



Verse by Vincent Colin Burke

A WOODCUTTER REFLECTS WHILE DANCING

Whence do they come,  
Those footsteps light  
That mingle now with mine?  
Where will they go, that knot behind,  
Which I tie now by turning?  
My hand on yours is rough,  
You say –  
'Tis natural:  
The tree, being bitten, will  
Project its bark;  
Your fingertips, however, are calloused  
At the roots,  
From tapping tidy type across  
The blanch'd and battered face  
Of tree you never knew.  
But I slay friends to keep you warm,  
Or such as you,  
And I must say for them that it  
Is worth the loss of life –  
Or it were suicide and murder.  
With music ending, return now  
To your friends,

Burke – Poems – 2

To walking paths unblended –  
What did you say? I  
Dance well,  
Do I?  
I hadn't known it –  
Thank you.

IN A BARBER SHOP

A bearded man to the barbers went;  
That among these were women made him lament.  
He said to one, by an empty chair,  
“Not you, madame, shall cut my hair;  
A gentleman deems that mean it seems  
When ladies take pay their men to array.  
I with my groomers demand a proper nexus:  
Who shapes my flag and tends my pride  
Ought really, I feel, to be on my side  
In the battle of the sexes.”  
After waiting a while for male barber to finish,  
He sat for trimming of plumage chinnish,  
But when he thought he’d got all his way,  
His barber was slyly moved to say,  
“I take it, sir, you didn’t know that I’m gay.”  
The customer smiled like a beleaguered Elf  
(Of Tolkien’s kind) and replied, “I can only suggest you bugger yourself.”

VEIL OF SNOW

Standing still in time, watching snowflakes dance  
Out of the distance toward me,  
Many snowflakes, much alike, many not for me but one:  
Shall I seek it,  
Straining eyes difference to discern  
In the brief moment ere it  
Falls, whirls, mingles, dances up?  
Or, hoping, wishing, half unmindful,  
    Stand and watch  
    The dance of snowflakes.

AURORA

The Valkyries ride forth tonight:  
A distant setting sun gleams from their armour bright.  
Ravens are circling, searching left and right.  
Falling, sword in hand, striving still to fight,  
Heroes will dine in Odin's hall tonight.  
Fierce through the south the Northman came:  
For forager, chill wind of fame;  
Ravaging fair lands with sword and flame,  
Taking as prey both maiden and dame.  
The Valkyries ride forth tonight:  
A distant setting sun gleams from their armour bright.  
Drums! Drums! Throb through the jungle;  
The pulse of the jungle beats with fury and fear  
Stirr'd, and stilled, by gun or spear.  
But hope is here and faith will follow;  
Though hope may fade if faith seems hollow:  
These new great men, so proud of bravery,  
Will buy from brothers who market slavery.  
Ravens are circling, searching left and right.  
From Deutschland now the Aryan speaks:  
Under him mankind will scale new peaks;  
The world for a while just lets him rave,  
Till from his feet spreads a yawning grave.  
Falling, sword in hand, striving still to fight,  
Heroes will dine in Odin's hall tonight.  
Twixt East and West a world divided stands,  
Each claiming to hold the future in its hands,  
And men will fight, as is their wont,  
For the devil they know against the devil they don't.  
The Valkyries ride forth tonight.

SORCERY

From the tyranny of the engine  
Nothing has been saved:  
When the windmill waved its arms,  
The wind was first enslaved.

To a Pupil, Gaining Lore

Not bad to be a farmer man,  
Raise your own grub to your own pan,  
Nourish whom your wife gives birth,  
Make love to her through Mother Earth.  
Such idle dreams are not for you,  
You must to your own self be true,  
A wage for hire is your rightful pelf;  
You mustn't get above yourself:  
Become the most that you can be:  
Strive to be an employee.

Not odd to be a cobbler:  
Your wife need never hobble, her.  
You'd give your children their own shoes  
And teach them valid  $p$ 's and  $q$ 's.  
Such idle dreams are not for you;  
You must to your own self be true.  
A wage for hire is your rightful pelf;  
You mustn't get above yourself:  
Become the most that you can be:  
Strive to be an employee.

Not wry to be a soldier b'y  
Fit to fight for justice high  
Even, if need be, against the state, or,  
Rather, whoever wields it, if a traitor.  
Such idle dreams are not for you;  
You must to your own self be true.  
A wage for hire is your rightful pelf;  
You mustn't get above yourself:  
Become the most that you can be:  
Strive to be an employee.

A schoolteacher's task is heaven-sent  
And so is he, perhaps, but paid by government

Burke – Poems – 8

And so unlikely to make much dent  
In a bank of the run where we are pent:  
He boasts the young already free,  
For he's most of all an employee.

-- Vincent Colin Burke, July 7, 2009



GALLGULL GLOATING

Our modern mammoth market offers all things to all men  
And some men find there things worth having, now and then,  
But we have shaped it mainly so that it has purveyed  
The thought that things men need are better bought than made.

It seems a jape that an ape with speech could ever bring himself to preach  
His advantage lies in selling self to aggrandize some others' pelf,  
Though he must not proceed beyond a creep.  
But we tempters sow great confidence that public schools  
Will much improve the lives of business tools  
And managerial human nature will be far nicer made by educature.  
That lets parents sleep.

However. To make on his own at least one needed thing,  
And, while making it, to sing  
Is what normal man has ever sought,  
To keep God's way of keeping men Who them to life had brought.  
Making was their best nobility, after generative fertility,  
Which was first what He Himself had wrought.  
These two alive authorities are the very veins and arteries of every vital nation;  
To underline such living words is the chief purpose of sensation,  
And to nerve men when for these they should have fought.  
Thanks to us, both they and men have mostly come to nought.

It should not give too sharp a shock that sheep in our commercial flock  
Are frequently unfaithful:  
If most husbands let another chiefly bear (I mean, of course, an *employeur*)  
their wife-upkeep,  
That is almost equally disgraceful:  
To keep a wife in life, with her own help, and any whom he helps her whelp, is  
mingy man's chief act of love, imitating Him Above. (*Arghh!*)

GALLGULL GLOATING AGAIN

Right hard my rule is graven  
On docile souls gone bad  
Of many an older maven  
And many a well-taught cad.

The older mavens weeping  
May deem themselves well paid  
For luring cads now steeping  
In heat where none get laid.

GALLGULL GLOATING STILL

Right hard my rule is graven  
On sickly souls got worse,  
Of touts for tourist haven  
And writers of bad verse.

The tourism touts are grieving:  
They've left their beds unmade.  
The workers at word weaving  
Never are well paid.

Vincent Colin Burke, July 9, 2009

BIG SMILE

By Vincent Colin Burke

A Mountie down from Ottawa drove onto shore one day.  
Unlike others on the Caribou she hadn't come to play,  
Though all aboard had noticed before she left the ship:  
The young mainland Mountie wore a big smile on her lip.  
Biig smiile. She wore a big smile on her lip.  
She was bringing mainland justice, that was what she said,  
To a tough old Newfoundlander whom some girls called Reckless Ted.  
She suspected him of using too much energy in bed.  
Any case like that must surely make the news.  
The young Mountie gladly granted selected interviews.  
A feminist told Open Line that men at all like Ted are swine,  
And if politicians really wanted to win the female votes,  
They had to be prepared to offer up some goats.  
When the Mountie managed to get Ted within her grip,  
The government must make new laws to let some scissors snip.  
Biig smiile. Must let some scissors snip.  
The young Mountie absolutely guaranteed The Western Star,  
Before the pre-trial furor could unfairly go too far,  
An arrest would follow only her being certain of the fact,  
Even if it meant she must take Ted in the act.  
The commissioner commended the young Mountie on her tact.  
He knew he needn't mention the wiggle of her hip.  
Biig smiile. No need to mention the wiggle of her hip.  
(He had secretly assured her that if she bungled, she'd be sacked.)  
Some cautious buddies brought Reckless Ted their anxious word.  
He said he thought their worry was utterly absurd.  
He poured scorn on the idea that his affairs could take a dip.  
He suggested any Mountie might safely meet him in her slip.  
He swore he'd swiftly banish the big smile from her lip.

Biig smiile. He'd soon banish the big smile from her lip.  
She met him in a hotel bar and patted his big head.  
With similar allurements she enticed him up to bed.  
Made equal by the Court Supremes, she had her way with Reckless Ted.  
Her trap had worked out perfectly, Reckless Ted would take a trip:  
He was transported by the Mountie with the big smile on her lip.  
Biig smiile. Transported by the Mountie with the big smile on her lip.  
The Mountie proved by the way she moved that justice isn't dead.  
She has a nicer smile since she bore a child for her husband Reckless Ted.  
That's the story of the Mountie who did justice to old Ted.  
Biig smiile. Now every day for supper she cooks them up a feast,  
That central mainland Mountie who does justice to the East.

O canny daft, usurp our fallow land.  
Bold buggery must all our sons demand.  
Like knowing tarts we theorize  
New rights for sodomy.  
Both brown and white, O canny daft,  
We flock so tame for ye.  
All through our land  
We pay abortion's fee;  
O canny daft, we flock so tame for ye.  
O canny daft, we flock so tame for ye.

Who are these touts who full of crap in greed our hearts are steeping,  
Who do us ply with jingles sly while all our souls are sleeping?  
Sales, sales are not the thing; those who sell should often swing;  
Their ads should make us wary.

Why are admen unworthy drones whom honest folk keep paying?  
Those vultures deem they'll pick us clean; they prey upon our praying.  
Sales, sales are not the thing; those who sell should often swing;  
Their ads should make us wary.

We give them money (much and more); more stalwart men would stone them.  
The kings of pigs sell us fun things; our appetites condone them.  
Sales, sales are not the thing; those who sell should often swing;  
Their ads should make us wary.

Why are admen such busy drones whom working folk are paying,  
Who only gild where others build, who prey upon our praying?  
Sales, sales are not the thing; those "in Sales" should seldom sing;  
Commercialism's a mingy bawd; advertising is snary.  
All they sell we must need like hell, or joints will all grow stiffer:  
All those shills say we need their skills and who are we to differ?  
Sales, sales are not the thing; those "in Sales" should seldom sing;  
Commercialism's a mingy bawd; advertising is snary.  
They'd keep us scared we'll stay unpaired unless we buy "enhancement";  
So grave is sex that no one's text now can explain what dance meant.  
Sales, sales are not the thing; those "in Sales" should seldom sing;  
Commercialism's a mingy bawd; advertising is snary.

Minor Incident Before an Execution

“To look at him,” I said with a wry frown,  
To a spectator like myself, “you’d almost think him wearing a real crown.”  
As if he’d heard me with his mind,  
The convict with his half-gibbet borne by someone harmless just behind  
Looked strait at my eyes a sudden while  
And smiled a grim smile.

Vincent Colin Burke, March 12, 2010