

WINE TRAINING FOR A BEER GUY

Experts rate a glass of wine
In terms I cannot quite define.
The notion of a “quaint” Chablis,
I’m sad to say, is lost on me.

Expert words like “round” or “charm”
Make me want a firearm,
And when I read a wine’s “aggressive,”
I don’t get manic just depressive.

Don’t tell me of “rough” Beaujolais,
“Robust” Merlot, “lean” cabernet,
Just give me words that shed some light,
Like sweet or not, or red or white.

Subtle words won’t teach my palate.
You have to hit me with a mallet.

—BERNARD JACKS

THE PRAYER

Murphy carries a pint uncracked
and hidden at his hip.
He trips in the lane. His backside smacked,
he contemplates his slip.

“Mither o’ God, tis been some time
since Ireland had a quake,”
observing with impromptu rhyme,
“Mark how the streetlamps shake!”

As though he shoulders a Guinness keg
he staggers up from the mud,
but something wet runs down his leg.
“Dear God, let it be blood!”

—TIMOTHY MURPHY

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STOPPING BY A BENCH ON A WINTER EVENING

(after Frost)

Whose goods these are I think I know;
He seems not to be looking, though,
And he won't mind me stopping here
To help myself before I go.

My tough old wife would think it queer
If I came home with a sack of beer:
“Where'd ya snatch it, for criminy's sake...
And all without a pawnshop near.”

I'll give this fellow's coat a shake
To see if there's some change to make;
I love these pockets, large and deep
The more they hold, the more I'll take.

I like my shopping quick and cheap,
And I've no promises to keep,
But one more bench before I sleep,
Just one more bench before I sleep.

—JOHN HAINES

EXCEPTIONS TO THE GOLDEN RULE

Be kind to cats
And even bats
And other creepy things,
And birds and bees
And ox celebés
And anything that sings.
Do to them as you'd have them do
In similar circumstance to you.
And if you please
Be kind to trees
And mantises on their knees,
But you may exclude
And be very rude
To ants and flies and fleas.

—DIANE ENGLE

AT THE NEW MUSIC CONCERT

The air conditioning is broken.
No, that's the famous soloist.
Maybe someone should have spoken.
The air conditioning is broken.
If I can't find my subway token
I'm really going to be pissed.
The air conditioning is broken.
No, that's the famous soloist.

—DAVID MASON

NO PROBLEM

This is the question
Exerting its pull:
Our glass is half-empty
Or merely half-full.

Finding an answer
Can be mighty tough,
But why should we worry?
One half is enough.

—RHODA BANDLER

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