

THE EUROPEAN CITY SONG

Every heiress goes to Paris  
Fancy Frenchy Fashion Eden!  
I declare the air in Stockholm  
Is the sweetest scent in Sweden.  
Take a picture in Pamplona  
Of the running of the bulls.  
And in Glasgow, thank the Scottish  
For the whimsically oddish  
Highland kilts in tartan wools.

Get together in the Nether-  
Lands beside the Amster Dam!  
If you'd like to bike to Zurich,  
Stop for lunch Swiss cheese and ham.  
Oh, the Finns are fine in Helsinki.  
And you will have some fun  
Scandinavigating Norway  
Visit Oslo, door by doorway,  
And don't miss the midnight sun.

Then be open to a Copen-  
hagen Danish walkabout.  
Meet your relatives in Brussels,  
Kiss their little Brussels sprout.  
European cities offer  
You the perfect picture show  
That will tantalize and tickle,  
But it puts you in a pickle  
Just deciding where to go!

J. PATRICK LEWIS

HOW TARZAN BECAME AN AUTODIDACT  
AND IMPROVED EACH SHINING HOUR

To cut his teeth: The Monkey's Paw.  
The Jungle Books, his grist.  
Lianas parted where he conned  
Gorillas in the Mist.

A branch library offered him  
Decline and Fall by Gibbon.  
He gobbled books: Out on a Limb,  
With Leaves of Grass to live on.

How did he find time to explore  
Darwin and social science?  
He aped speed-readers, omnivore,  
And skipped between the lions.

VICTOR HOWES

LOCKED PROBLEM

In the desk drawer  
I found but these:  
Keys without locks  
And locks without keys.

What is it makes  
The heart to freeze  
About keys without locks  
And locks without keys?

Never a night  
Without a morn,  
Seldom a rose  
Without a thorn,

Never a peach  
Without a stone,  
Seldom a lecture  
Without a yawn,

But plenty of rocks  
Without any trees,  
And lots of locks  
Without any keys,

And many a foxhole  
Without a fox,  
And scads of keys  
Without any locks.

Now go ask the prince  
And go ask the page,  
Go ask the fool  
And go ask the sage,

Go ask the wicked,  
Go ask the good,  
The scholar, the preacher,  
The witch in the wood,

The Man in the Moon  
And the wind in the trees:  
What is the reason  
And purpose of these  
Keys without locks  
And locks without keys?

ESTHER CAMERON

THE SUBJECT OF A LIMERICK

There once was a gerund named Angling  
Whose bed action needed untangling.  
Far worse than the predicate  
Surrounding his etiquette  
Was the sight of his participle dangling.

JILL WILLIAMS

from Light: A Quarterly of Light Verse (Editor: John Mella) — Winter 2000 issue

NEW YORK COUNTING RHYME

Each face you see  
has a brain behind it  
That's hard to bear  
in mind on a street  
as busy as this

Each mouth has once  
received a kiss  
if only Mom's  
Each gut was given  
its sufficiency

Each hand has felt  
the otherness of  
a larger hand  
it learned to love

Each set of toes  
within its shoe  
did service as  
an abacus  
and taught a tot  
to count to five

This is a church  
and this its steeple  
and here's at least  
ten million people

TOM DISCH

BROADWAY JOE

A guest will arrive  
more dead than alive,  
but our correspondent just has to know,  
“How much snow?”

He interviews incoming guests,  
then circulates among the rest:  
“Did you hear? Forty-eight inches of snow!  
Drifts higher than Tiffany's window!

“New York is paralyzed!”  
And then, days later, as if by the gods devised:  
“Do you believe in New York  
it's sixty degrees? People are swimming to work!”

It can be a perfectly palmy afternoon,  
but with guests leaving, Joe commiserates. “I'll soon  
be shoveling snow myself,”  
he says sadly, grinning like an elf.

At the beach,  
where he swims in water only up to the reach  
of his neck, I see Joe wears the tropics about the way  
he sports his hair-do, a toupee.

RICHARD DEY

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