. Wetterlund rummage through family history for a new

name, others simply invent one. Some take names with a Mediterranean flair, like Andriano and Bovino, said Eva Brylla, the director of research at the Institute of Language and Folklore in Uppsala. Others adopt English-sounding names, like Swedenrose or Flowerland; others let their imaginations fly, simply using building blocks common in Swedish names and fashioning tongue twisters like Shirazimohager and Rowshanravan.

The government, which must approve all name changes, places certain names off limits. Trademarks, like Coke, are out, as are obscenities. Names of nobility, like Bernadotte, the family name of the Swedish king, are not allowed, nor are names of celebrities. Obama is also off limits, said Jan Ekengren, director of the Patent and Registration Office, which oversees name changes. And Donadoni, the name of an Italian soccer star, was rejected.

All of this strikes a familiar chord for Mr. Cervall, 44, a management consultant, though the history of name changes in his family goes way back. His paternal grandfather was Bertil Carlsson, and his brother, Vallentin Carlsson. So in 1927 the brothers, wanting to shed the “-son” and feeling inventive, took the first syllables of Bertil and Vallentin to form the surname Bervall.

That did not sound quite right, so they replaced the B with a C to get Cervall, then got permission to take it as their surname.

So Mr. Cervall and his children are all Cervalls. But his sister married an Olsson, and her son, chafing under his surname, received permission at age 18 to be called Cervall, too. “He wanted to be different,” Mr. Cervall said.

Ms. Brylla of the Language and Folklore Institute, who is a consultant to the Patent and Registration Office, said the practice of changing names had been around for more than a century in Sweden as people sought to escape their “-son” names. But in recent years, the trickle of name changing became a flood. Partly, Ms. Brylla said, this was a result of new legislation.

Under the old laws, only those with surnames ending in “-son” or having embarrassing connotations could change their names. But a law enacted in 1982 permits almost anyone to do so, for almost any reason.

“Since 1982, the number of name changes has increased each year,” Mr. Ekengren, the patent office director, said. “The number has doubled since 2002.”

Last year, there were 7,257 name changes, a slight drop from 2009, he said, probably because of the economic crisis and a 20 percent increase in the fee for a name change, which is now \$270. ...

Indeed, support for Swedish names is coming from an unexpected quarter. In recent decades, successive waves of immigrants have been coming to Sweden, and many avail themselves of the laws and take Swedish-sounding names to hasten their integration.

Mr. Ekengren [*whose name means “oak brandi”*] recalled a case a few years ago in which an immigrant family requested permission to be called Mohammedsson. “Permission was granted,” he said.

T T T T

Many connoisseurs, understandably, charged for expressing their views, and some may still do so today. Some, such as Bernard Berenson, had a financial interest in many works for which they provided an opinion, an arrangement that Berenson chose to keep private. In the nature of things, too, dealers would tend to consult those connoisseurs who were not unduly cautious or restrictive in their attributions. Although the reasons are not immediately obvious, in some countries art historians gain considerable prestige by attributing hitherto neglected works of art to major artists, but little or none for downgrading attributions.

All this means is that, in the nature of things, connoisseurship is not a disinterested pursuit of truth, based exclusively on careful and objective consideration of the evidence, whether visual or documentary. Although some who practice it are conscientious and skeptical, the chances of a competent forgery being detected are not as strong as one might suppose. Nothing better demonstrates this than the saga of the Modigliani heads, which is not mentioned in any of the books under review, perhaps because the authors considered the whole episode too absurd.

According to legend, Modigliani, as a very young man in Livorno, tried his hand at sculpture, but having been told by his friends that his works were no good, in a fury threw them into a canal. In 1984 the curator of the local museum of contemporary art announced that she would have the canals of the city dragged in the hope of discovering the lost carvings. To her delight, over a period of a couple of weeks three carved heads, with female features in the style of Modigliani, emerged from the water. They were examined by scientists, who stated that they must have been submerged for at least fifty years, and identified, or so they claimed, the type of chisels that had been used to make them.

Although there were a few dissenting voices, notably that of the late Federico Zeri, who was obsessed by forgeries, most of the leading Italian art historians of the day, including some with no particular competence in twentieth-century art, hailed the heads as major new works by Modigliani. But then three local teenagers claimed that they had made one of the heads. They were not believed until they produced a photograph of themselves holding it, and then made a second head on television, using the tools they claimed to have used for the first head: a chisel, a screwdriver, and a Black and Decker drill.

A few days later a dockworker in Livorno said that he had made the other two heads, as a protest against the ignorance of art critics (a relatively common motive of art forgers). He too produced conclusive photographic evidence for his claim. The moral of the story, of course, is that forgers often have little to fear from connoisseurs, or from scientists, whose findings are now routinely used to bolster the claims of indifferent works on the market. In a world in which most people, whether from ambition or greed, want to discover originals rather than forgeries, connoisseurs and scientists can often be the forger's best friends. It is possible that those best qualified to detect forgeries are professional artists, but today they seem rarely if ever to be consulted on such matters.

T T T T

**How to Cut a Pomegranate - *Imtiaz Dharker* (\*1954)**

'Never,' said my father,  
'Never cut a pomegranate  
through the heart. It will weep blood.  
Treat it delicately, with respect.

Just slit the upper skin across four quarters.

This is a magic fruit,  
so when you split it open, be prepared  
for the jewels of the world to tumble out,  
more precious than garnets,  
more lustrous than rubies,  
lit as if from inside.

Each jewel contains a living seed.

Separate one crystal.

Hold it up to catch the light.

Inside is a whole universe.

No common jewel can give you this.'

Afterwards, I tried to make necklaces  
of pomegranate seeds.

The juice spurted out, bright crimson,  
and stained my fingers, then my mouth.

I didn't mind. The juice tasted of gardens  
I had never seen, voluptuous  
with myrtle, lemon, jasmine,  
and alive with parrot's wings.

The pomegranate reminded me  
that somewhere I had another home.

**Carpe Diem - *Stewart Conn* (\*1936)**

From my study window

I see you

below in the garden, a hand

here pruning

or leaning across to snip

a wayward shoot;

a daub of powder-blue in a

profusion of green,

then next moment, you are

no longer there –

only to reappear, this time

perfectly framed

in dappling sunlight, with

an armful of ivy

you've trimmed, topped by

hyacinth blooms,

fragrant survivors of last

night's frost.  
And my heart misses a beat  
at love for you,  
knowing a time will come  
when you are  
no longer there, nor I here  
to watch you  
on a day of such simplicity.  
Meantime let us  
make sure we clasp each  
shared moment  
in cupped hands, like water  
we dare not spill.

**Water - *Flair Adcock* (\*1934)**

I met an ancestor in the lane.  
She couldn't stop, she was carrying water.  
It slopped and bounced from the stoup against her;  
the side of her skirt was dark with the stain,  
oozing chillingly down to her shoe.  
I stepped aside as she trudged past me,  
frowning with effort, shivering slightly  
(an icy drop splashed my foot too).  
The dress that brushed against me was tough.  
She didn't smell the way I smell;  
I tasted the grease and smoke in her hair.  
Water that's carried is never enough.  
She'd a long haul back from the well.  
No, I didn't see her. But she was there.

**Dawn Revisited - *Rita Dove* (\*1952)**

Imagine you wake up  
with a second chance: The blue jay  
hawks his pretty wares  
and the oak still stands, spreading  
glorious shade. If you don't look back,  
the future never happens.  
How good to rise in sunlight,  
in the prodigal smell of biscuits—  
eggs and sausage on the grill.  
The whole sky is yours  
to write on, blown open  
to a blank page. Come on,  
shake a leg! You'll never know  
who's down there, frying those eggs,  
if you don't get up and see.

**In Santa Maria del Popolo - Thom Gunn (1929-2004)**

Waiting for when the sun an hour or less  
Conveniently oblique makes visible  
The painting on one wall of this recess  
By Caravaggio, of the Roman School,  
I see how shadow in the painting brims  
With a real shadow, drowning all shapes out  
But a dim horse's haunch and various limbs,  
Until the very subject is in doubt.



But evening gives the act, beneath the horse  
And one indifferent groom, I see him sprawl,  
Foreshortened from the head, with hidden face,  
Where he has fallen, Saul becoming Paul.  
O wily painter, limiting the scene  
From a cacophony of dusty forms  
To the one convulsion, what is it you mean  
In that wide gesture of the lifting arms?  
No Ananias croons a mystery yet,  
Casting the pain out under name of sin.  
The painter saw what was, an alternate  
Candour and secrecy inside the skin.  
He painted, elsewhere, that firm insolent  
Young whore in Venus' clothes, those pudgy cheats,  
Those sharpers; and was strangled, as things went,  
For money, by one such picked off the streets.

I turn, hardly enlightened, from the chapel  
To the dim interior of the church instead,  
In which there kneel already several people,  
Mostly old women: each head closeted  
In tiny fists holds comfort as it can.  
Their poor arms are too tired for more than this  
-- For the large gesture of solitary man,  
Resisting, by embracing, nothingness.

T T T T

**What apostrophe?**

On 21 August 2013, *The Guardian* published the remarkable results of its International Apostrophe Day haiku competition. Here is a selection of the best.

@ActuallyHolly (Holly Ashworth) tagged her entry #haikuingwhilepregnant:

Punctuation marks  
all labor hard, but only  
you make contractions.

@louisebolotin's allusion to the so-called greengrocer's apostrophe:

It hangs between pea's  
But not twixt seasons greetings

Defying logic.

The possessive apostrophe proved a popular theme:

Life isn't easy  
When you keep being abused  
But you're possessive.

@mjhindle (Matt Hindle)

"You're so possessive,"  
she fumed as I was busy  
apostrophizing.

@Stoeprak (Christo Steyn) contributed a haiku that contained an Afrikaans apostrophe, *afkappingsteken*, which literally means "off-chopping sign", as well as this one:

endangered species  
of the punctuation tribe  
how it's earned its keep!

The winner was *Apostrophe Vigilante*, who tweets as @ApostropheLaw, is clearly an expert and the winning tweet neatly demonstrates how an apostrophe can change the meaning of a sentence.

I've run out of food.  
I'm going to eat the dogs.  
What apostrophe?

T T T T

## Read the small print

Google's so-called "Privacy" Policy, June 2013:

**Log information** - When you use our services or view content provided by Google, we may automatically collect and store certain information in server logs. This may include:

- details of how you used our service, such as your search queries.
- telephony log information like your phone number, calling-party number, forwarding numbers, time and date of calls, duration of calls, SMS routing information and types of calls.
- ....
- cookies that may uniquely identify your browser or your Google Account.

**Location information** - When you use a location-enabled Google service, we may collect and process information about your actual location, like GPS signals sent by a mobile device. We may also use various technologies to determine location, such as sensor data from your device that may, for example, provide information on nearby Wi-Fi access points and cell towers. ....

We also use this information to offer you tailored content – like giving you more relevant search results and ads.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This means that Google traces your movements, logs your calls, records your interests and sends you unwanted ads. If you are as shocked by this as I am, change to *DuckDuckGo*

T T T T

### **Pass the port one more time**

A Florida senior citizen drove his brand new Corvette convertible out of the dealership. Taking off down the road, he pushed it to 80 mph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left. “Amazing,” he thought as he flew down I-75, pushing the pedal even more.

Looking in his rear view mirror, he saw a Florida state trooper, blue lights flashing and siren blaring. He floored it to 100 mph, then 110, then 120. Suddenly he thought, “What am I doing? I’m too old for this!” and pulled over to await the trooper’s arrival.

Pulling in behind him, the trooper got out of his vehicle and walked up to the Corvette. He looked at his watch, then said, “Sir, my shift ends in 30 minutes. Today is Friday. If you can give me a new reason for speeding – a reason I’ve never before heard – I’ll let you go.”

The old gentleman paused then said: “Three years ago, my wife ran off with a Florida state trooper. I thought you were bringing her back.”

“Have a good day, sir,” replied the trooper.

T T T T

### **Walking Normally**

When I was six, I remember being puzzled by the fact that adults very rarely looked backwards while they were walking. I often did. I was reassured by the following piece from The New Yorker of 9 September 2013.

CLAIM: When we are at the mall you say that you have walked so much that you need to be carried, because your legs are “all stretched out.”

FACT: While hyperextension of muscles, tendons, and joints is a real and serious problem among certain demographics (manual laborers, professional athletes), it is rarely seen in anyone four and a half years old.

CLAIM: Walking backward is better than walking forward.

FACT: Traditionally, human beings have walked forward rather than backward because their eyes are on the front of them and therefore can look ahead and help them see where they are going. Walking backward, as you are doing now, increases the likelihood that you will—O.K., maybe now you understand what I am trying to tell you, because you have walked backward into that lady.

CLAIM: Holding your wrists and hands up inside the sleeves of your jacket and flapping the sleeve ends back and forth when you walk somehow improves your walking, and makes you look like an elephant.

FACT: Flapping your sleeves does nothing for your walking and makes it harder for me to grab your hand when you are about to veer into a video-game store where we are not going. An elephant does not flap its trunk when it walks, and, in any case, it has only one of them.

CLAIM: Skipping is faster than running.



FACT: I hate to break this to you, but skipping is actually not faster than running. It is slower. Scientists have done tests to prove this. The problem involves the added friction of the soles of the feet in the characteristic skipping motion. I know your own skipping is “special” skipping, with that extra hop that you have added in, but otherwise it is physically the same as conventional, ordinary skipping, and subject to the same laws.

CLAIM: Pressing yourself flat against the counter by the cash register, extending your arms full length, and sliding along the counter and then along the wall and then along the door until someone opens the door from the outside and you tumble out onto the sidewalk is a good way to leave a restaurant.

FACT: Look at your mother. Look at me. Look at every other human being in the world. Do we plaster ourselves against the wall and slide along it when we leave a restaurant? Why do you think nobody else does that? I don’t care if Billy Nolan does it. *Nobody in his right mind does it because it is not a good way to leave a restaurant.* There is a right way and a wrong way to do everything, and sliding along flat surfaces in restaurants is generally not the right way to do anything.

CLAIM: Running very fast in circles around my legs while we are waiting for your mother by the baggage claim will hurry her arrival.

FACT: That is incorrect. There is no connection between your running and the plane that will make the plane land faster. Did you hear what I just said?

CLAIM: With the new pogo stick that your aunt gave you, you will jump over trees and houses.

FACT: No, you will not. What pogo sticks are actually good for is this: bouncing two inches off the ground once or maybe twice, and then falling over. That is it. Pogo sticks are a swindle. In the history of the world, no one has ever jumped over a house on a pogo stick. Or a tree. Or a car. Even a small car. O.K., yes—maybe a toy car. But that’s not what we’re talking about here. You are saying that you will go out on the driveway with your pogo stick and jump over the house, and I am saying that you will go out, get on the pogo stick, bounce once or twice, and end up still on the driveway, only with a skinned knee and screaming your head off. In this you will exactly resemble every other human who has ever attempted such a feat since the invention of the pogo stick. Your aunt gives you these things to torture me, like that life-size Earth First stuffed toy polar bear that now takes up half the living room.

CLAIM: If you’re not supposed to walk backward, what about walking sideways?

FACT: No. And watch where you’re going. You walked into my foot.

CLAIM: How about walking like this?

FACT: Just walk normally.

CLAIM: This *is* walking normally, for a primate.

FACT: Walk normally for a human.

CLAIM: Mrs. Varma said a human is a primate.

FACT: Yes, that is true, and just please walk normally, all right?

CLAIM: The stroller with your little sister in it will be easier for me to push if you help by pulling it from the front while singing, "Yo-ee-o, yoe, hup!"

FACT: No. Please. Stop that.

T T T T

### More Animal Poetry

Ogden Nash was probably the most prolific author of poems about animals, combining wit with economy of words - the results are delightful.

#### *The Chipmunk*

My friends all know that I am shy,  
But the chipmunk is twice as shy as I.  
He moves with flickering indecision  
Like stripes across the television.  
He's like the shadow of a cloud,  
Or Emily Dickinson read aloud.

#### *The Camel*

The camel has a single hump;  
The dromedary two;  
Or else the other way around.  
I'm never sure. Are you?

#### *Fleas*

Adam  
Had 'em...

#### *The Guppy*

Whales have calves,  
Cats have kittens,  
Bears have cubs,  
Bats have bittens,  
Swans have cygnets,  
Seals have puppies,  
But guppies just have little guppies.

#### *The Octopus*

Tell me, O Octopus, I begs  
Is those things arms, or is they legs?  
I marvel at thee, Octopus;  
If I were thou, I'd call me Us.

#### *A Caution to Everybody*

Consider the auk;  
Becoming extinct because he forgot how to fly, and could only walk.  
Consider man, who may well become extinct  
Because he forgot how to walk and learned how to fly before he thinked.

*The Fly*

God in his wisdom made the fly  
And then forgot to tell us why.

*The Centipede*

I objugate the centipede,  
A bug we do not really need.  
At sleepy-time he beats a path  
Straight to the bedroom or the bath.  
You always wallop where he's not,  
Or, if he is, he makes a spot.

*The Praying Mantis*

From whence arrived the praying mantis?  
From outer space, or lost Atlantis?  
Glimpse the grin, green metal mug  
that masks the pseudo-saintly bug,  
Orthopterous, also carnivorous,  
And faintly whisper, Lord deliver us.

*The Duck*

Behold the duck,  
It does not cluck,  
A cluck it lacks.  
It quacks.  
It is specially fond  
Of a puddle or a pond.  
When it dines or sups,  
It bottoms ups.

*The Pig*

The Pig, if I am not mistaken,  
Supplies us sausage, ham, and Bacon.  
Let others say his heart is big,  
I think it stupid of the Pig.

*The Oyster*

The oyster's a  
Confusing suitor;  
It's masc., and fem.,  
And even neuter.  
But whether husband,  
Pal, or wife,  
It leads a soothing  
Sort of life.  
I'd like to be  
An oyster, say,  
In August, June,  
July, or May.

*The Firefly*

The firefly's flame  
Is something for which science has no name  
I can think of nothing eerier  
Than flying around with an unidentified glow on a  
person's posteerier.

*The Porcupine*

Any hound a porcupine nudges  
Can't be blamed for harboring grudges.  
I know one hound that laughed all winter  
At a porcupine that sat on a splinter.

*The Turtle*

The turtle lives 'twixt plated decks  
Which practically conceal its sex.  
I think it clever of the turtle  
In such a fix to be so fertile.

*The Jellyfish*

Who wants my jellyfish?  
I'm not sellyfish!

*The Rhinoceros*

The rhino is a homely beast,  
For human eyes he's not a feast.  
Farewell, farewell, you old rhinoceros,  
I'll stare at something less prepoceros.

*The Cow*

The cow is of the bovine ilk;  
One end is moo, the other, milk....

*The Eel*

I don't mind eels  
Except as meals.

*The Ant*

The ant has made himself illustrious  
Through constant industry industrious.  
So what?  
Would you be calm and placid  
If you were full of formic acid?

*The shrimp*

A shrimp who sought his lady shrimp  
Could catch no glimpse  
Not even a glimp.  
At times, translucence  
Is rather a nuisance.

*The Cobra*

This creature fills its mouth with venom  
And walks upon its duodenum.  
He who attempts to tease the cobra  
Is soon a sadder he, and sobra.

*The Ostrich*

The ostrich roams the great Sahara  
Its mouth is wide, its neck is narra.  
It has such long and lofty legs  
I'm glad it sits to lay its eggs

*The Dog*

The truth I do not stretch or shove  
When I state that the dog is full of love.  
I've also found, by actual test,  
A wet dog is the lovingest.

*The Cuckoo*

Cuckoos lead Bohemian lives,  
They fail as husbands and as wives,  
Therefore they cynically disparage  
Everybody else's marriage.

*The Squab*

Toward a better world I contribute my modest smidgin;  
I eat the squab, lest it become a pigeon.

*The Wasp*

The wasp and all his numerous family  
I look upon as a major calamity.  
He throws open his nest with prodigality,  
But I distrust his waspality.

*The Lion*

Oh, weep for Mr. and Mrs. Bryan!  
He was eaten by a lion  
Following which, the lion's lioness  
Up and swallowed Bryan's Bryaness.

*Bugs*

Some insects feed on rosebuds  
And others feed on carrion.  
Between them they devour the earth.  
Bugs are totalitarian.

*The Rabbit*

Here is a verse about rabbits  
That doesn't mention their habits.

### *The Canary*

The song of canaries  
Never varies,  
And when they're moulting  
They're pretty revolting.

### *The Termite*

Some primal termite knocked on wood  
And tasted it, and found it good,  
And that is why your Cousin May  
Fell through the parlor floor today.

T T T T

## **PGA Rule Changes for seniors**

The AARP has negotiated with the PGA to modify the Rules of Golf for seniors:

Rule 1.a.5: A ball sliced or hooked into the rough shall be lifted and placed on the Fairway at a point equal to the distance it carried or rolled into the Rough with no penalty. The senior should not be penalized for tall grass which green keepers failed to mow.

Rule 2.d.6(b): A ball hitting a tree shall be deemed not to have hit the tree. This is simply bad luck and luck has no place in a scientific game. The senior player must estimate the distance the ball would have traveled if it had not hit the tree and play the ball from there.

Rule 3.b.3(g): There shall be no such thing as a lost ball. The missing ball is on or near the course and will eventually be found and pocketed by someone else, making it a stolen ball. The player is not to compound the felony by charging himself or herself with a penalty.

Rule 4.c.7(h) If a putt passes over a hole without dropping, it is deemed to have dropped. The law of gravity supersedes the Rules of Golf.

Rule 5. Putts that stop close enough to the cup that they could be blown in, may be blown in. This does not apply to balls more than three inches from the hole. No one wants to make a travesty of the game.

Rule 6.a.9(k) There is no penalty for so-called "out of bounds." If penny-pinching golf Course owners bought sufficient land, this would not occur. The senior golfer deserves an apology, not a penalty.

Rule 7..G.15(z) There is no penalty for a ball in a water hazard, as golf balls should float. Senior golfers should not be penalized for manufacturers' shortcomings.

T T T T

## **Richmond Golf Course**

The above is, of course, a hoax. The following is not:

One evening in the autumn of 1940, bombs fell on the course and Temporary Rules were introduced to allow for the consequences. Dr Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, used the Club's Temporary Rules as the theme of a

broadcast by William (Lord Haw-Haw) Joyce: “By means of these ridiculous reforms the English snobs try to impress the people with a kind of pretended heroism. They can do so without danger, because, as everyone knows, the German Air Force devotes itself only to the destruction of military targets and objectives of importance to the war effort.” Evidently the Club’s laundry outbuilding was a military target.

***Richmond Golf Club - Temporary Rules, 1940***

1. Players are asked to collect Bomb and Shrapnel splinters to save these causing damage to the mowing machines.
2. In competitions, during gunfire, or while bombs are falling, players may take cover without penalty for ceasing play.
3. The positions of known delayed-action bombs are marked by red flags placed at reasonably, but not guaranteed safe, distance therefrom.
4. Shrapnel/and/or bomb splinters on the Fairways, or in Bunkers within a club’s length of a ball may be moved without penalty, and no penalty shall be incurred if a ball is thereby caused to move accidentally.
5. A ball moved by enemy action may be replaced, or if lost or destroyed, a ball may be dropped not nearer the hole without penalty.
6. A ball lying in a crater may be lifted and dropped not nearer the hole, preserving the line to the hole without penalty.
7. A player whose stroke is affected by the simultaneous explosion of a bomb may play another ball from the same place. Penalty, one stroke.

T T T T

**†Klaus - In Memoriam**

“Wer im Gedächtniß seiner Lieben lebt, Ist ja nicht todt, er ist nur fern - Todt nur Ist, wer vergessen wird.” (*Joseph Christian von Zedlitz 1790-1862*)

T T T T

**Policy matters**

Egypt has been much in the headlines this year and the crisis continues. The country was also in the headlines in 1957. The following anecdote about Anthony Eden is from *Dulles* by Leonard Mosley, New York 1979 - p.441:

Nutting [Anthony Nutting, then Minister of State for Foreign Affairs] tried to calm [Eden] by saying that, before removing Nasser, it might be as well to have an alternative leader to take his place, otherwise there would be chaos in Egypt.

“But I don’t want an alternative,” Eden shouted. “And I don’t give a damn if there’s anarchy and chaos in Egypt.”

Two days after that incident, the well-known military expert Captain Liddell-Hart had come to see the prime minister at 10 Downing Street. Eden had asked him for an outline of how a military campaign should be fought in Egypt, and Liddell-Hart had written one for him - only to have it sent back, with curt demands for

alterations, no less than four times. Finally, rather than do a fifth version, he had sent in the original outline and decided to leave it at that. Eden summoned him and said:

“Captain Liddell-Hart, here I am at a critical moment in Britain’s history, arranging matters which may mean the life and death of the British Empire. And what happens? I ask you to do a simple military chore for me, and it takes you five attempts – plus my vigilance amid all my worries – before you get it right.”

“But sir,” Liddell-Hart said, “it hasn’t taken five attempts. That version, which you now say is just what you wanted, is the original version.”

There was a moment’s silence. Eden’s handsome face went first pale and then red. He looked across at the long, languid shape of Captain Liddell-Hart, clad in a smart off-white summer outfit, then he reached out a hand, grasped one of the heavy, old-fashioned Downing Street inkwells, and flung it at his visitor. Another silence. Liddell-Hart looked down at the sickly blue stains spreading across his immaculate linen suiting, uncoiled himself, picked up a government-issue wastepaper basket, and rammed it over the prime minister’s head before slowly walking out of the room.

T T T T

### **Odds and Ends**

Quote from the 2013 Australian election (*The Guardian* 6.9.13): “Still, as Abbott himself pointed out in a campaign remark that could have come straight from that master of the form, George W. Bush, nobody is the ‘suppository of all wisdom.’”

Cemetery Director, responding to a complaint: “Why are you making such a fuss? People are dying to come here.”

My family and I spent an unforgettable two weeks in uninterrupted sunshine on an island in the Swedish archipelago and came across the following lines from a song written by Carl-Anton Axelsson in 1967 (*Om maskros och tjärdoft* - Dandelion and the smell of tar), that captures well the nostalgia felt by Swedes for that time of year: “För hela året drömde jag / om vår korta sommar drömde jag” (All year I dreamt / I dreamt of our short summer).

In Memory of  
Miss Mary Ann Coleman  
the Daughter of WILLm: COLEMAN ESQr:  
Who died the 2nd of Septr: 1808, Aged 24 Years.  
If modest worth, if Piety sincere,  
If resignation mild, e’re claim’d a tear,  
Let the deserved tribute here be plac’d,  
To her whom living all these Virtues grac’d.  
*Seen at St. Alban’s Cathedral*

“An intelligent Russian once remarked to us, ‘Every country has its own constitution; ours is absolutism moderated by assassination’” Quoted by Georg Herbert, Graf Münster, *Political sketches of the State of Europe 1814-1867*.



“Britain is one of just 19 countries that recruit 16-year-olds into the army. Zimbabwe recently increased its minimum soldiering age to 18.” (*Guardian* report on post-traumatic stress disorder, 28 October 2013)

Baroness Manningham Buller, the head of MI5 from 2002 to 2007, told the Chilcot Inquiry: “The Iraq war heightened the extremist view that the West was trying to bring down Islam. We gave Bin Laden his jihad.” *The Spectator*, 24 July 2010.

“The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.” H. L. Mencken: *In Defense of Women* (1918)

Probably the best known comment by Karl Marx is that religion is “the opium of the people,” generally taken as dismissive of religion in general. The phrase should, however, be read in context as it carries a somewhat different connotation: “Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.”

Once, twice, thrice, I Julia tried.  
The scornful puss as oft denied.  
And since I can no better thrive  
I'll cringe to ne'er a bitch alive -  
So kiss my arse, disdainful sow  
Good claret is my mistress now. *Henry Purcell (1659-1695)*

“Oh God thy sea is so great and my boat is so small.” - Breton Fisherman's Prayer.<sup>10</sup>

Hark the herald angels sing  
Mrs Simpson's pinched our king.  
(1936 children's rhyme quoted in letter from Clement Attlee,  
26 Dec. 1938, in Kenneth Harris *Attlee*, 1982, ch. 11)



<sup>10</sup> The Breton Fisherman's Prayer was engraved on a brass plaque and presented to President John F. Kennedy by US Navy Admiral Hyman Rickover in 1963. The admiral would subsequently present the same type of plaque to all new commanders of Polaris submarines.