

Occasional Limericks

Pages: 272

Publisher: AuthorHouse (August 11, 2009)

Format: pdf, epub

Language: English

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First published by AuthorHouse 8/4/2009

ISBN: 978-1-4389-2923-1 (sc)

ISBN: 978-1-4389-2924-8 (hc)

ISBN: 9781467048668 (ebk)

Printed in the United States of America

Bloomington, Indiana

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[Chapter 1: The Beginning](#)

"Once upon a time..." That is for another type of fantasy but is very closely related to "There once was a..." beginning for so many of those "naughty" limericks I first learned and delighted sharing with my adolescent peers out behind the barn. At that time poetic forms were an unknown quantity and a "pome" as I pronounced it was something you wrote with the last words of each two succeeding or alternating lines ending in the same sound. The quatrain, the most popular form of English versification, was the unnamed model used for those first poems. In fact, growing up in a somewhat Puritanical household, a limerick could not have been poetry because they were "dirty" and poetry was "clean". This was the assumption of the small town boy who finally discovered the truth in a college course designed to improve his knowledge of literature. The University of Iowa had discovered that many of the freshman entering school were deficient in many areas of study and developed what was called the "Humanities Program". It was designed to ensure that our education would be well rounded by requiring that we display competence in these areas. A series of tests were given to determine if we met certain standards in English, history, literature, math, and even physical education. Where proficient we were allowed to advance in the regular curriculum and where not we were required to take "Core" courses to meet those minimum standards. "Silas Marner" and "Ivanhoe" were not quite enough background for me and it was one of the textbooks for the literature core course titled, "A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry" edited by Oscar Williams that taught me otherwise. Our assignment of "The Wasteland" by T. S. Eliot was, and remains incomprehensible. The discovery of the Limericks section of fourteen verses written mostly by the famous ANON and none of them salacious, dispelled my misconceptions of them and undoubtedly started the mental process that eventually led to the creation of my own verses.

The occasion for my first limerick has long been forgotten, even the time is no longer known. Many have been lost for not being written down or the copy has been lost in the clutter. No great loss to be sure, but there are a few left to be shared and many include the reason for being written. Someone suggested they should be kept and as a result those which were scribbled on various scraps of paper including fly leaves from crossword puzzle books, napkins from bars and restaurants, paper plates from the Hollywood Bowl, a shopping bag from Ketcham, Idaho (one of the lost group), envelopes, etc. are kept in a storage box. About the only type that has never been used is toilet paper because it is so difficult to write on and is very likely to get wiped out. This has come from the necessity to get them written immediately or they're forgotten when a more suitable notebook or pad is not available. Also, it's difficult to complete them in my head in part because of the revisions that are necessary to achieve the desired effects. There are many which have to be put aside for a time while searching RAM (Computorese for Random Access Memory). In my case it is more accurately described as Reluctant Access Memory and carried to the logical(?) extreme of Raunchy Access Memory for the scatological variety.

The rhymes that roll off of my tongue,

Propelled by the air from my tongue,

Created in RAM*

Contorted by HAM**

Quite often are stopped by a tongue.

*Reluctant Access Memory

**Hopelessly Addicted Mentality

An example of being put aside for perhaps thirty years or more showed up as I neared the bottom of the barrel. It is described as: Bad example that needs to be revised. Here it is with the improved scan:

Dennis a man from the bar,

Loves to smoke a big black cigar,

His critics all yell,

"That stogey does smell!"

And he just answers, Har, har!"

Line four is just fine, but one, two three and five definitely need revision. Now the revised limerick which scans properly. It is your decision if it was worth the wait.

Young Dennis a man from the bar,

Will light up a big black cigar,

His critics then yell,

"That stogey does smell!"

He answers to them, "Har-dee-har!"

The occasions for which they have been and continue to be written are as varied as the situations you encounter every day ranging from birth to death and the potpourri in between. This may be as

simple as the spelling of a word such as the word occasion in the title which has caused a few problems.

It* really is spelled with two cees,
Two esses slip in with great eese,
And much of the time,
It's off on the rhyme,
Who cares when its aim is to plees?

*Occasion is the reference not the word 'it' for those nit pickers of the world who delight in their deluded intellectual superiority.

[Chapter 2: Birth](#)

Starting at the beginning of the list is that event which few of us remember before the age of 3, 4 or more. Anything prior to that has to be purely conjectural and generally scatological. It is always nice to use the person's first name in a birthday greeting but so many come too close to those, impossible words orange, purple, silver, wolf, opus etc. for rhyming purposes.

It started out when a small sperm
And ovum created a worm,
And then it did grow,
Though ever so slow,
Which finally came to full term.

For a couple who lead a very religious life when a new member joined their family:

Hello to the new baby boy,
A wee bouncing bundle of joy,
Seth Michael will grow,
And surely we know,
The word of our Lord will employ.

Gemma Rose Landay born in Seoul Korea.

We welcome you miss Gemma Rose,
Of course every one of us knows,
A cutie is she,
From over the sea,
With bright eyes and pert little nose.

A belated response to John Craig in a letter commenting about Alan Paton's remarks on Reinhold Niebuhr his favorite theologian.

There was a young preacher named John,
Whose sermons would go on and on,
And when he reached eighty,
They stayed just as weighty,
How could they be sine qua non?

Diane Miller's fortieth birthday.

The big day has come for Diane,
A party is part of the plan,

For when you reach forty,
It's time to be sporty,
And not sit around a dead pan.

Bruce Steeles' fortieth birthday party. A belated verse to which a lead in line was added,

For your day whenever it was...
There once was a fellow named Bruce,
Who always was full of the juice,
But when he reached forty,
And then became snorty*,
We suffered from all his abuce.

*irritable, peevish, captious

For Don Burns a rather weak attempt.
There once was a man named Don B,
Who said that, "I really don C,
Why at age one and for T,
You still can't be spor T,
And dress up just like a dan D."

There once was a fellow named Jake,
Who thought he would bake a nice cake,
But he made such a mess,
That he said, "Well I guess,

It wasn't the right thing to make."

Try a small piece anyway

Whoever thought bon vivant Hank Miller would become a father on purpose.

Who's this to be called miss JoLynn?

I think that it verges on synn,

To know in advance,

If it's bloomers or pance,

And Orwell is going to wynn.

Hand and Diane's baby whose sex was determined by amniocentesis and ultra sound scan in the womb.

JoLynn Miller's first birthday.

Let's heare it for JoLynn's first yeare*,

She's brought you a wee bit of cheare,

And this cute little mouse,

Now comes first in this house,

And I'm sure that is perfectly cleare.

Note: I think the use of the use of the Elizbethan (?) form of spelling, in this case, is appropriate.

Written after the dinner party which had a cake with a question mark candle at Don and Joanne's for Constance Teather from Coventry, England.

A whoop and a Hey Nonie Nonnie,
Another great year, Auntie Connie,
For your special day,
We all want to say,
That you do remain plentie bonnie!

A long term tradition for my friend Betty Graliker was a meal of beef Stroganov. prepared by the 'girls', I became one of the invited and since she is a candle lover, that became a traditional gift from me.

I show up with the candle but no card

There once was a fellow from Crieff,
Who shouted out loudly with grieff,
The present I brought,
A card I have naught,
I'll lay all the blame on a thieff.

The front of the card for one of the older generation had a banner with candles in the background:
'BLOW HARD!'

Each year rolls around much too fast,
One thinks that perhaps they won't last,
At seventy-five,
You've still got the jive
So fill up your lungs for a blast...
Make it Really Hard!

The caption: A Light Happy Birthday. The graphic a candle stick.

No candle was found for this year,
Although I did look far and near,
It was so hard to see,
From so much potpourri,
My vision was lost in a blear.

These birthdays that come in December,
Are often so hard to remember,
In all of the rush,
One's mind turns to mush,
Y'all know that one may disremember.

There once was a lady named Betty,
Who went to the old Serengeti,
The animals there,
Did give her a scare,
And caused her to act a bit fretty.

There once was a girl from Kentucky,
Who said, 'Oh, I am so lucky,
I'm invited to dine,
And plied with good wine,
Perhaps that's what comes when you're plucky.'

Twenty-

Thirty-

Forty-

Fifty-

Nthty

Those birthdays that all end in -nine,

That some folks do like to opine,

With all said and done,

No matter which one,

So long as you're feeling just fine.

HAVE ANOTHER -NINE!

Again I have missed on your card,

For me that is not very hard,

To have a nice day,

Is what it would say,

Pretend it was writ by the bard.

Aha, it's your birthday again,

I thought I would buy a fat hen,

But unlike a candle,

They're too hard to handle,

And have to be kept in a pen.

So many have been esoteric.

But never to shock any cleric,
It may be quite strange,
To make a small change,
For this year they'll just be generic.

The New Printshop® was used for the next two, a gift had been ordered and did not arrive on time.

Like any good young blooded boy,
I just have to try my new toy,
I may make mistakes,
But those are the breaks,
When new things you try to employ.

The PRODIGY failed to deliver the gift on time so the following was added..

I thought that your gift would arrive,
At least by a quarter to five,
But right here I stand,
With naught in my hand,
And not an excuse to contrive.

Greeting Card

Card Description: The present included a miniature candle.

Card Front: The home made card this year had a full sized clip art cake and titled

This Year The Whole Cake

Card Inside:

A birthday this time of the year,
May short change on gifts I do fear.
Though on the down side,
So close to Yuletide,
Still adds to the Holiday cheer,

A man who admits he is fifty,
They'll say that he really is nifty,
But just let a dame,
Admit to the same,
They'll say that she's being too thrifty.

Joanne Burns' Art birthday card (Blue Clouds). The card had the following pre printed greeting: 'To my fashionable friend Happy Birthday'. *

A compilation of limericks written over the past 60 years or so about incidents that have occurred in the authors life experience. Most are for specific occasions with a few naughty bits since there are so many of those by others.

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