Lyrics, Skits, Stories, Poems, Worthless Musings


25 March 2015

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1 Lyrics

1.1 For and About Guitar Ensemble

INTRODUCTION (2010):

In my trademark literal-minded style, these lyrics are meant to conform exactly to the rhythms of voices (guitar parts) in two works. I probably did not achieve exactly that.

First, John Wiesenthal of Rochester’s Hochstein School of Music and Dance (50 Plymouth Ave. North, Rochester NY 14614) has written and arranged, and is continuing to write and arrange, fun pieces for guitar ensemble. Chaparral is an original trio, and sounds like a rather harmonically-adventurous theme for a western TV series or movie. If you like equinacious prose, check out the Carulli Romance Programs #7 (Section 2.2).

Second, Bugs Bower’s Bop Duets, treble clef edition, is still in print (Charles Colin Publisher, 23 Gregg Court, Tappan NY 10983), and the complete set is available in one volume from several vendors on the web as well as the publisher. This lyric is for part 1 of No. 12. The ensemble’s fine guitarist and occasional girl vocal lent her vocal stylings to this number on a handful of gigs.

Ama Gochoa is a pretty well-known or at least familiar-sounding lugubrious Basque folk tune, hence Basque-themed lyrics.
SCRUB OAK SCALENE

Chaparral
Irreg.


Girl Vocal Solo (Top Line):
I love that cowboy! Love his jeans, love his boots.
How he plays his guitar, how he rides... and shoots!
I’m young and lusty, rancher’s daughter, rich of course –
How can he just ignore me? It couldn’t... be that horse!?
(Last time only) No!

(Cow) Boy Vocal Solo (Middle Line):
Blonde mane, golden shine – love that pal-o-mine oh,
Soft nose, five gaits, we’re hot to trot when we go out on dates.
We’ll get a grub stake, we’ll buy a spread.
Someday those laws will change and... we’ll be wed!
(Last time only) Whoa!

Horse Vocal Solo (Bass Line):
Love it when he’ll fork my oats for supper, and cinch my crupper, curry my hocks, and
When he pats me and calls me ’Brown Eyes’, I’m thrilled right down to my four fetlocks.
Still doubt slithers along my withers since he’s poor, dips snuff, and wears spurs.
But that ranch girl, she makes my hooves curl, I’d just love to be hers.
(Last time only) Oh!
Verses 1-3 in order, then (last time) tutti, with Big Finish.
GOOD FRIENDS
Bop Duet Number 12
Irreg.

Christopher Brown, 2009

Bugs Bower *Bop Duets*, 1980

Violets are showing,
Tulips are growing,
Sunday sun’s shining,
But still my heart is pining,

’Cause your flirting-is-so teasy,
Manner’s so breezy,
It all makes me queasy:
We’re GOOD FRIENDS – I could die!

The crocus poking,
Flame tree a-smoking,
Will you wake up, you son-of-a
Be a little interested!

How-can-I make you see
You mean so much to me?
It’s not enough to be
Your GOOD FRIEND.

Every bunny, butterfly, Bambi;
Every bluebird, bumblebee
Buzzing by the brook,
Thinks it’s funny you’re so namby-pamby
That you never even give me a look (you big schnook).

Now the Tem-per-a ture’s falling,
Wild geese are calling,
Back I keep crawling,
But here we are just where we were so
Why-can’t-I just face it?
Love won’t replace it
Guess I’ll embrace it –
We’re GOOD FRIENDS.
My dog ran out into the road,
And then ran out of luck.
He was rear-ended by a Ford,
Then flattened by a truck.

My brother was a separatist,
And so he made a bomb.
When it went off, it separate-
Ed him — from me and mom.

My girlfriend, AMA GOCHOA,
(well, now she is my ex-),
Said: “Honey, if that’s what you are,
You’ll need a boy for tacit”.
1.2 Departmental Farewells and Celebrations

1.2.1 Jill Orioli Forster Retires 2003

[Songs for Jill at her Retirement Reception from Departmental Adminstrator (after 29 years at the University, some 27 of them with the deparment). The whole affair was webcast with streaming video and sound. We had a couple or 3 guitars, a keyboard or music minus one type CDs for backup.]

TICKET TO RIDE
(John Lennon, Paul McCartney)
Lead Vocal: Dana Ballard

MAGICALLY
(sung to the Beatles ”Let it Be”)
new lyrics by Randal Nelson

When I find myself with budget troubles,
Jill’s the one I go to see.
Speaking words of wisdom,
Magically.
And in my hours of darkness,
all my problems are resolved for me
By her words of wisdom,
Magically.

Chorus:
Magically, magically,
magically, magically.
By her words of wisdom,
Magically.

When DARPA cuts the budget,
and removes my summer salary.
There will be an answer,
Magically.
When student lines are slashed,
And ONR and I part company.
Always there’s an answer,
Magically.

Chorus (see above)
And when the tangled web of fiscal policy confuses me.
There’s an explanation, Magically.
And labyrinthine paperwork entombed in files I never see.
All is taken care of, Magically.
Chorus: (see above)

SECSTAFF LAMENT
(to the tune of “Charlie and the M.T.A.” By the Kingston Trio)
Words by Peggy Meeker

[Peggy started as a student worker about a year after I got here...]

Chorus:
Oh will she ever return, no she’ll never return,
her retirement she has earned;
she wants to stay forever in that sunny weather,
our Jill will never return.

Oh let me tell you the story of a woman named Jill
and of a tragic and fateful day
when she decided to retire never thinking of us,
just sent some emails and walked away.

Chorus

Now all day long Jill’s staff is mournful, crying
”What will become of us?
How will we determine where to go for lunch
or when to work, if work we must?!”

chorus

People all across campus used to call Jill’s office
for her answers to their questions were true.
And now we have to tell them ”Please give us a minute;
really we should be calling you!”
chorus

Now ye citizens of CS don’t you think it’s a scandal
how Eileen will have to pay and pay.
We will all try to help her but it’s hard, hard slugging
now that Jill has gone away!

Chorus:

UNCHAINED MELODY
(The Righteous Brothers)
lyrics, vocals by Brandon Sanders

[Sanders is a grad. student. Very nice soulful job here... These lyrics are
great but delivery added a lot!]

Chorus:
Oh, my Jill
My savior
I've bungled - need your help
Again one more time
'Cause I seem to learn so slowly
And I have ruined so much
Are you still here?
I need your help
I need your help
God speed your help to me

Lonely coffee dries in the pot, in the pot
Wow, that pot is hot-ter than I thought,
Lonely coffee dries in the pot, it’s so hot,
Soon there will be no more pot

Chorus

Lonely copies stick to the drum, quite like gum
transparencies show that I’m dumb, ohh dumb
All alone I gaze at the mess, what a mess
Maybe I can blame it on a guest.
Chorus

WHEN I WAS A GIRL
(to the tune of ”When I was a lad”, from HMS Pinafore)
lyrics and vocal: Chris Brown
with the CS Dept Tutti Chorus

When I was a girl I knew I'd be
In the helping professions of society
The criminally crazy or the terminally ill,
Or the addled academics, all could use my skill.

Chorus:
Yes those addled academics sure could use her skill.

For propping up professors so reliably,
I’ve now achieved the status of a retiree.

Chorus:
For propping up professors so reliably
She’s now achieved the status of a retiree.

My shorthand and Selectric speeds were both so high
I was hired by Jerry Feldman as a Sec. I I
You students weren’t born but I was here just the same
Back before the Hylan Building even had a name.

Chorus:
Back before the Hylan Building even had a name.

Before Gleason, Schlegel, Park Lot or the WC
I was there with the Department in the MST.

Chorus:
Before Gleason, Schlegel, Park Lot or the WC
She was there with the Department in the MST.

As a Sec I I, I was vastly underpaid
So a Sec I V I was quickly made.
I brewed the coffee and arranged the trips
And with ORPA, payroll, INS I came to grips.

Chorus:
And with ORPA, payroll, INS she came to grips.

I funged DARPA dollars so creatively
That my little office got the name of "Jill’s Laundry".

Chorus:
She funged DARPA dollars so creatively
That her little office got the name of "Jill’s Laundry".

My secretary days were a thing of the past
When they gave me the post of an Admin. Asst.
I got a computer and I sent email,
And my Excel-lent accounting kept us out of jail.

Chorus:
Yes, her Excel-lent accounting kept us out of jail.

My spreadsheets earned Paprocki’s plaudits
And we dodged all the bullets of the federal audits.

Chorus:
Her spreadsheets earned Paprocki’s plaudits
And we dodged all the bullets of the federal audits.

The budgets got bad and the forms got badder,
But Admin. Asst’s not the top of the ladder,
While chairmen came and chairmen went,
As Administrator I said how their bucks got spent.

Chorus:
As Administrator she said how their bucks got spent.

I steered the ship with a hand so true
And was mother and a yenta and a dishmaid too.

Chorus:
She steered the ship with a hand so true
And was mother and a yenta and a dishmaid too.

Now staffers all, wherever you may be,
If you want to survive and escape like me,
Though the profs, deans, and students are a royal pain,
Just be careful to be guided by my own refrain:

Chorus:
Just be careful to be guided by her own refrain:

“Keep a sense of humor and work selflessly,
And you’ll all achieve the status of a retiree.”

Chorus:
"Keep a sense of humor and work selflessly,
And you’ll all achieve the status of a retiree.”

1.2.2 Eileen Pullara 40 year award 2011

FIREDRILL
(Featuring the ’Leen-tones, CB vocal, Randal Nelson on guitar, tune of “Drill ye tarriers.”)

Every morning at the break of day, When the Staff fade in and the students fade away, She Sits at her desk and tries to begin, shouts: “George, this bugger’s not booting a-gain!”

Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill. It’s the Abacus, then, or beg for delay, and This stuff’s due on Friday.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
(It’s bust-ed still.)

Henry says: “I’ve hired three profs, They need Salaries and offices and labs and summer-offs. As for Space and budget, my plan won’t fail: Take Half the broom closet, and hold a bake sale.”
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill. Thank
Cthulhu, black magic works OK, cause it
Seems it’s due on Thursday.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
(Where there's – a will...)

Now it’s Ovide in your face,
Snooping round, looking for to steal our space, and
What you gotta do to foil this grab, is
Herd three dozen students to the Software Lab.

Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill. And
Then you’ve gotta make ’em stay, and it
All must happen Wednesday.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
(“now just – sit still!”)

James bounces in on June two two, he
Says: “Have I got news for you!
My Darpa deal has just got done, so
Please spend three million five by July one.”

Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Use it or lose it is what they say, so it
Must be done by Tuesday.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
(The urge – to kill.)

ORPA’s even more clueless than we, on the
Latest thing from ’MURI-NASA-DOE, “It’s
Just a little matter of getting straight”
This four-point, forty-page, boilerplate.

Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill. We
Must re- ’spond to this ’BAA, and we
Must re- ’spond by Monday.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
(Who writes – this swill?)

“But Eileen, she’s smart, she’s here full-time, she’s
got great letters – and we don’t pay a dime!” “C.
B, in it just put a sock – there’s
no such thing as a free post-doc!”

Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill. You must
stop this madness or there’s hell to pay, so it
must be done today!
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
(with no – ill will.)

Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill. The
auditors are here and they’re not here to play. This
had to happen someday.
Firedrill, Eileen, Firedrill.
(We need – your skill!)

1.2.3 Dana Ballard Moves to U Texas 2008

The Ballard of Dana Ballad

(Tune “The Ballad of Davy Crockett”).

By Anonymous staff member
Anonymous faculty committee\(^1\)
Chris Brown \(^2\)

Born in Nassau in the Caribee,
as a kid he taught the adults how to water-ski;
but life was too boring and too shark-free,
so he greased up his sliderule and applied to MIT.

\(^1\)But, for the record: Michael Scott (nouns); Sandhya Dwarkadas (adjectives); Len Schubert (verbs, participles, and that highly inventive and apposite gerund); Lane Hemaspaandra (fact checking).
\(^2\)The boring bits.
Dana, Dana Ballard:
Not just another nerd.

He aced all his courses there without half trine,
The frat was cultured, the cuisine refined,
But life was so boring, he was soon on the line
To Professor Jack Sklansky at UC Irvine.

Dana, Dana Ballard:
Computer vision pioneer.

“The detection of nodular tumors in chest radiographs” was an epic science pome,
And Dr. Ballard’s thesis was a monumental tome,
But life was too boring and too much like home,
So he packed up his wife and kids and flew away to Rome.

Dana, Dana Ballard:
His program was dynamic, too.

O Bella Napoli, long on siestas, short on strife–
But ex-patriotic living was not easy on the wife.
And things were getting boring, and jobs at home were rife
So they started looking round for where to start a new life.

Dana, Dana Ballard:
Arivederci! “Go west, young man!”.

Now Jerry was a bright young guy that Stanford fired.
Yes, he’s the same Feldman that Old Bob Sproull hired.
Dana’s life was boring, and of pasta he was tired,
And Jerry captured Dana with the vision he inspired.

Dana, Dana Ballard:
Implausible biology...

Books, best papers, neural nets all spread his name –
The Hough Transform and Active Vision fueled his fame,
But life was too boring and too much the same
So (after squash and go), brain science now became his game.

Dana, Dana Ballard:
High Q, High IQ, Low kyu.

The admin staff went crazy ’cause he never was there,
Students, post docs, colleagues, we were pulling out our hair
Proposals to be signed and grades to turn in
Dana’s disappeared — to play racquetball at the gym.

Dana, Dana Ballard:
Where IS that S.O.B.?

He’s a SLANDEROUS 3, PROFANE, BLEEP, EXPLETIVE-DELETED
And his SCURILLOUS, DEFAMATORY, LIBELLOUS-IF-REPEATED
That (YOU’D NEVER REALLY *SAY* THIS, WOULD YOU?) NON-PC
BLANKer
is an ACTIONABLE, SMUT, OBSCENE, INDECENT, bloody wanker.

Dana CENSORED Ballard:
Couldn’t happen to a nicer state!

When CS and VR met with Psychology
They synthesized and bloomed almost romantically,
But life’s too boring in our fair Flour City,
So Dana’s off to Austin: (Texans say: “tough tiddy!”).

Dana, Dana Ballard:
He’s got his own building now.

Soon he’ll be a Longhorn at good ol’ UT,
With a pickup and a seven-figure salary,
But it’s never boring sailing on the blue Exuma sea,

---

3This is now the only public version. Redactions and legal opinions by the Office of the University Counsel appear in upper case, in place of some original text by the anonymous faculty committee. Our apologies to all for this glitch. (The original may be available from a member of the committee.)
It’ll call him back to where he started in the Caribee.

Dana, Dana Ballard:  
His Hobie’s his hobby now.

### 1.3 Graduation Ceremonies

#### 1.3.1 Graduation 2010

DREAMAWAY, or The Students Sleep, All Right.  
CB and the Tokenizers  
(tune of “The lion sleeps tonight” by the Tokens).  
A-Dreamaway...  
Wake up Now! Dreamaway..

In the lab, in the sixth-floor major’s lab  
No one sleeps tonight—  
There’s a project, an AI project, due  
Just before midnight, hep hep  
Wake up Now! Dreamaway,...  
Wake up Now! Dreamaway,...  
Shared, distributed, L2 cacheing  
Maps multicore read and write and –  
These job schedulers, with preemption, are  
Due before first light, hep hep  
Dreamaway, ...  
Wake up Now! Dreamaway, ...  
[inst. break] ..Is that pretty, or what? bum, bum....  
P, NP, #P, RP, co-NP,  
NP-hard, NC, NSPACE,  
AM, L, PH, PP, ZPP,  
NTIME, DTIME, and DSPACE... (...Classy, but complex...)  
Wake up Now! Dreamaway, ...

In the classroom, the cozy classroom,  
The students sleep, all right!  
No taps of texting, no Farmville themesongs,  
The students all sleep tight. Shhhhh...  
Dreamaway!
1.3.2 Graduation 2011

From 2011 – 2013 the Algo-Rhythms (Marty Guenther, Ted Pawlicki, Randal Nelson, CB) performed original lyrics to well-known tunes at graduation ceremonies. CB’s offerings usually lost out to lyrics by the others. There may be more (even movies) on the URCS website.

Here’s my bid for the CS anthem and fight song, with chords. “Hello, hello, we are the Billy Boys” was sung in bars and on the street by a Glaswegian “razor gang” (yikes) in the 1930s, and became the signature fan song of the Glasgow Rangers football club. Recently it was banned by the Scottish government for inciting sectarian violence (it takes one side of the other of the catholic-protestant antagonism better known amongst the Irish). Turns out the tune is simply “Marching through Georgia”, which you may remember from summer camp if you went to the right sort of camp. At my camp the lyrics went “Hurray, they’re shooting father.”

The CS Crowd

Intro:
| G C | G | D | G |
-------
Verse:
| G | C |
From al-Khwarizmi’s roots we spring
| Am | D (C B A) |
A dozen centuries past,
| Bm Bm7 | Em Em7 |
Through Boole, Von Neumann, and Turing,
| Am Am7 | D |
And still we’re coming fast.
| C A | G C G |
We’ve changed the world a million ways,
| Am Am7 | D A D7 |
We’re young, we’re strong, we’re proud--
| G | C G |
All disciplines now sing our praise,
| G D | G | C A D D7 | G |
Cause we’re the CS crowd: We are the CS crowd!

Chorus 1
| G | C | G |
Hello! Hello! We are the CS crowd.
| G       | Am D (C B A) |
Hello! Hello! you’ll know us cause we’re loud.
| G G C C | G |
Ever better’s what we got til we got to be the best,
| C Am7 D D7 | G |
Cause we are the UR CS crowd.

Chorus 2

Intro Interlude:
| G C | G | D | G |
Verse:
| G | C |
You physicists, you engineers,
[ That’s the official lyric. Soloist should sing:
You parasitic bankers, you engineering wankers,]
| Am | D (C B A) |
You governmental powers,
| Bm Bm7 | Em Em7 |
We’re lords of all your dreams and fears,
| Am Am7 | D |
You know your ass is ours.
| C A | G C G |
We’re everywhere, we’re always there,
| Am Am7 | D A D7 |
Empowered, well-endowed--
| G | C G |
Without us you would be nowhere,
| G D | G | C A D D7 | G |
Cause we’re the CS crowd: We are the CS crowd!

2xChorus and repeat last line.

1.3.3 Graduation 2012

Nothing from me, but here’s another R. Nelson lyric:
CHANGING TIMES
Apologies to Bob Dylan

Come gather round people wherever you roam,
And admit that the networks about you have grown.
And accept it that soon you’ll do business by clone.
If your face to you is worth saving,
Then you better use Skype or you’ll never be known.
For the times they are a-changing!

Come bosses and businessmen please heed the call,
Don’t ask for my password, don’t write on my wall.
Don’t stalk my friends, do not think you can crawl,
Through my posts in a Spyder invasion.
And know those who creep highest have farthest to fall.
For the times they are a-changing!

Come bloggers and twitterers, freed from your pens,
Keep your batteries charged, lest you miss the next Gen’.
But don’t text so fast you attach the wrong PIN,
And have to confess to the nation,
You’re a flame-happy troll who goes surfing for skin.
For the times they are a changing!

Come governors, judges, throughout the land,
Don’t let RIAA have our tablets all scanned.
The tunes that are ours are not yours to demand.
Your old songs’ echos are fading.
Our music is freedom and cannot be banned.
For the times they are a-changing!

Connection established, a query is cast.
A viral from UTube is downloading fast.
Don’t throttle the flow, don’t make life second class,
To Spam-Ads from big corporations.
Let the false god of profits be bits of the past.
For the times they are a changing!
1.3.4  Graduation 2013

Again nothing from me, this got rejected or auto-ejected.

To the tune of “The Genesee”

Our Infectuous Staff

Our program has a good repute,
So says the CRA:
Thanks to all those whom none dispute,
Take care of business every day.
They pamper visitors, run big picnics,
Follow rules from Hajim School,
They’re on to all the student’s tricks,
And stay composed and cool.

From Jill, Peg, Rose, Suzanne, and Tim
Michelle, Liud, Peggy, also Ray,
To Marty, JoM’rie, Craig, Dave, Jim
Melissa, Elaine and Pat today.
They run our labs, do visas, lunch,
With guts and smiles that never fail –
Do budgets, bring the speaker’s brunch
And keep us out of jail.

So as we roll on, gathering force
Along our steadfast way
We know it’s staff who clear our course
Despite all, day by day.
Long may our reputation grow,
But it would be less by half,
Without the ones who we all owe–
Our stupendous, stellar staff.

1.3.5  Graduation 2014

This won’t be performed due to scheduling conflicts with the band.

MARTY TRIED  (5.0 in C)
(Performed by Merle Haggard)
Chris Brown (Lyrics)
Intro (4 m)

16ths

V V V V V accents
CCGC CGCC FCCE CCEC  Clickity Clack: Randal -- continues thru intro

on 3rd time thru C-C:
quartets, gliss, bend
E----Bb  E----Bb (1st str 12-6, 3rd str 9-3)
onesome Whistle  -- Ted
eighth and 3 1/2 beats of C:
C C------------ Deep Chord of Doom  --Ted, CB

s Verse

C          F          C          F
As World's Smartest Kid Today, in my own mind anyway,
C          G          G7
I ignored their boring math and histories,
C          F          C          F
I despised the teacher's pet, got my answers off the net,
C          G7          C
Only studied gamer's blogs and MP3s.

Chorus

C          G          F          C
I turned sixteen with my X-Box, found some courses I could pass,
Am C          E          G          G7
I crushed all Warcraft foes from near and far, near and far,
C          F          C
Thought I'd take my talent to some place that needs a touch of class,
C          G          G7          C
And that's how I wound up at U. of R.

V

C          F          C          F
That nice young Professor Ted tried to get into my head
C          F          G          G7
Those trees, graphs, sets, sorts, hashing, and big Oh.
C          F          C          F
While my labmate broke his head, I was texting girls instead
C          G7          C
Of learning what I saw no need to know.

V

C       F       C       F
Kindly old Professor Brown cheered me up when I was down,
C       G       G7
As I blew off Prolog, Matlab, Scheme, and C.
C       F       C       F
And he never thought of shaming me for spending all night gaming,
C       G7       C
He just smiled, said: 'No hard feelings, here's your E.'

Ch

C       G       F       C
So I turned nineteen knowing nothing, with my life out of control,
Am       C       E       G       G7
No one could steer me right but Marty tried, Marty tried,
C       F       C
Marty warned me of the future and dissected my sad past,
C       G       G7       C
So there's only me to blame cause Marty tried.

V

C       F       C       F
Distracted, dazed and bleary, I flamed out in Systems, Theory,
C       G       G7
Independent study, even HCI.
C       F       C       F
Psyche and English turned me down, Anthro said 'Get out of town!'
C       G7       C
U of R was giving up, still Marty tried.

Ch

C       G       F       C
So I turned twenty-one in Hylan Lab this morning just past five
Am       C       E       G       G7
No song, no cake, nobody by my side, by my side,
C       F       C
My whole class has gone to Google while my BA was denied ---
But I may get out next year cause Marty tried.
I may graduate next year cause Marty tried-- .

(Rallentando Molto Religioso)

*Last F C G7 C cadence:
Voice chords to emphasize the notes F E D E in top.
Or, can be played over a C bass, considering the F E D E as melody.

1.4 Random

1.4.1 Balkan Brothers

BALKAN BROTHERS (Stand Together)

This song is submitted as the Official Olympic Anthem, the new National
Anthem for the Serbian Entity within Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, the Entity
that is known as Macedonia, etc. Also the euro-song contest, and it might be
a crash best-seller in the pop charts as a patriotic crossover number

Verses tune sounds a bit like a stirring and spirited version of Will The
Circle Be Unbroken. Actually, it is closer to My Rose of Old Kentucky by
Bill Monroe. The refrain resembles Union Miners (Stand Together).

(Refrain) – Men’s Glee Club

BALKAN BROTHERS stand together
In a peaceful harmony,
Serb and Croat, friends forever
In a land so fair and free.

(Verse – Women’s Choir SINGS)

Catholic sisters, Muslim mothers,
Making babies, kneading dough —
(Men in humorous aside: “Yes, they need dough!”)
While their fathers, sons and brothers,
Tend the fields with scythe and hoe.

(Refrain, Men and Women)
(Verse – Children’s Chorus)
Balkan babies, Serb and Croat,
As their families watch with pride
Pick up flowers, not stones to throw at
Children on the other side.

(Refrain, Tutti! Men, Women, Children)
Serb policemen help Albanians
Cleanse the towns of Kosovo
Transylvanians and Montenegrans
Welcome those who want to go.

[Alt. Refrain]
BALKAN BROTHERS hide together,
Shelt’ring from those NATO bombs,
While Macedonians and Hertz’govenians
Feed their children, wives and moms.

BALKAN BROTHERS, now consumers,
All have money in the bank.
Say “MacDonald’s”, shop at Walmart,
Drive a sportes-ute, not a tank.

(Refrain, Everybody JOIN HANDS and SING!)

1.4.2 An Ode to Freshman Move-in Day
(To tune of Ta-ra-ra boom-de-ay.)

So you stand in a long line for a new ID
and then they tell you they’re out of Superegos

It’s Freshman Load-In Day,
May want to stay away:
They’ve made your parking spot
Some distant weedy lot.

But who knows, you may meet,
Fresh, fair, with aspect sweet,
A single mom in tears
And kiss away her fears.
1.4.3 A Morning Shock

To the tune of The Water’s Wide (Seeger, Peter Paul and Mary, Bob Dylan, the Highwaymen, the Seekers, Joan Baez, etc...)

On Encountering a Toilet Bleach Tablet

The water’s blue,
I’m scared to piss;

I never knew
A lav like this.

Can’t violate
This azure pool....

Just have to wait
’Til I’m at school.

1.4.4 Composting

To the tune of Gaudeamus Igitur.

On Committing Compost

You are headed for the bin –
Please don’t cringe when you go in.
You’ll be making food for plants,
You’ll be making nests for ants.

You’ll go back to Mother Earth:
You’ll rejoin your place of birth.
That sure beats Dispos-all’s maw,
Whence you’d mix with sewage raw.

Doesn’t that feel better now?
You could have been inside a cow.
And in Spring beneath the sun,
You will say: “My life’s begun!”.
1.4.5 Jingle

On Looking South-East from Plum House:
To the tune “Pepsi-Cola Hits the Spot” (1930):

The Ineluctable Imperfection of Worldly Holiness

Blessed Sac’s the church for me,
B. L. E. S. S. E. D.,
S. A. C. R. A. M. E. -
N. T., C. H. U. R. C. !

...H.

2 Stories not quite set to music

2.1 Program: Saint Amelie’s Trial

Miguel Llobet’s *The Testament of Amelia* sounded programmatic to me, so (channelling Borges) I plagiarized some classic scholarship.

By: Jorge de-la-Calleja-Mora

On this dank, drizzly day, the Cathedral is gloomy. Amelie, in a clear steady voice, answers the charges and professes her innocence and faith to those assembled. She pauses, and it seems the wind catches the church’s bells, which softly repeat her testament. The peons and burghers look up, then at each other. The Church officials look steadfastly down.

Again she speaks in calm, assured phrases; a single sunbeam breaks through the clouds and falls on her through the Great Window. It casts the image of the Madonna on Amelie and bathes her rough prison dress with the blue radiance of the Virgin’s gown. Again she falls silent, and now the audience, both the awestruck and the ashamed, all must hear it — a seraphic choir is echoing her words.

The implacable Inquisitor, however, is unimpressed. Sarcastically, he repeats her last words to himself as his quill scribbles the order for her execution.

The church bells toll a single death knell.

---

2.2 Program Notes: Inspired by Carulli Romances

The guitar ensemble worked on a nice set of short pieces by Carulli.

Programs I form a little cycle, and are actually meant to reflect what I hear in the tunes: they are much more of a stretch than the Llobet, however. Programs II and III have nothing to do with the music and were only based on the titles. More shameless plagiarism from “I haven’t seen Mama in years”, a fine old bluegrass number.

Ferdinando Maria Meinrado Francesco Pascale Rosario Carulli (1770 ? 1841).

Notes to Carulli’s Opus 333-II:

“Many of the pieces now regarded as Carulli’s greatest were initially turned down by the publishers as being too hard for the average player, and it is likely that many masterpieces were lost this way. Undeterred, Carulli started publishing his pieces himself. However, the great majority of Carulli’s surviving works are those that were considered ‘safe’ enough to be accepted by other publishers, mainly for the teaching of certain techniques or for beginners.”

In his Life of Carulli (1873, Impresso Battaglio), G. LaGorgia states: “Upon his death, among his books was found a tattered and worn copy of Szeni-Costa’s Illustrated Romantic Folktales and Songs of Central Europe (ca. 1762, pub. unk.), with childish carrot-jam stains and later, more mature notations in Carulli’s hand.” These tales were among them.

2.2.1 Programs I

1. *Le Nid et la Rose (Das Nest und die Rose)* – The Bird and the Rose:

   A little bird in a nest, too young to fly, is entranced by a rosebud nodding gently in the breeze below. The bird sings to the rose but gets no reply. The next day the baby bird sings as a thunderstorm slowly builds, high on the mountain. Lightning strikes the tree, which falls to earth, crushing the rose. The day is now quiet, and smells faintly of roast chicken.

2. *La Laterne magique (Laterna magica)* – The Picture Show:

   The townspeople are gathering in their best attire for the visiting magic lantern show. The mayor and his wife arrive, as do the madame and some of her girls, looking fantastic. The overture starts; the curtain rises. The show is about a priest who has an innocent friendship with an alter boy and then lives happily ever after.

3. *L’Angelus (Vesperauten)* – The Sexton Rings Vespers:

   The old sexton is ringing the bells for vespers while his young son watches. Taking a sudden thirst, the sexton leaves his son to ring the final round while
he nips across the muddy road for a quick pint. His son calls a merry farewell and continues ringing vespers. A chilly wind from the mountains is finally too much for the ancient, decrepit steeple: it collapses, sending its bells tumbling down on top of the hapless youth.

4. *La mere et l’amant (Mutter und Geliebter)* – The Old Story I:

   The mother walks elegantly into a shop rumored to have have mangelwurzels today. She sees another, a younger, woman, a girl really, wearing the necklace that her husband said he pawned to pay the man who wormed the goat. She confronts the young woman, who laughs defiantly. The mother leaves the store with dignity, but the laughing lover skips down the street behind her chanting “Nyah, nyah, I’m the beloved, you’re the mother. You Old Hag!”

5. *Le petit doigt (Der kleine Finger)* – Sticky Fingers:

   The boy’s finger was always getting into somewhere it shouldn’t: his nostril, his sister’s ear, his mother’s rutabaga tart, his granny’s churn. His mother said: “someday your finger will be stuck where it doesn’t belong. What will you do then?” One day the little finger was carefully placing a big copper dinar on the tracks of the Trans-Transylvanian Transit train when it really did get stuck. Fortunately the train was not running on time. Unfortunately, it was early.

6. *Le petite Mendiante (Die kleine Bettlerin)* – The Beggar-Girl:

   On Christmas eve the blind beggar girl is walking out of the village to visit her cousin, newly moved to a farm nearby. She passes a tavern from which emanates the smell of stale beer and the sound of atonal folksongs badly played on the balalaika. A passing nun gives her a groat. A gentleman on a spavined donkey ignores her. Suddenly she is slipping — she has stepped off the unfamiliar road into a gravel pit. She struggles upward but the gravel slips under her. Again she scrambles up, again she is carried down. They find her in the spring. A rose grows nearby and a little bird is singing.

2.2.2 Programs II

7. *Autant qu’il m’en souvient (Erinnerung)* – Memories:

   I remember Buddy: we used to play chase before breakfast and after the day’s work. I remember plowing that field over there many, many seasons. I remember Moustache, who beat me up occasionally, and his son Red Hat —we used to share stolen wormy apples. I like it under this tree. The flies are a nuisance; if Buddy were here we’d swat them together. I remember seeing out of my left eye: the world was bigger and brighter then. I loved it when we pulled the cart with Moustache and Red Hat into town and we
would visit with Thunder, Robotnic and the others... but that was when Buddy was here.

8. *Je revenais de mon village* (*Ruckkehr aus der Heimat*) — The Old Story II:

My sweet Sonja, The horse carries me once again back to my old home and old mother, but I'll return to you soon. It's her rheumatism, or possibly sciatica, or her anniversary — that always depresses her. You remember last time her dearest great-aunt passed away, and then she had that little fall, and then she went to pieces when the pig died, and then she thought she had dropsy. But I'm sure things will go smoothly this time and that I'll be back before Little Vlad, Marcia, Slobo, Stanko, Petra, and Misha finish school: (if not, you should see if you can go to half-time at the foundry). Your loving husband, Vladimir P.S. Send six dozen of your special beet and turnip cookies by the next oxcart — mum does love them so. I'll be sure she thanks you this time.

9. *L’Inquietude* (*Besorgnis*) — Restless:

The little boy was disturbed: why beat donkeys to haul sacks up the trail when a windmill could lift a heavy weight that could then be slowly dropped to do the pulling? He was preoccupied: with 100 crowns he could loan a little money to scores of desperately poor peons so they could start businesses: they'd be enriched and with his profits he could help more people. By a stream, worried about his rheumatic old mother: he thought of a laundry device using paddles dipping in the stream to turn a barrel, and — but now a squat and warty troll blocked the trail! Winking, it croaked: “Don’t worry, be happy!” The boy’s face smoothed and henceforth he just played dominoes, chased milkmaids, and drank raki. His last words were: “It’s a wonderful life!”.

10. *Le bon pasteur* (*Der gute Hirte*) — The Good Shepherd:

Ratko counted twice: a sheep was definitely missing. He heard a still, small voice within him: “a Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. You must leave these sheep safe in the fold and go rescue yon prodigal ungulate.” Ratko thought: “’prodigal ungulate!? Who is this guy?” Then he reflected: “Brigands have been seen about. Two goats and the tanner’s son-in-law disappeared last week: probably a new sucking bog has sprung up. And wasn’t that sheep looking depressed, even suicidal? Besides, it’s probably insured.” So he simply amused himself with the remaining sheep. When the landowner learned of Ratko’s prudent decision, he gave Ratko a shiny zloty.

11. *Les trois ages du Troubadour* (*Die drei Lebensalter des Troubadours*) — History of the Troubadour:

Troubadors are intinerant, peripatetic and often impecunious musicians. Stone Age troubadors made music by clashing rocks together. They were
quite strong from carrying their instruments up and down muddy tracks, and
the bass players often had flat feet. Early iron age troubadors played the
iron triangle by clashing an iron rod around in it. Later, the triangle was
replaced by squares, dodecagons, and higher-order polygons, culminating in
the circle, whose infinite sides took years of practice to master. String age
troubadors used fingers to stroke balls of twine, which quickly evolved to
vole-gut stretched in straight lines over some framework, as in the koto, oud,
washtub bass, and ukelele.

12. *La Coquette du village (Die Dorfschoene)* – The Village Coquette:
The beautiful village coquette lived with her lazy, conniving stepsisters
and her hardbitten stepmother. Her poor father had died shortly after his
marriage to this formidable woman with short, iron-gray hair and sensible
shoes. The coquette flirted shamelessly, but spurned the suitors who flocked
in from the neighboring creosote mines, turnip fields, and hog farms. For
that matter, she spurned the son of the local squire and of the banker. The
stepmother noticed all this spurning, and the girl noticed her noticing. One
morning they were simply gone from the village. Years later, on her birthday,
the eldest lazy sister got a postcard, apparently from an Aegean island. There
was no message.

2.2.3 Programs III: Alternates or Drafts

*Je revenais de mon village (Ruckkehr aus der Heimat)* I Shall Return to
my Village:

Oh, I shall return to my village –
I shall someday return—
Someday.
When they understand.
Or when they forgive.
Or when they forget what I did,
Did do what they said?
Was it so wrong? I do not know.
Thunder growls in the west.
I shall return to my village
As a ghost.

Title mistranslation: I Return to my Village:

I was coming home. As I approached I saw a gathering and I smelled
the scent of flowers. A family reunion? A wedding? No... wasn’t this the
graveyard? An old man staggered from the crowd, his face distorted with
grief and his eyes blinded by tears. “Hold my hand and lead me away from
here,” he said. “I’ve just brought these flowers for Alma – I haven’t seen
Alma in years.” He poured out a story of young love, an abandoned child, his failure as father and husband, his remorse. “If I could bring her back I would make her so happy, but she’s gone to a place I’ll never see.” I embraced the old man and called his name but his suffering was so great he never recognised me. After all, I hadn’t seen Papa in years.

*La Laterne magique (Laterna magica)* – The Picture Show:

The townspeople are gathering in their best attire for the visiting magic lantern show. The mayor and his wife arrive, as do the madame and some of her girls, looking fantastic. The overture starts; the curtain rises. The show is about a man who must tend to his aging and manipulative mother in another town while trying to keep his wife and children together as a family. At the end there wasn’t a dry sleeve in the house.

3 Combinatorial Dialogs

3.1 Pasta and Probability

Suzanne and CB are having ravioli: there are two arugula-asiago ravioluses, two feta-artichoke, and two shrimp. They all look exactly alike. CB puts ’em in the pot, later Suzanne fishes ’em out, serves out three raviols apiece, and covers ’em with Tops ”Good Enough for Our Customers”(TM) Red Sauce.

CB: (sitting down, eyeing her) ”You In?” SSB: (slapping her lucky 2-dollar bill on the green baize tablecloth) ”Fade that!” (sotto voce) ”Sucker”. CB: (sharp glance at her, peels three unmarked circulated Washingtons off his roll), ”Three bucks to your two says we each have a shrimp.”

Should Suzanne bet with this man?

Say the ravioli are individuals: e.g. the two shrimps are NOT identical (we’ll account for that). Imagine 6 bins, each for a raviolus. Say CB is ’dealt’ the first 3 bins, SSB the second 3.

There are 6! = 720 ways to order six different pasta pillows into the bins. (6 choices for bin 1, then 5 for bin 2, etc.)

There are 6 ways to put 2 shrimp and one non-shrimp into CB’s 3 bins. (3 choices for which bin is non-shrimp, then 2 ways that result from swapping the two shrimps between the 2 remaining bins).

That leaves 4 bins to be filled by non-shrimps, (1 of CB’s bins, all 3 of SSBs bins). They can be distributed anyhow, so all 4*3*2*1 = 4! possibilities count.

So that’s a total of 6*4! ways for CB to get 2 shrimp.
Same for Suzanne.

Thus there are $2 \times 6 \times 4!$ ways one of them gets 2 shrimp, and with 6! total arrangements, the ratio of 2-shrimp cases to all cases is $2 \times 6 \times 4! / 6! = 12 \times 4! / 30 \times 4! = 12 / 30 = 2 / 5$.

So the probability of someone getting 2 shrimps is 2/5, thus the probability of no one getting 2 shrimps is 3/5, so the odds for one shrimp apiece are 3 to 2.

Thus this is a fair bet and SSB’s only reason for accepting it is the thrill of gambling.

3.2 March Madness

Bob: (signalling waitress with two fingers, eyes on the TV) How many different brackets are possible, anyway?

Alice: Basketball’s so boring! Isn’t that the binary tree with teams for nodes, 64 leaves in a fixed order (call that order a tourney), with each non-terminal node representing the winner of a game between its children? Well I had combinatorics in CSC172 and... just a sec.... Nine quintillion and change.

Bob: I’m impressed! Who taught Data Structures?

Alice: Who remembers? I googled that, duh.

Bob: (wields Apple Watch) Yep, that’s 63 games, with two possible choices of winner per game.

But what if you get to organize the tourney and choose the leaf order, that is who plays whom in round one? How many then?

Alice: Well I remember something from 172: 64!, right?

Bob: (simultaneous) No! That’s too many!

Alice: (simultaneous) Wait! That’s too few!

Bob: Brackets A and B are actually the same if each team in A has the same parent as it does in B, yes? So at any level of the tree you can swap any game’s two opponents and have the “same” bracket – “same” means the trees are isomorphic.

Alice: ‘Isomorphic’, eh? I’m impressed! Who taught Graph Theory?

Bob: ... (smiling brightly) touche’. (aside) Smart-ass...

Alice: Look, I just forgot to multiply the 64! tourneys by the possible ways the wins can go for any tourney, which we agree is $2^{63}$. So that gives $64! \cdot 2^{63}$.

Bob: Look, you just forgot to divide 64! by the number of isomorphisms.

(pregnant pause)
Both: Where’s that damned beer?

Anst. 64! brackets.

Each of 63 internal nodes has two ways to order its children, so there are $2^{63}$ isomorphisms for every bracket: same deal as the fixed-tourney calculation for the number of brackets.

Putting Alice’s final figure together with Bob’s final observation, we get 64!.

Or bypassing isomorphisms as a distraction, consider that there are 64 possible winners of the tournament, so any of 63 teams can be one finalist and then 62 teams can be the other. Working down through the tree gives $64 \cdot 63 \cdot 62 \cdot \ldots \cdot 3 \cdot 2 = 64!$ total choices. It may be a bit less intuitive to pick tree nodes in another order but order is of course irrelevant. This elegant solution is due to Randal Nelson.

Or, for any tourney (order of teams at the leaf level), fill up the tree by making the left child of each interior node the winner, (so it’s its own parent). In this case, any tourney specifies the entire “bracket”, and there are as many brackets as tourneys (ordered as above), or 64!

4 Wretched Doggerel

4.1 Running Haikus

UNTITLED
(Meaning the poet knows the title and you don’t (nyahh, nyahh!).)
Entire semester
Finding these socks inside out
Every other day

NO TITLE
(Meaning the poet doesn’t know the title (but you might...)
Running in drizzle
Midwest coal’s acrid acid
Makes me blink back tears

NO TITLE – REALLY
(Meaning the title means there actually is no title...)
My conjunctiva
Blistered by acid drizzle
Or else it’s these socks.

4.2 Radix

Inspired by Attanasio’s novel *Radix* and DR: 2010

RADIX P. 325

A mineral ortish sort of pile
Betray Delph’s dreaming by bileguile –
Ethic Sumner, bereft of voor
Lynks to Graal, finds eo-spoor:
Masseboth masses Rubeus’s might;
Can godmind, Driftstort win the fight?
Will Delph awaken from iz slumber?
And will Jac-Assia be a number?

4.3 CSC 173 Ballads

4.3.1 MATLAB(TM)

2009:

diary delete shg,
pack sort flops ans svd.
num2str stairs atan2,
magic startup residue.

who cumsum qz qr?
i ans pi inf errorbar!
any mean & global plot
' == ^ ~

modred plotconfusion dare?
display brighten candle care!
placepole damp impulse feedback,
zoom off now get series stack.
weekday highlow amortise,
double softmax margin size!
fetch initial canon, mae;
maxdrawdown on thirdwednesday.

elseif break: pause, reshape spline,
echo toeplitz, return sin.
finite polar fft,
contour logspace std.

if delete isstruct for sum,
save what load type hex2num.
hadamard null polyfit?
error help clear exit quit!

4.3.2 Lambda Calculus

2009: for DR (HO)
We open Computation’s core:
Do we find wires when we explore?
Ones and zeroes? diode junctions?
Nope, there’s no there there – but functions!

Nameless functions start with lambda
after which the bound var’s crammed, a-
long with dot, and then the text
of function body follows next.

Except when your reduction’s eta,
Application starts with beta:
Real arg copied in for formal
If evaluation’s normal.
(Use alpha since there’s nothing shaming
In the need to do renaming).

self copy self copy self copy self copy...
sel self self self ... copy copy copy copy
When trapped in infinite regress
you’ll never find a clear egress.
So just prevent it with abstraction,
Whose binding will delay the action,
And which when used on selfapply
Paradoxically yields Y.

We build logic (and, or, true).
Numbers, cons, car, cdr too,
Arithmetic, with a typed version,
Structures, conds, Y not recursion?

Thus o’er the world we’d vainly search
To find one clever as A. Church.
Lambdas from the ivory tower
Match Turing’s mechanistic power.

5 Retirement Skit for Peg Meeker

WHAT NOW?
   By Henry Kautz, George Ferguson, Chris Brown, 2007:
One Performance Only:
May 22, 3-5pm, CSB601

Dramatis Personae:
Harassed search-committee member: Chris Brown
Chair: Mitsu Ogihara
First: Ben VanDurme
Second: Randal Nelson
Third: Henry Kautz
George Ferguson: Himself
PEG-2.0: Herself.

Production;
Technical and SFX Supervisor: George Ferguson
Props: Ben VanDurme, Chris Brown

Running Time:
Maybe 10 mins
Prolog

(Show Ohead 1)

The overhead projector shows a calendar with May and June, X’s on the May dates. “WHAT NOW?” is writ large below.

It’s June the first, 2007. An academic office. The office of a harassed search-committee member.

(show Ohead 2):
A page of BAA gibberish is now projected on the overhead behind him. Throughout the Prolog, a succession of nightmarish bureaucratic paperwork is projected: arcane forms, spread-sheets...

The Phone Rings.

HS-CM: Administrator Search Committee. Yes, the job is still open... well, it’s a 40 hour week plus some occasional work on weekends, and involves typing, filing, photocopying, arranging events, setting up travel, and a pleasant phone personality. Oh, good!...

(show Ohead 3):
Is that all? Well, not quite. There’s also mastery of Mac OS-Ten, all versions of Windows and Vista, unix, excel, outreach, eudora, vee-eye, Word, emacs, filemaker pro-II, photoshop, latex, bibtex, pine, gimp, HTML, VRML, mozilla, Acrobat, Dreammaker, WebCT, Office, blackboard, our peoplesoft Human Resources Management System, Access, Powerpoint, Dspace, Postscript and of course M-PEG ...(beat)... oh, you do? Fantastic!....

(show Ohead 4):
Well, not quite. There’s also understanding the voluminous and mutually-contradictory documentation and permissions demanded by our college dean, deans for freshmen and sophomores, the faculty dean, the graduate dean, the president and provost’s offices, the anti-purchasing department, the anti-personnel department, the Foreign Student Office, ORPA, CEIS, NYSTAR, NSF, AFOSR, ARO, OSHA, ADA, IRS, INS, Rochester Fire Marshall, Dept. of Homeland Security, NIH, Medicare, Medicaid, Medigap, the faculty senate, UR Legal Counsel, the UR faculty council, the US Consul, and... Oh, you’re used to that? Super!...

(show Ohead 5):
Well, not quite. There’s also copy-editing and adding content and references to faculty manuscripts for books and papers, editing the technical report series, dealing with reprint requests from places like Yemen, attending internal administrative committees, bailing out the overwhelmed general, program, and local arrangements chairs for large international conferences, supervising interns and staff, keeping track of 50 flakey students’ progress through a
dozen constantly-evolving administrative hurdles over 7 years (plus petitions and special cases), dealing with prima-donna graduates, bewildered Korean delegations, irresponsible and absent-minded professors, and clueless administrators.... Why, that’s outstanding!...

(show Ohead 6):
Well, not quite. There’s also providing mentoring and personal and career counselling to all your colleagues in the administrative and secretarial staff, who of course are underpaid and oppressed by the University and their jobs in general, and who have occasional personal disasters and blood feuds among themselves... Oh, you have? Couldn’t be better! ...

(show Ohead 7):
Well, not quite. Thing is, the job keeps morphing and the mission keeps creeping. Do you think you could learn that much stuff again by Fiscal Year 08? Don’t worry, the previous staffer made it all seem easy! You do? You can? Magnificent!

Oh, parking? That would be extra...
A sports club? That would be extra...
Dining on campus? We DO have a faculty club...no, THEY would never go there. It’s full of undergrads in flip-flops toting trays and yakking on cellphones...
But you’ll take it?! This is wonderful! May I pass your salary requirement to the Dean...?

Mouths ’Oh, My God!’
...That’s how many figures again? Help me out, how many zeroes is that exactly? That many? And they aren’t zeroes, they’re nines?
...I’ll have to call you back, thanks!

Gloom. Sighs.

HS-CM: What Now?

Crosses self, dials

HS-CM: President Seligman? Can you put me through to Lynn Davidson?
Lynn, I’m jumping in here, thinking big, and trying to recruit you to replace our departing administrator Peg Meeker. Oh, you know the job? Well yes, there IS some contact with faculty... hello? hello?
Dammit!

Dials

HS-CM: Lynn, we were cut off...Oh, THAT’s the issue...
(show Ohead 8): (head shot of well-known recently-ex faculty member (Section 1.2.3))
yes I know he’s still on the books, but he’s gone, really! He’s a professor in Austin, Texas! Not far enough? But he spends half his time in the Bahamas! Still not far enough? But he’s on sabbatical all of next year in Auckland, New Zealand! STILL not far enough? Yeah, no, the problem is I actually DO understand. Completely. Thanks anyway.

(show Ohead 1):

DESPAIR

HS-CM: What Now?

An Idea:

HS-CM: We’ll have to try an internal solution...we’ll start at a salary we can easily afford and work up...hmmm, Peg started out as a student intern... just maybe...

Scene I

(Overhead Projector off):
Chair’s office: HS-CM and Chair sit behind desk.
Chair: JoMarie, please send in the first candidate.

Enter First

First is a typical student. Gangsta-dress or NBA type worlds-ugliest shorts, flip-flops, iPod with prominent headphones in place, chewing gum, tattoos and piercings possible, orange or green hair OK, blingy hiphop necklace, baseball cap on frontwards: it says “Oberlin Math”. Head bobs and jaws champ incessantly throughout.

HS-CM: You want to do something with that hat?
First: No problem. (Turns cap around backwards).
Chair: Can you type?
First: Like text? No Problem.
Chair and HS-CM exchange a look.
Chair: Any experience with budgets?
First: Like money? No Problem.

Deploy long folding plastic holder with about 20 credit cards.
I max ’em out, Dad sends me more... no problem.
Chair: Thanks. Don’t call us, we’ll call you.

Exit First
Chair: I guess we add another zero.
HS-CM: Or nine.

Scene II

Second is being interviewed
Second: ...NSF money is all going to diversity science and nano-automobiles. Those idiots don’t see the importance of my research in bee brains! I need some part-time work to support any students. Bloody dolts, they don’t...
Chair: (cutting him off) May we see your typing test?
Second hands it over.
Chair: (to HS-CM) Looks OK...wait! What’s this?
HS-CM: (to Chair) Jeez! He can’t type parentheses...they’re all curly brackets!
Chair: Thanks. Don’t call us, we’ll call you.
Second: Amidst ad lib. grumbles and protestations
Exit Second
Chair: I guess we add another zero.
HS-CM and Chair together: Or nine.

Scene III

Third is being interviewed
Chair: You’ve passed all the tests with flying colors and as an alumnus with academic and industrial experience you know how things work. You’re hi—
Third: (to Chair) Sorry, important call....
Fishes out cellphone
(to Chair) Sorry, gotta go.
Exit Third
Chair: (Depressed) Anyone else?
HS-CM produces folders. They are different sizes, starting at huge, but one has only one Page [har har]
HS-CM: Nah... zip, really. Peter Lennie (huge), Don Trump (huger), Larry Page (skinny)...
Chair: Let me see that one.
Extracts the single page from the folder, allows audience to see.
Never saw a one-word CV before! Who else?
HS-CM: Some New York guy named Bloomberg (really huge)... Oh, a new one (hugest) Rumsfeld!?
Chair: Forget it. All totally unqualified. Maybe we should...
Continuously into...

Scene IV

George runs in.

George: We did it! PEG-2.0! An intelligent agent program endowed with all of Peg’s expertise! AND thanks to Robbie and Dan it seems to learn to solve new problems on its own! It’s phenomenal, we don’t understand how it does it!

The projector is turned on, and we see an incredibly crudely animated version of Peg’s face (e.g. done in Flash). Depending on SFX time and budget limitations it might introduce itself, as in...

PEG-2.0: Please state the nature of the administrative emergency.

George: Peg, for this proposal due at 5pm for the joint NATO/DARPA/NIH/Gates Foundation/Lollipop Farm Grant, the 634(b) plus-up subcontract no-cost extension? What are the results of applying ORPA and ADA regulations on med-center overhead-sharing, fringe rates and encumbered hardware budgets to socially-disabled part-timers who have local office space and H-6a visas but are paid directly in Lithuanian litas? You’ll need the obvious figures from one of the spreadsheets I sent you last November. Or maybe August.

PEG-2.0: Just one moment.

screen goes blank, sound of touch-tone dialing, ringing, if possible Peg’s salutation? .. “leave a message”

PEG-2.0: Peg 1.0, call me right back, I have a quick question.

Chair and HS-CM rise, point at the door.

George: What!? It was good enough for DARPA!
They’re still pointing.
Exit George

They’re still standing.

HS-CM: You know what this means, of course?

Chair: I’m afraid so. There is REALLY no way to replace Peg.

They slowly sit and slowly lower their foreheads down onto the table. Lights fade to black.

Curtain

6 Barrel-Scrapings and Dross

There once was a man from Nantucket
Who lost some chum from his bait bucket.
And in plaice of his dabs
Found a bad case of crabs –
Said: “It wasn’t paw, it was maw tucket!”

Old Plato’s limp wand of affection
Never underwent upward deflection.
Though neo-platonic orgasms aren’t clonic
At least they can get an erection.

*********

From THE ORIGIN OF FOLK-SAYINGS, Vol II p. 297, By C. Brown

Sadie Homo is in tears. Her dad, Mo Homo, has just perfected the eponymous milk homogenization process, and...

“Wahhhh...Daddy, this milk is all mixed up! It’s yucky! Pooie! I like real milk, with the drinkie part* on the bottom and the yummy part** on top! I like it separated! I want cream-on-top!! I need it di-VI-ded!!! BWAH-Boo-hoo, blubber...!”

“But darlin’, this is the way of the future. All milk is going to be like this! You won’t even remember the old style, I promise. Bawling won’t bring back the past or make you feel better.

So... it’s no use crying over split milk.”

In the dairy industry, ’whey’ (O.E. ‘wheyan’: to skim.)

**Technically, ’curbs’ (etymology obscure, maybe involving milk carts.)

****
Humanities papers waiting to be written:
“Rambo meets Sambo: Guns and Butter in Postcolonial Economics”
“From Apocalypto to Apocalypse Now: Precolumbian meets Postcol-
nial”.

*****

Jeopardy Clue

My shrine is Shinto
My box is Bento
Hello’s “mushi-mushi”,
And food’s sushi-sushi.

****

ELEVATOR PITCHS
Halloween III meets Dirty Dancing:
Bugaboo Boogaloo!
Franchise extends to the Muppet Generation
Peekaboo Bugaboo Boogaloo!
and the indiginous-aboriginal-autochthone language version
Kickapoo Bugaboo Boogaloo!
as well as the blaxploitation series
J*gaboo Bugaboo Boogaloo!

****

The unabridged saga of Casey Anthony (4 July 2011)
She sorta forgot
She lost a tot:
The People said “Guilty”
The jury said “, not.”

****

Harris and Klebold
They slew.
It’s true.
But why did they
Slay?

*****
Teresa Lewis

She seemed a bit dejected
Before she got injected,

But still was kinda hot
(Until she got the shot.)

********** ************

Beer

The queerest aspect of a beer’s
How rapidly it disappears.

*****

7 Toasts etc.

7.1 Prof. Joan Rubin’s Birthday on Chinese New Year 2013

As shining Snake pursues the mighty Dragon, east to west,
Joan’s future rises now upon a past supremely blessed.

Distinguished Prof. in US poetry, culture middlebrow,
With teaching art in language arts, she shows her students how.

Cosmopolite, trained alto voice, a garden like Versailles.
Supported, loved, and needed by guys — David, Michael, Tai.

She’s queen of applesauce, bestowing grapes and Two-buck Chuck
Each month on starving artists who still can’t believe their luck.

So friends and family, colleagues too,
Join in a cordial toast —
“All Best!” from us, “Success to you!”
From this admiring host.
7.2 Rare Books and G&S Ephemera Gift by Harold Kanthor MD

Some sort of sonnet, I forget which...
   To Frederic: A Thirty-Eight Special

Hail Frederic! Slave of duty, paradox-
Ically younger and more aged than your peers,
Your bravery, good looks, and tenor vox
Inspire our lusty, thrice times three-fold cheers.

You took the heart of Mabel and her hand;
Like us, she burned at 4X through her years.
Twelve generations, kids both great- and grand-
You’ll greet with laughter, bid farewell with tears.

But some things never change: it still is true
That conscience may not justify attack.
(The unintended consequence to you
Was more amusing than ours in Iraq.)

To Frederic, still on stage at thirty-eight,
We fill our flagons full and celebrate!

7.3 Mustache Madness

For departmental mustache-growing event 2008: another sonnet.
   New Beard on an Old Guy
When I was your age, grumped the grizzled sage,
Perhaps like you, a callow, foppish youth,
My flare-legs, beads, and beard were all the rage
(The latter helped disguise the chinless truth).

My virile whiskers, neatly trimmed in place,
Enhanced my roguish role as gay deceiver,
Lent character and romance to my face;
I vainly preened, disdaining shouts of “beaver!”.
It was to play Mikado that I shaved –
I looked so young! An open, boyish swain!
And bristles came back gray: they misbehaved:
From then ’til now I’ve razored and stayed vain.

Does this white fringe acknowledge age with sanity?
...Or blind babes to my baldspot? Viva vanity!

7.4 To the Haggis

At Lorraine and Jack Porcello’s Burns Night, 2014.

Graphics and typesetting: Suzanne Bell.
Toast to the haggis

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you:

The haggis, tasty and nutritious treat
Originating in the hills of heather
Composed of bits the sassenach won’t eat
Tonight doth nobly bring us all together.

Proudly flying o’er estates and keeps
St. Andrew’s Cross, the saltire, Scotland’s flag is,
While nestled in a fragrant pile of ’neeps
Sedately sits and steams the humble haggis.

Lord Jack provides this excellent comestible—
Of oats, sheep secum, offal, all combined;
Lady Lorraine assures us it’s digestible—
To haggis, and the house where it’s enshrined.