



## Romans' four-legged 'Big Mac' bites back

Dormice exploit confused status to chew their way through homes

Robin McKie  
Science Editor

THE EDIBLE dormouse, the Roman legionary's equivalent of a Big Mac, is taking its revenge: the tubby rodent is consuming electric cables, TV aerials and insulation in English homes.

And experts' attempts to deal with the creature are hampered by its status: some regulations decree it is a pest, while others say it is an endangered species.

'If you look up the legal status of the edible dormouse in the *Red Data Book for British Mammals*, it simply states: confused,' said zoologist Paul

Bright of London University. 'In fact, it is very confused.'

The problem follows Britain's signing of European legislation which decrees that the edible dormouse (*Glis glis*) is endangered — which indeed it is in its native southern Europe. Therefore, it cannot be destroyed.

However, in Britain, where it is not a native, its numbers have reached nuisance level. Edible dormice were exploited by Roman soldiers, who kept them fattened and ready for cooking whenever they felt peckish.

They were so prized that few escaped the spit, but at the turn of this century the Rothschild family introduced them



The dormouse: legionaries' favourite fast food.

on to their estate at Tring, Hertfordshire, and problems soon followed.

The animals — the size of small squirrels — escaped and began nibbling their way through the larch plantations of the Chilterns and homes

around High Wycombe, Aylesbury and other nearby towns.

As foreign animals, they are considered pests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The legislation stipulates that if an edible dormouse is caught, it cannot subsequently be

released into the wild. However, the Berne Convention, which protects European wildlife, prohibits killing it.

'You can get up to 80 edible dormice in your loft, and you know all about it when you do,' said wildlife enthusiast Sian Barton, from Wiggington, Herts.

'One woman was driven mad by their scurrying around at night. I used to help by catching them and sticking the little things back in a field. Now I cannot do that. Only licensed council experts are allowed to deal with edible dormice, and they charge £58 an animal. If you have dozens of them in your attic, it can be a real problem.'

The only consolation is that edible dormice are about to hibernate, so residents should soon get some peace — until next spring.

### IX. — GLIRES

GLIRES : Isicio porcino, item pulpis ex omni 327  
membro glirium trito, cum pipere, nucleis, lasere,  
liquamine farcies glires et sutos in tegula positos  
mittes in furnum aut farsos in clibano coques.

APICIUS  
L'ART CULINAIRE

## THE TRUE LOVE REMEDY

ei mihi, quod nullis amor est sanabilis herbis

(Ovid, Met. I:523)

No herbal remedy can heal Love,  
No modern medicine can cure it.  
Blest is the brute who cannot feel Love,  
The rest of us must just endure it.  
Death serves only to congeal Love,  
But that's no way to abjure it.  
Let those who think they've found a real Love,  
Innocents, consult the curate,  
And say forever you and me'll love, --  
*That* if anything should cure it.

*Peter Russell  
Pian di Scò  
26th September 1995*

## HYMENEAL

Home turtles, culvers back to work,  
Doves, now you bill too long.  
Coo, coo, you plump blue quists  
And drape the wedding lists!  
Trill, trill, you speckled mavis  
Your score of *Merry Aves* --  
Sing, sing, you jetty merles,  
The Bride adjusts her curls!  
You little ruddocks, do not lurk,  
You do the Bridegroom wrong.  
Brown nightingale, no longer shirk  
Hymen's Ode, our Marriage Song.

*Pian di Scò, 25th September,  
1995*

I feel rather ashamed of my Editorial article "A Black Christmas" because for all its factual veracity it is a case of an old man whining about his bad luck. I remind myself that there are hundreds of editors of little magazines, -- and far better ones than MARGINALIA, -- and they never complain about their difficulties. I take my hat off to them!

In June last year I had got together all the material for Nos 21 and 23, as well as for two new Italian issues. My son Peter George had agreed to computerise the bits that were still in typescript. After a few days, when he was ready to start, I found to my horror that the family of edible dormice that lives under our roof had torn the mass of papers to shreds. In many cases I had no copies. Of course I ought to have put the papers in a metal container, but alas!, stupid me, I didn't!

A pinprick, you will rightly say, -- yes, but it was the forerunner of much worse things to come. In July, kind friends persuaded young Peter George that he was wasting his time acting as my assistant and that he should go to University and qualify himself for a regular job. He immediately abandoned all work for me and set himself assiduously to study. Since then he has been attending six days a week a cramming establishment in Florence, and I hardly see him! I myself was left standing with a mass of uncompleted work and no one to computerise the texts. I respect my son's decision to mould his destiny himself but it has left me with enormous difficulties. In eight months since then, I have failed to find anyone to computerise for me. Everyone seems to have a computer, but all they use them for is "games".

4

Around the same time as this, the pains I had been having in my legs became really acute, and I consulted a doctor. After X rays and magnetic soundings the specialist diagnosed osteoporosis of lumbar vertebrae and prescribed calcium pills. The pains got much worse and some days I am virtually paralysed. I should explain that to get to my car I have to climb 150 metres of an extremely steep footpath up the mountainside. Now, the doctors are trying to persuade me to have myself declared an invalid, which would give me a pension of two hundred sterling a month, but which it would take two or three years to obtain from the Ministry, and would involve my giving up my driver's licence. Nor would it be certain, since I am not an Italian citizen. I have held a clean driving licence for just sixty years and don't feel like giving it up for a will o' the wisp! Nor do I want to be an "invalid" -- yet! At 77 years there's still some red blood in me!

Another alarming sign of the times has been the performance of the Italian posts during the past year. Between 1964 and 1996 I got used to losing half a dozen items each year, - a routine risk. However, since the Post Office's extensive publicity campaign boasting their increased efficiency, in the last year over one hundred packages posted by me (or to me) simply have not arrived. Over fifty<sup>t</sup> items have taken over six months to arrive here, many of them sent Air Mail. Even a number of Registered packets have not arrived, and after six months the Post Office has failed to trace them. Two of my new books were held up for almost a year because the corrected proofs simply never arrived at the publishers' office.

Of course, some things DO arrive! My correspondence has increased

enormously this past year, since MARGINALIA seems really to have "caught" on. I post about twenty letters or packets every day. At present I have a large box full of mail to be sent off, but not a penny for post!

You may well ask whether I have anything positive to report. When a chap works sixteen to eighteen hours a day, you might expect him to have something to show for his labours!

Over the past two years about twenty books by me or about me have appeared. I can't complain about lack of recognition, but extremely few people seem to recognise this recognition! If it weren't for a handful of good people who simply send me cheques, large or small, and ask for nothing in return, I would have died of starvation years ago. My earned income for 1997 amounts to fifty sterling. During that period I published more than two hundred articles or groups of poems in the reviews as well as five or six new substantial BOOKS.

At the moment of writing, my second volume of Selected Poems, MORE FOR THE WOLVES (1974-1989) should be out at any day; Volume III, MY WILD HEART (1989-1996) is edited and accepted. THE GOLDEN CHAIN, originally published in 1970 in English only, is to appear in a bilingual (Italian/English) edition in June 1998 from Medica, (Pavia) and my POESIE DAL VALDARNO (bilingual) from Varia Ed., Firenze, in February. PAYSAGES LEGENDAIRES is to appear from Celtia, Torino, in a bilingual edition translated by Ciro di Maria, with essays by Kathleen Raine, S.MacCaslin, Tom Scott and M.Saracino, late in 1998.

Of major essays my DANTE E L'ISLAM and AMORE CORTESE have now been translated into English and will be available soon. My FIGURE OF WOMAN AS AN IMAGE OF THE SPIRIT and ALL AND EVERYTHING have been translated from English into Italian. Anthony Johnson's fine essay on my FOUR

SNOWMEN AND A FIFTH has been well translated into Italian. My son Peter George, my daughter Sara, Jessica Kaufmann, and Patrizia Agresti, as well as my grand niece Laura Simmons, have done wonders with my texts.

My very good friend Dr. Glyn Pursglove of University of Wales has in hand mammoth editions of my THE POET'S CRAFT, SELECT CRITICISM ABOUT PETER RUSSELL, THE POEMS OF QUINTILIUS (1983-1997, ? 3 vols), SELECT ESSAYS ON EZRA POUND, and even, if rather (necessarily!) <sup>hypothetical</sup> TWO THOUSAND SONNETS FOR THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND, and TWENTY STUDIES OF QUINTILIUS.

BAD NEWS: my good friend and benefactor; Dr. James Hogg, warns me that University of Salzburg may have to stop publishing at the end of 1998. This would leave me without a publisher. Anvil Press didn't even answer my offers of the later Quintilius, and my second and third vols of Selected Poems. The projected annual volumes of my COLLECTED POEMS have got up to VENICE 1965, but further volumes, an average of 360 pp per year, seem unlikely to appear in the immediate future. There are 5,000,000,000 people in the world. One can sell a maximum of 600 copies of a serious book of poetry. Fifty would be a more realistic figure.

GOOD NEWS: Kathleen Raine is reviving the great review TEMENOS. The first issue of the new series is due early in 1998.

The Missouri review PAINT BRUSH (Truman University, Kirksville) has invited me to submit pp 120 of original poetry and prose, plus criticism about me, for a special issue in late 1998.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, I am a garrulous old man. Maybe I should be put down, Academia has tried its best but failed. About fifty <sup>t</sup> people with their generosity keep me going. But bluntly two very red-blooded people

simply can't live on three hundred bucks a month.

I've not been able to buy a paperback book for over two years. Paying for heating, food, electricity etc, is a constant nightmare. Can I ask you to help?

All the above is a tendentious description of my situation. But at least it is true and factual.

I have omitted to mention the fact that I have innumerable poems in typescript or not yet transcribed which I wish to plonk on the world? Academia doesn't like "prolificness" but what did Blake say about it? Who is <sup>g</sup>right?

At this moment MARGINALIA Nos 21 and 23 are ready. There is no cash to print or post them. Does it matter? Obviously I think it does, and the volume of correspondence about MARGINALIA persuades me this is so.

I feel "at the end of the road", YOU can help me to go on.

Peter Russell  
Pian di Scò  
20<sup>th</sup> January 1998

address: La Turbina 52026 Pian di Scò  
AR. Italy

*ALBAE MEDITATIO*

Already it's getting light and the first birds  
Are twittering in the walnut tree, and you  
Are hidden everywhere from my fallacious eye.  
Some of the pale green leaves at this hour  
Appear bright yellow, smooth grey of the walnut bark  
Jet like the young girl's cable braids swinging like bell ropes.

There is a mirror you cannot see and a rose in it.  
Sun is already up behind the trees,  
But the moon, lemon-coloured, lingers reluctant  
Like the windhover before he drops. Everywhere you,  
Body and spirit, screened by each ovate leaf. What should I say?  
Green leaves, running water, a beautiful face. It is permitted  
To love these things with a passion pure but intense?  
The young boy with his cap awry passes  
With his fishing-rod and his wicker basket.  
But what is it between my eye and the passing of Beauty?  
The prism of air and the sun's transparent light  
Bend in perpetual duel the living rods.  
Wherever Beauty is revealed, there out of necessity  
Love must grow. Why should today  
Be an exception? Love is its own reality.  
A metaphor is a bridge to reality. Surely  
A single thought of that Beauty is a ladder  
To higher branches. I am a straw to Love's amber,  
And willing to be tossed to and fro on the wind  
Of whatever makes for cohesion in our mutable world.

Running water, green leaves, reflections,  
A beautiful face. The weir and the waterfall.



Love is a medicine that makes pains into cures,  
 But there are people who think that Love is a mere illusion,  
 Like physicians and vendors of money and weapons  
 And the learned in universities and the assessors of culture.  
 Stone, if you wish, is bread, is living flesh,  
 And the rough wine of the country is Love himself.  
 There is no sweeter poison to drink than Love,  
 No sickness more bracing than this sickness of Love.  
 Love is the cat o'nine tails that strips off the skin,  
 Implanting a coat of many colours where before  
 There was only a grey epidermis of scale and scab.  
 Love is the fire that burns all deadness away.  
 A ferocious burnishing that leaves only light to the eye.

A voice from the forest, the pheasant's cry,  
 A cry from the waters' depths, a woman's cry,  
 But it is not a woman. It is the cry of Love himself.

Her very veils are Revelation itself,  
 Her black tresses, yes, conceal the mole in her white neck,  
 But they display oceans of shining darkness.

Out of the blackness of the pool spreads the image of her face.  
 Do not touch it, or it will disappear.  
 As you look in the pool, you look in the rose.  
 In the centre that is yellow, a sea of light.  
 A vision of clouds and roses, the clouds themselves are roses,  
 The roses themselves are light, the light is clouds,  
 Clouds eternally moving in the still mirror of the sky,  
 And the Empyrean is intense motion, utterly at rest.

The call of a dove, it is the call of a woman  
 Who is not a woman, the woman calling her lover.

On that same path, for love of a Christian girl,  
The pious Sheikh took to herding her swine.

What is the world without longing, without desire?  
Without desire, neither a man nor the nightingale can sing,  
Nor can the rose bloom or her petal blow on the wind.  
The Sheikh has broken his pens in bewilderment,  
The pious girl has given succour to an Infidel.

The air is an oil of roses distilled in the dew of dawn.  
It burns with a light blue flame, silent as moonlight.  
The sounds of the goldsmiths' hammering in the bazaar,  
The sound of the watermills in the Garden of Meram,  
The playing of the children in the square, the silence of deserts.  
The voices of space, and the spaces between the voices,  
The tongues of the moods, of wind and earth, of fire and sea,  
Of running waters, the yearning of all creatures for home.  
It is pure, but not like water; subtle, but not like air;  
Luminous, but not like fire. Spirit it is, that never knew body.  
That Wine never dwelt with Care, that Sorrow never with Song.  
Joyless he is who lives sober, he that does not die drunk,  
Let him weep, for he will lose the way towards wisdom.  
Be thinking of beautiful things that neither age nor winters  
Change. Listen to a thousand tongues reciting before thee.  
And as for the lays of old time, a thousand have been scattered  
On the wind, a thousand buried in the snow.  
These the Teutonic Knights trampled with heavy boots,  
Those the spells of maleficent priests rooted out.  
There are a thousand tongues in the wood, a thousand tongues in the sky,  
In the running brook; in the deep lake a thousand more.  
The states of mind of the gnostic seek out and find  
These thousands of tongues, unforgetting, and thousands more.

I shall pursue the woman to the new pastures where rain has fallen,  
 And the thorn-bushes are green and the small bird sings.  
 Meanwhile the mill-wheel turns and the noise of the children in the square  
 Reverberates clearly, though the City is three hundred miles out of earshot.  
 It is the silence of these sounds that knits my mind,  
 And the roar of many waters in the night refreshes me.  
 A constant sound, more various than many words  
 Of maenads, maniacs, mystics, – all the sober Bards.  
 Erôs is everywhere, and everywhere Eris  
 Throws Love's pure harmonies into the jangle of the street,  
 Chaos of market-place and battleground, the jungle of the world.  
 Rapture itself calls out in rut for cleaving rupture,  
 Still ocean cloven silently by the immane waves.  
 Moses with his rod slew the Pharaoh of wordly existence,  
 The Muses gave Hesiod their wand and he harmonized worlds,  
 Singing of generations of Gods he welded in one the saeculum.  
 Somnûn the lover said that you cannot define anything  
 Unless in terms more subtle than that thing.  
 There is nothing subtler than Love. How shall it be explained?  
 The rational interpreter is like the donkey carrying books.  
 He brays loud, but nothing unclouds the lover's furrowed brow.  
 And I ask what Kant ever said about Love, or Hegel,  
 Contradicting his contradictions, about the eye of the Beloved?  
 Thinking of the Muses, envious of the love-crazed mystics,  
 I am Drosophila in the harvester's web.

In that mysterious solitude when she unveils herself  
 When no more thought of battling self-regard,  
 The sentinel on the lip, the watcher in the heart,  
 Persisted in their censorship, I said to Her:  
 Separation has been hard; in this proximity  
 Naked beholding alone divides.

Dart now on me that glance, like one who looks on a lover  
 Before Love blinds him to himself and all appearances,  
 And body vanishes in Love's effulgence. Say:  
 "Thou shalt not!" Others before me have heard this commandment  
 And known increase of love. Can man ask more  
 Than once united with thee he no more needs to see.  
 This mystics call, in the anguish of their love  
 And stark clairvoyance, the Second Separation.  
 The mountains crumble, even Sinai is laid low,  
 And words fail utterly in the darkness of this joy.  
 "O fire of the burning furnace, be coolness and peace!"

And what is Death, the dissolution of the body,  
 A fair young woman who well knows how to treat  
 Dissolute bodies. Let her come with her seductions,  
 Showing her nakedness, irresistibly dissimulating  
 The wanton harlot. Welcome, O harlot! Welcome!  
 O holy saeculum, and O unholy heavens,  
 Open with all your awful revelations!  
 I am here

Peter Russell  
 Pratomagno  
 1st September 1991

***VALETE***

I would die happy if my last words  
 Were true and beautiful as Blake's "The Birds"

## A BLACK CHRISTMAS! LUCK? DESTINY? FATE?

Three or four days before Christmas we woke up to see a lovely white blanket of snow covering the hills around us. We were cheered at the thought of a "white Christmas". Unfortunately it snowed steadily for the next two days and we found ourselves completely cut off. It was impossible to pass the three miles to the shops, even with chains. We were without food and calor gas. A day later, the chimney of the wood stove in the kitchen where I work all day, started to smoke copiously and we had to do without heating. My eyes were so sore and watering I couldn't read even headlines!

A day or so later, three typewriters in a row packed up with mechanical faults and became unusable.

When the snow melted the water supply gave out completely. Not a drop of water in the tap. Evidently the pipe from the reservoir was blocked by mud and débris. It was four days before the technico cleared it.

By this time, that is the Befana, or Epifania, another joyful holiday in Italy, I had developed a savage bronchitis and rasping cough. My doctor was on holiday and I couldn't get antibiotics without an official prescription. I was so weak and demoralised that I had to give up work on the long essay I had been writing for AGENDA on "VISION IN DANTE AND EZRA POUND", not to say most of the basic household chores.

Three days later the photocopier ceased working, and the day after, the computer too went dead. The major component, including the memory, was ruined by the damp and cold, and all our work of the past eight months was lost. Packard Bell estimated £500 or more for the replacement, and a delay of a month.

Then, one fine day, our FAX was struck by lightning, the third time now in two years. No great loss, since being Italian made, it rarely worked anyway. We shall not be replacing the FAX. I wanted to erect a lightning-conductor, but my landlord, an Italian engineer, tells me that lightning-conductors only attract the lightning.

To crown all these little comedies, a day or two later I went into one of our outside storehouses to find an Italian text I needed, only to find that the roof had fallen in and virtually buried a large cupboard in which I keep my contemporary Italian archive. Rain and mud had poured in and ruined hundreds of issues of reviews and recent books of poetry and the sodden pile was covered with fallen rafters, and large and heavy roof-tiles. The three metre wide cupboard was a total write-off. At least, we have a little extra firewood for next winter!

By mid-January all our basic services were restored and by the end of the month the computer and the photocopier were back in use, but my bronchitis and other senile ailments persisted throughout the winter and spring, and even now, June 1997, I am far from well. By the time you get this I shall be seventy-six years old and I see no hope for any great improvement in my health and strength. In the eighteen months between July 1995 and November 1996, I underwent four major surgical operations, and these, with the six months of bronchitis this year, have left me very weak and seriously interrupted the production of new issues of MARGINALIA, new public lectures, and new collections of poems and prose essays.

I was sad to have to give up my projected trip to London in February and March this year, on which I was scheduled to deliver three more lectures at the TEMENOS ACADEMY in London; on "The subversive voice":

1. This side of language
2. In the language cage
3. Beyond the pale of language

all to be followed in the fourth week by a reading of recent poems illustrating or exemplifying this "subversive" voice.

Those readers who didn't follow my activities in London in February 1996 may like to know that my TEMENOS LECTURES were

1. Poetry as the Language of the Spirit in the Age of Antichrist
2. Myth, Symbol and Apocalypse
3. The Devaluation of all Values
4. Towards a Revaluation of all Values.

The last four are to appear as a single book from TEMENOS shortly. I still have hopes of coming to London late in 1997 or early in 1998 to deliver the three new lectures. I see TEMENOS as the creative meeting-point of very many world cultures and an extremely harmonious moment in our generally so stormy contemporary confrontations.

Meanwhile, in my tumbledown old mill house in the Tuscan Appennine, I continue to work each day, but I seem to be more than ever torn between the demands of different supporting activities. Having no income whatever save a minute Italian Government pension "for my services to Italian literature" and a Civil List Pension "for my services to English poetry" (the two amount to less than £200 per month, and the Italian one hasn't been paid for six months while Signor Prodi is saving up for Maastricht) I have to find the rent for this house (which is more per month than the two pensions combined), the usual living expenses for my son and myself, and very considerable resources for the production of MARGINALIA and the distribution of my privately printed books, as well as an enormous literary correspondence. Thus I have to strike a balance between simply writing new poetry and giving new public lectures and readings that at least give some minimal compensation, between personal correspondence with individuals (a most precious activity) and general publicity (endless circulars directed to mere "names" in five continents), between "market research" and scholarly study which awakens unknown depths in the "poetic soul". Maybe I'm just a mental weakling. I find it very difficult . .

Other activities that are very necessary but very time-consuming are choosing unpublished poems for reviews, and checking that they have not been published before, noting what I have sent out so as not to send the same text to different reviews, and then WAITING, -- it may be six weeks, it may be six months. In some cases, believe it or not it has been six years! A number of my books and longer articles have recently been translated into German and Italian, or from my own Italian into German or English. Checking these texts is a long job which I find extremely tedious. And of course, preparing final texts for the numerous full-length books both of prose and of poems which are appearing in this period.

But the thing that bothers me most and really gives me nightmares is the fact that I have nearly two hundred notebooks from 1983 to the present, from which I have transcribed and typed out only about a tenth of the pieces written. Each notebook contains pp. 400, and in each there are between twenty and a hundred almost- or part- finished poems, plus a great many research notes which I need to incorporate in poems or essays. This is my most important task as I see it, but it's the one that always necessarily gets left to the last or neglected entirely.

I really see no hope of ever being able to transcribe more than a very few of these poems. From this year alone, I have seven fat notebooks with very numerous drafts of new poems. So far I have typed out only a dozen of them. I think they must be quite good because they have all been accepted by editors in USA and UK; as well as Italy and Germany.

MARGINALIA itself represents a great deal of working time also. To prepare Nos. 21 and 23, I have had to go through four large boxes of *mss* which I have accumulated over the past year, and whittle it down to 64 pages maximum.

The same goes for the two new Italian language numbers of MARGINALIA which I now have to prepare.

Peter Russell  
15th June 1997

BOOK REVIEWS SECTION

I had planned to have a book reviews section starting with this issue. The first batch of reviews were eaten by our beloved dormice and I have failed to find energy and time to rewrite them. My sincere apologies to the Publishers.

*PACKING*

Why so lonely on the hill,  
Why so fearful of the gale?  
Must you leave your ruined mill?  
is your Harvest set to fail?

My Hours are almost at a close,  
My Complaine now is near at hand.  
Far-off, far-off, the vision grows  
Of a dawning, dusky land.

Must you take a journey then,  
After so long a permanence?  
Must you exchange once again,  
For sojourning a going hence?

I've lived in the Wilderness  
Certain lusters, as you know;  
Now it seems my sentence is  
To leave behind my Love and go.

Will you not in Absence pine,  
For the oaktree and the ash?  
For your crust and for your wine,  
For the millstream's gentle crash?

Wild and wanton once I was,  
Now content with all my books;  
Nothing frights like fear of loss,--  
Just think, in Spring, how that tree looks!

You will miss wild cyclamens  
Each December in the wall;  
Your winter Journey now begins,--  
Flowers on a grave will fall.

Uncompleted I depart,  
So much more ~~there~~ is to do;  
This it is that wrings my heart,--  
Now I know what 'tis to rue.

Don't forget though, there's today,  
You may do one lovely thing;  
Perhaps tomorrow will delay,  
Briefly once again you'll sing.

Time's relentless, will not bend  
Or give another month or year.  
Somber, somber, is the end,--  
Love, o Love, I would stay here.

*Peter Russell  
Pratomagno  
13th. October 1995*

POETRY COMMENT by GLYN PURSGLOVE

Readers of *Acumen* will surely have noted the moving poem 'Packing' by Peter Russell, which appeared in issue 27; its dialogue in quatrains has, I know, been admired by many. Now this reflection on old age can be obtained in book form, along with two other fine poems—'The Road' and 'Wild Wood Notes'—direct from the poet (La Turbina, 52026 Pian di Scò, Prov. Arezzo, Italy) in a small collection called *Three Quests* (29pp; £6.00 including postage). 'The Road' and 'Wild Wood Notes' are in quatrains too, and all three poems are printed with facing-page Italian translations, two by the poet's son Peter George Russell and one by the Italian poet Leonello Rabatti. The three poems were all of them composed during 1995. Russell is a many-voiced poet and it is the lyrical, traditional voice that dominates here. The collection carries an epigraph from the seventeenth century poet John Chalkhill, and there are echoes of Milton, Shakespeare, Spenser and others. But these are the echoes of a shared music, not recondite allusions; this is poetry of a manner and beauty all too rare in our own time. The journeying quest of 'The Road', having begun in narrowness and doubt—"I can't be on two roads at once"—moves through the recognition that "Love is now the only purpose" and that the journey is its own purpose, to a climactic epiphany:

At which Imagination soars  
Like the Eagle to his peaks,  
And everything from minute spores  
To outer darkness clearly speaks.

It's in the space within the heart,  
Infinite space, embracing air,  
Soul or Spirit, whole and part,—  
The beloved is waiting there.

'Wild Wood Notes' celebrates olive and oleaster, honey and trout, and "the cascade of immortality", in full and hard-earned awareness that "In the book of single nature / Language makes duplicitous". Of recent years Russell has been writing—despite illness and difficulty—some of the best verse of an already distinguished poetic career, and this collection is amongst the very finest.

A CLASSICIST ON POETRY NOW

"Without the symbolic language offered by a living mythology, poets grow silent, alienated from the springs of inspiration, or resort merely to describing aspects of the physical world or their own neuroses. The artist, who in a healthy civilisation, presents us with ways of seeing the world, without a living vision resorts to mere technique, "photorealism", or interior decoration".



## *MANSOUL*

Man's soul like a snail-shell barque  
 On a vast ocean rises and falls;  
 Rises and falls, and falls again and rises  
 Drenched with the bitter brine of love,  
 Its course inconstant slow endeavour  
 Set blindly on a disappearing star

*Peter Russell,  
 Pratomagno,  
 7th April 1997*

## *DREAM EMBLEM*

That lamp burns on: whatever they may say,  
 The flickering shadow darting here and there  
 Exactly represents ideal constancy,  
 That cannot, moment to moment, ever be the same,  
 Needing a varied movement to be still,  
 To be the emblem of identity, --  
 Voluntary action, out of intellectual dream.

*Peter Russell,  
 Pratomagno,  
 16th April 1995*

*Neither of the above two lyrics has been published before.*

# SOMETHING ABOUT POETRY (1995)

There are certain lines of poetry that stick in the memory like well-loved musical themes and for no apparent reason haunt us, or become an obsession, for shorter or longer periods at certain times of our life. They may vanish in the crowded labirinth of memory for years, and then, willy nilly, like some river that has flowed underground for miles, suddenly reemerge into the light of day.

Yeats's

*Tall dames go walking in grass-green Avalon*

is one of those lines which come back to me periodically and seems as fresh and magical as when it first enchanted me some sixty years ago.

Another is Mandelshtam's line in his great poem "Tristia" in which the central image at the beginning is that of Ovid's parting from his household on his departure for his long exile on the far-off Black Sea coast:

*And women's weeping mingled with the song of the Muses  
(I zhenskiy plach meshal'sya s penyem Muz)*

That line has been with me on and off for just on forty years, though always in Russian, because its essential poetic quality only comes out in the melodious original text.

The Yeats line seems to have sprung from nowhere, or from the Eden of pure poetry, though for all I know there may be in Tennyson or William Morris, something that vaguely suggests it.

I had always thought of Mandleshtam's line as apparently sprung from nowhere, and so it well may be, but recently I was intrigued to find a line in Book XI of the *Mahabharata* -- the *Striparvan*, which one might fancy anticipates the Russian master by some two thousand years:

*And the cries of the beasts mixed with the women's sobs*

The searching out of "sources" is a legitimate scholarly activity but is only a remote and ancillary part of our natural intuition of the authentically poetic. Whether Mandelshtam had read the *Mahabharata* or not, or in what language he read it, will matter very little to anyone concerned with poetry *as such* rather than with literary history or comparative philology. It will be the scholar's duty to look up the line in all the versions of the Indian epic in languages known to Mandelshtam and available in Russia in 1918.

Peter Russell,  
1995

## AN OUTSIDE OPINION

PETER RUSSELL, *La Turbina, 52026 Pian di Sco, Prov Arezzo, Italia*: more literature from the exiled genius. This batch included Marginalia 9, some fliers for PR books (including new stuff from the University of Salzburg which is distributed by Agenda), a copy of an article by Dana Gioia which expresses bewilderment at the current lit establishment's ignorance of Russell (Gioia places Russel in a Yeatsian tradition). Clearly Russell is no arse-licker, which is probably why he's punished. The catalogue of works in print is particularly impressive. Despite floods, slings, arrows, major surgery and no income Peter is "as happy as a King". Not living in England is clearly good for poem and poet. When it's time for the real progressives to stand up it might become apparent that there is more meaningful experimentation to be had within the tradition, rather than within the pretence that you can deal with the tradition by ignoring of it.

## MAGICAL MOMENTS IN POETRY

Two passages which haunt me with their sheer word magic are the following:

The deep falls of fair rivers,  
 and the wind's turning  
 Are the true music-givers  
 unto my mourning

and

The thorny ways, the deep valleys,  
 The snow, the frost, the rain,  
 The cold, the heat, the dry, the wet,  
 Gale on the mountain, damp on the plain.

I wonder if any readers will recognise these short extracts? In our next issue we shall be discussing the poems from which they come, on a scholarly and aesthetic level, for what that may be worth.

These two brief excerpts remind me of Spenser's better-known

*The speaking woods and murmuring waters' fall*  
 (from Colin Clout's Come Home Again)

and of Marlowe's even more celebrated

*By shallow rivers to whose falls  
 Melodious birds sing madrigals*

and yet the less-known lines both have a quite unique tone to them.

20  
**PREMIO INTERNAZIONALE "Succisa virescit"**

**dell'Università degli Studi di CASSINO**

**e**

**del CENTRO CULTURALE "PAIDEIA"**

**1997**

**AMBAGE**

Anonima, unanime, umana,  
Esanime, dai morti animata,  
Autonoma, anacreontica, anacronistica,  
La cenere, la cetra, eccetera, dal canto cimentate,  
Camène allontanate, magiche nutrici  
Che parlano a tutti e niuno, inaudite  
Anime dolci e silenti, e divinità.  
Eppure a te, tra le rocce che si ergono,  
Non è giunta finora  
Dal mare la bottiglia,  
Ed io sono incerto  
Se questo è angoscia o serenità.

*Peter Russell*  
(Pian di Scò, AR)  
24 aprile 1997  
FINALISTA

*Peter Russell* - Era da molto tempo che non accadeva di leggere una poesia di tal fatta. L'autore si è superato affrontando nei canoni classici greco-romani le problematiche più drammatiche dell'uomo del terzo millennio. Un verso che stuzzica e ammalia, affinando il palato sia del conoscitore, sia del neofita, sia del lettore meno smaliziato. Malgrado l'intensità del dettato, non si avvertono appesantimenti di toni. Ecco dove Russell si è superato: offrire chiare immagini di ninfe e divinità nascoste pur mantenendo ben vivo e visibile l'alito e il senso della vita.

--dal CORRIERE DI FROSINONE  
SABATO, 5 LUGLIO 1997  
non firmato

## *AMBAGE*

Anonymous, unanimous, human,  
 Animated by the dead, exanimate,  
 Autonomous, anacreontic, anachronistic,  
 Ashes, the lyre, etc., by charmed song proven,  
 Far off Camene, magical nurses  
 Who speak to all or none, unheard of  
 Honey-sweet silent souls, divinities.  
 To you though, on the rocks that rise  
 Around you, the bottle has not yet  
 Floated in from the sea,  
 And I am uncertain whether this  
 Is anguish or serenity

*Peter Russell,  
 Pratomagno,  
 24th April 1997*

translated by the author from his original Italian

### VIOLENCE OR POETRY?

"We are always prepared to condone violence, and we reward political banditry with honours -- yet to poetry we offer only povetry and exile.

Franco Loi, in *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 31 July 1991.

Franco Loi is one of the best-known living Italian poets. His recent *Angel*, written in Milanese dialect, has been a big success.

## ECATOMBE

Tramonta il sole  
 sulle desolate pianure  
 e sui monti silenti.  
 Sembra che ci sia  
 un mare di sangue  
 nel cielo.  
 Solo i sassi,  
 immobili e freddi,  
 sembrano raccontare  
 la storia di una civiltà scomparsa.  
 Un silenzio di tomba  
 rimbomba di valle in valle;  
 echeggia, silenzioso,  
 di luogo in luogo.  
 Si sente solo il fiume  
 argentino che scorre;  
 ogni goccia è una lacrima:  
 racconta una storia di morte  
 e dolore,  
 una storia di sangue  
 e battaglie perdute.  
 Non c'è anima viva.  
 Spunta la luna, fredda e spietata,  
 si allungano le ombre,  
 e paiono risvegliarsi i fantasmi del passato.

*Sara Christina Russell,  
 Jackpot, Nevada, USA,  
 1992*

### BOOKS OR TAPES?

Since so few people buy books of poetry it has struck me that it might be a good idea for me to offer a number of tapes of myself reading poetry. Three television groups have made Videos of me in the ambience of La Turbina. All promised to send me copies of the finished products. After five years not one has been delivered.

I would be grateful to have your opinion on this. Thankyou!

SARA RUSSELL

## ECATOMBE

The sun sets  
over barren plains  
and silent mountains.  
There seems to be  
a sea of blood  
in the sky.  
Only the cold and motionless stones  
seem to tell  
the story of a lost people.  
A deathly silence  
echoes from valley to valley,  
Its deafening quiet  
reaches all places.  
Only the silvery river is heard  
as it runs:  
Every drop is a tear  
that tells a story of death  
and suffering,  
a story of blood  
and lost battles.  
There is not a living soul here.  
The moon rises, cold and merciless,  
the shadows grow longer,  
and the spirits of the past seem to awaken.

(1992)

translated from her original Italian  
by SARA RUSSELL

SARA is my second daughter, now aged 22. She is due to graduate from University of Nevada in May 1998, in English and Italian language and letters. She has a teaching fellowship lined up for the next three years. We in Pian di Sebè are anxiously awaiting her visit to Italy this summer with her 4 year old daughter, Savannah.

VERSES WRITTEN IN THE SAND  
for W.H. Auden

In this circle that I've drawn  
I place the gentle ox's horn.  
My life's all worship, praise and prayer -  
I do not mourn, I do not care!  
Geometry was born in sand -  
The new moon irrigates the land -  
I who when enthusiasm  
Shudders in me, note the spasm -  
Write down intuition wet  
In bold figures like a debt  
With a circle round it,--pace,  
Sensing all of time and space,  
Up and down the room of life --  
Till I balance Love with Strife.  
These equations that I solve  
Endlessly in words, involve  
Contraries and opposites  
Multiplied by my five wits --  
Solutions various as the swarms  
Of thy many Protean forms --  
Only resolved when man becomes  
Quotient himself of all his sums;  
And Nature, like the gentle ox  
Gently draws him in his box  
Like a schoolboy's answer, at random -  
*Quod (right or wrong) est demonstrandum;*  
And She trims her lovely horns  
Or dims her circlet in the dawns  
Other children will awake to  
(Whom She's the eternal snake to);  
And they'll draw upon the sand  
Circle and line with trembling hand  
As I do in extended play  
Murmuring each blessed day  
Praise and worship, hymns and prayer -  
Full of mourning, full of care

Peter Russell

Venice  
31st January 1965

The above poem appears in my VENICE POEMS 1965 (University of Salzburg 1995, pp.332 with Introduction). It will appear again in 1998 in the bilingual Italian/English edition of my THE GOLDEN CHAIN (1970), now in production.



Perhaps because you are the fatal image  
Of calm itself, always so dear to me,  
Evening, come to my arms, serenity  
And twilight silence, you who like a bridge  
Over deep waters, on our pilgrimage,  
Above the abyss, into eternity  
If only an instant, lift us, and we see  
Clearly displayed our secret heritage:

As though all language was at once green land  
And an enchanted city made for souls  
Who journey in imagination, not on wheels,  
Reduce slow time to instants, squarely stand  
On peaks of vision, and spread out all the scrolls  
Upon the starry floor your dusk reveals.

*28th April 1997*

Look ever lovely as becomes you best!  
Dark is the world that sees not your fair face,  
And dark the eye not lit up by your gaze,  
Right dull the ear that hears not your behest,  
When with your gentle voice itself is blest.  
The rose's scent upon your two lips plays,  
Your secret breasts like two cool violet sprays,  
Or honey bags the bee lays in his nest.

In you there's fragrance of another clime,  
That is not born of nature's chemistry,  
Or from sweet woods or fields or gardens sprung, --  
In you, the presence of unmoving time,  
The dimpling shade of an enormous tree  
Whose every leaf is like a whispering tongue.

*26th September 1995*

The loves and the illusions all are gone,  
Vanished the graces and dear vanities,  
Old energies converted to disease  
And lassitude, and simply hanging on.  
You who would climb the slopes of Helicon,  
Know that the nymphs and the sonorous bees  
Are elemental speaking deities, --  
The wild cyclamens eclipse oblivion.

The senses dwindle as the air gets thin.  
It is the heart that hears the angelic voices  
And knows the play of phoenix and of swan.  
The music of the world's disordered din  
That loads the air with its malignant noises, --  
Here one clear note can blot out Babylon.

*1991*

These early mornings when the house is quiet,  
These balmy dawns when dew has drenched the grass,  
When rosemary sparkles emerald by the path  
And late spring's coloured flowers run riot,  
The wild duck gather on the little eyot  
Midstream, where the wild waters gurgling pass  
Or tinkle on the stones like broken glass.  
Serene, I ponder, -- what have I to sigh at?

Life was all tribulations at one time,  
A proof of spirit in a phantom night,  
A head-on challenge crouching at midday;  
Whatever hour it was a constant climb  
Out of my mind and yet not out of sight  
Of that felicity prepared for clay.

*10th May 1997*

Autumn is past and all the mushrooms rotten,  
Heedless and headless the winter bodies go;  
Summers for them have long since been forgotten, --  
The spring wraiths leap before them in the snow,  
And woollen dreams give way to dreams of cotton.  
Nothing that really is is here below.  
I ask myself how seasons were begotten,  
And how the plants and animals can grow.

I gaze out of the window at the woods,  
At fields and flocks, at clouds and distant hills,  
And at the mill. I hear the shepherds call  
Their barking dogs -- all earn their livelihoods.  
I smell the turf and breathe the air that chills --  
But from the twilight land of hospital.

*11th January 1997*

Aberrant space, discontinuities  
And isolates, specular planes that turn  
And shift the distances; the noons adjourn  
To a crepuscular dream; sharp shadows freeze  
Where the vacuities were at their ease,  
And the hot bricks, expanding, burn.  
The grinders languish at the unmoving quern,  
And a portentous silence jars like seas.

Strange foliage sprouts where nothing was before,  
And Caesar's bust in terracotta lies  
On the smooth stone with gold and oakleaves crowned  
Beneath the peristyle, that sags around  
Fallen Majesty, a globe of clay that cries, --  
An awful empty boiling at the core.

*28th November 1995*

## NÉ SUONI NÉ CANTI

Conviene bandire la mensa dell'addio  
quando l'ultimo frutto  
cade dall'albero antico  
e già stanchi attendiamo  
che tutta la luce rubano gli occhi  
per riempire la notte.

Né suoni, né canti  
che prima ci allietavano il banchetto  
ora possono scacciare  
la tristezza dal convito.  
E' inutile ricordare con il vino  
la giovinezza fiorita  
lontana nel tempo  
con l'agile danza e l'aperto sorriso.

Vieni, Morte, a sederti accanto a noi  
sul triclinio dell'ebbrezza;  
conducici incoscienti  
sulla sponda dell'estrema rotta!

BRANDISIO ANDOLFI

Let us set the tables for the gay banquet of Goodbye  
When the last fruit falls from the age-old tree  
and, tired already, we await for our eyes to steal  
all the daylight's radiance to fill up the night.

Neither the sounds nor the songs that earlier on  
gladdened for us the banquet can now  
chase sadness away from the symposium's feast.  
It's no good now to evoke with wine  
flowery youth remote in time  
with the spry step of the dance and the innocent smile.

Come now Death and seat you beside us,  
on the long triclinium of mirthful intoxication;  
and lead us, as you alone know best,  
down the banks of the last riverside journey

*tradimento di Peter Russell,  
Pratomagno,  
29th September 1996*

Brandisio Andolfi is a leading senior poet from Campania. He teaches Latin in a Liceo Classico, and has also published books on Italian wines. He has published eight books of poetry over the past ten years. I greatly admire his work and hope to publish a group of them, with a short appreciation of his work, in a later issue of MARGINALIA.

Brandisio's latest book arrived here today, January 22nd 1998, and is entitled: ALBERI CURVI D'ACQUA (Foggia, Bastogi). A rich collection.

There is an excellent introductory article on Andolfi's work, <sup>by</sup> Gianna Vancini in the always lively and interesting Italian little magazine POM-  
ezia NOTIZIE, April 1997 (Ed. Domenico Defelice, via Fratelli Bandiera 8,  
00040 Pomezia, Prov. Roma).

Since writing the above, I see that there are TEN books of poetry by Andolfi, too many for me to list the titles here, but if anyone enquires, I will gladly send full details to them. I also recommend the monograph by Antonio Crecchia, La dimensione estetica di Brandisio Andolfi (Termoli 1994) which is both bio-bibliographical and critical.

## A Brief Note on "Quintilius"

27

*Peter Russell*

I invented the late greco-roman poet Quintilius back in 1948 after a visit to George Santayana, anticipating Wallace Stevens' "Old Philosopher in Rome" by quite a few years! I've been writing the poems of Quintilius ever since--a span of nearly fifty years.

Quintilius is a sort of *vast persona* (in Browning's or Ezra Pound's sense) and while his works are set in the Vth centry A.D., with many references to his well-known contemporaries and to contemporary and ancient (even for him) historical events and with entirely authentic Romano-Greek apparatus culled from original sources as well as the modern scholars, they reflect not only our modern condition but something of most centuries between his time and our own. I make lines of Dante, Pontanus, Scaliger, Milton, Corneille, Voltaire, Goethe, Hoelderlin, Novalis and many others into *echt-quintilius*. Shakespeare does not go unrobbed! Even William Carlos Williams is adumbrated by some of Quintilius's tropes.

I realise all too well that genuinely busy scholars will have little or no time to give to a contemporary artistic production unless they happen to be interested in poetry *per se*, which is pretty unlikely.

At present I am writing (and have been for ten years) the "Apocalypse" of Quintilius, which started out from a series of dreams I had which reflected many of the characteristics of the Judaeo-Christian and Islamic Apocalypses, (Dante's main sources), as well as of the Scythian 'shamans' described by Herodotus and revered by the early Orphics and Pythagoreans, not to say my memories of discussions with older indigenes both in Western and Eastern Canada. The text of the original 'Apocalypse' of Quintilius (1984) was burnt in a fire here in 1990, and as Dante knew only too well, it is not possible to reconstruct such visions from mere memory. The visions fade, you can't fake them. Thus much of the "Apocalypse of Quintilius" is quite unapocalyptic and like the vision of saint Perpetua or Chaim Vital, more concerned with personal contingencies than with communal or universal themes. However a new Revelation has been given recently and has already been written down in manuscript (January 1995).

QUINTILIUS POSTHODIERNUS?

If there are female gods

Why shouldn't there be

Male goddesses?

translated from a text in Coptic inscribed on a  
tablet found in a wine glass in a garbage heap in  
Sais and almost certainly by Quintilius

## A DAY TRIP TO MECCA

Nothing's going to change on the dirty old earth,  
 Unless for the worse. 'Umm Dafr, Mother of Stench,  
 Has seated herself in the mind and heart of man,  
 Dalâlah has crept into their steaming beds,  
 Hudâ, like blessed Hud Hud, is far away,  
 And I am off to the whorehouse to say my prayers

*translated from the slightly incorrect Pahlavi  
 of Quintilius by Peter Russell  
 Pratomagno,  
 28th February 1997*

## APOCALYPSE

The Revelation has come and gone. I who saw  
 A myriad worlds spinning within a nutshell and knew all the atoms  
 By name, now know nothing.

Silence

is always revealing.

Calypso told me

She was going away. I would never see her again.  
 She embraced me warmly for the last time, then stroking my hairy ears  
 Said: "Quintilius, divine man, I shall miss you.

Spit in my mouth

And I shall remember you always"

*from a late Lydian palimpsest found in Sarras,  
 translated by Peter Russell  
 Pratomagno,  
 22nd March 1990*

## ACADEMIC IMPARTIALITY

*Elemental Discourses* (University of Salzburg, 1981, no price given) is a collection by the English poet Peter Russell, who was born in 1921. The most interesting aspect of this volume is a lengthy introduction by the poet, in which he gives an account of his life, his opinions, and his poetry. A latter-day Thackeray would be well-advised to consult it for inspiration for a modern *Barry Lindon*, so colourful and hilariously revealing are its contents. The swagger of its tone (perhaps emulating Pound and Graves) seems to be a conscious attempt at myth-making, and we are told that 'a career of "living dangerously", a life possessed by phantasms, false gods, or rather false goddesses' involved nine African 'wives' (all at the same time) and two European ones. In the course of his 'little Odyssey' Russell has been court-martialled for Marxist activities by the British Army in Burma (he is now emphatically anti-Marxist), expelled from Iran during the Islamic Revolution, and Poet in Residence at the University of Victoria (British Columbia). The expression of his opinions is most telling in its extreme hectoring and self-advertisement, but one could see that the inclusion at the end of a curious and eratically-typed page from a fulsomely admiring letter about his poems (to 'give an idea of the sort of impact these poems can make even on a reader who has just emerged from the formidable testing ground of the Cambridge English School') as a defensive measure, though the poet himself is reminded by it of an instance in the life of Goethe. Of the poems themselves, several products of a mystic in the Kathleen Raine school, it is best to simply say that they are so frightful that they do not bear reading, and it is a mystery why the editor of this series, Dr. James Hogg, saw fit to publish them.

from *English Studies* (University of Nijmegen) Vol. 64. No.6 December 1983.  
from *Poetry Chronicle* by J.M. Blom and L.R. Leavis.

I am of course wounded to the quack by this lofty and sublime expert literary judgement. Keats was killed by a review, and I am almost dead now after thirteen years of fretting my heart out. My book so authoritatively condemned (in the Court of No Appeal) contained amongst others, my poems "Missing a Bus", "The Holy Virgin of Mileseva", "Communication", "A Summer Garden 1931", "The Ghost of Shelley", "Smoke", "Four Snowmen", and "The Act of Love" and all of these have been reprinted by the unpolished and stupid editors. The noble name of Leavis is associated with the condemnation of Keats and Shelley. In my insane and ingenuous vanity, I am rather pleased to be condemned by the same grand sham. Life, as opposed to academic Death is quite fun!

### POETS' BELIEFS

Auden believed in sodomy  
Pound in Mussolini  
Yeats in Lady Gregory  
Dylan in a brewer:y  
Heaney in his Irishry  
Hughes in every animal  
Frost in mending a wall  
Lowell in Robert Lowell  
And Larkin in bugger all.

#### *Alternative Version*

### POETS' BELIEFS

Auden took to Christianity  
Pound to Mussolini  
Yeats to Lady Gregory  
Dylan to every brewery  
Heaney to Nobel Prizery  
Hughes to every animal  
Frost to mending a wall  
Lowell to every Lowell  
And Larkin to bugger all.

#### AN EDITOR?

A no-good editor, an indifferent rhymer,  
"X" was a first-rate social climber.  
What was his secret? What was his trick?  
He always knew whose boots to lick.

William Oxley

Note: These pieces by William Oxley should be acknowledged to two British publishers. Unfortunately the details are nowhere to be found, probably destroyed by our playful ghiri! My apologies to Mr.Oxley and the Publishers.

If I may take the liberty of answering back, and after all William Oxley himself is an Editor, (and so am I), I would quote my quip:

"Some of my best friends are editors" P.R.

**TO AN EVASIVE EDITOR WHO CLAIMS  
IN A POSTCARD THAT MY LETTERS  
ARE NOT FORWARDED TO HIM**

FOR J.F.N.

I'd like to communicate, ghost-bard,  
But the forwarding clerks won't let us.  
Without your address it is *most* hard  
To send you my canzonettas.  
And you are a man of a postcard,  
While I am a man of letters.

WOMEN

I have weighed  
women in  
the balance  
and found them  
wanting  
TOO MUCH

POST MODERN PASTORAL

I found myself alone with Mary  
In a secluded shady nook.  
She said: "At last now, dearie"  
But my hands and knees both shook.  
Somehow I felt a little chary --  
Her greedy eyes were really scary.  
She had that -- well, -- recycled look.

An adipose esculent dormouse

Had forepaws gross and enormous

The books of the Bard

He hurled half a yard

And screamed "What I want is a warm 'ouse".

SAMSON for all his faults  
at least brought down  
the pillars of society

PENSIERINO

Now God is dead  
we turn our minds  
Pious in greed  
to the State  
"to solve our  
little problems"

## NIGHTMARE

We never reached the dream within the dream  
 Though all the time we knew that it was there  
 Just a few yards ahead across the stream,  
 And we in bed as though we didn't care.

You put your arms around my naked shoulders  
 And drew me down to kiss you on the lips;  
 Your breath smelt bad, your breasts were like dank boulders,  
 --My dreams, you said, were like your acid trips.

One frightful night with you was quite enough.  
 I called a taxi shortly after dawn.  
 You took it angrily and went off in a huff;  
 And then I thought: My God, the curtains were not drawn!

Victoria  
 February 1974

**SHILLINGPOUND, MIDDLESEX**

An undistinguished little place,  
 Everyone there is rich;  
 Each husband has an ugly face,  
 Each wife's a perfect bitch.  
 The Urban Council kindly pays  
 To maintain the cricket pitch,  
 But there's never a Dr. Grace,  
 They've the Test, -- at the turning of a switch.  
 It's the Joneses set the pace,  
 The young don't have the itch  
 Or the old regret their days,  
 And the only art is kitsch.

## SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

A poet's hide must be so infinitely thin  
 That in mid-winter it can feel the spring begin

A poet's skin must be so impenetrably thick  
 That it's insensitive to even the "friendliest" critic.



Poet, your job is, as a wily scribe,  
 To purify the dialect of the tribe.  
 Well, we are all expectant,  
 But you'll need a lot of disinfectant.

## STAND

## P.R. IN TEXAS

In a society  
 Dominated by  
 Female organs

That mare  
 She wanna buck

## THE NEW POETS

Male members  
 Should stand up  
 For themselves

Neither enabling  
 Nor ennobling

Watch out  
 She  
 Gonna rear

The New Poetry

Is all in-fabbling  
 And mostly enfeebling

AVUNCULAR  
 for Aurunculeia

**KISMET**

Are not the most impermanent things of this world  
 The most sought after? Mickey Mouse and the footballers  
 Have *miliardi* to throw about but the poor fucking poet  
 Has nothing . . .

Vis-à-vis the reviews  
 (their congenital nepotism)

Are the faeces of nieces  
 any better than

The refuse of nephews?

## ON WRITING EPIGRAMS

BETTER BE "CORRECT"!

The virtue of contempt

May well divert you

But from cold shoulders it will not exempt

Intemperate you, in the majority view,

For all the glory that you dreamt

The contempt of virtue

Will never hurt you.

## APOLOGIES

I apologise to all the poets.  
I've not had time to read.

All the poets I have read  
Should apologise to me

Some of my best friends are editors

Peter Russell

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