

P R E V I E W

F R SCOTT MARGARET DAY B RUDDICK PATRICK ANDERSON N SHAW P K PAGE

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ODE TO A POLITICIAN

Item: A Sturdy Boy.

In simple cottage, with scant ceremonial,
Observe the birthday of this young colonial.

Clutching the nearest good as best he can
The helpless mite perceives no social plan.

He grows unhampered in his natural skills
And finds companionship in lakes and hills.

Item: A Forked Road.

But soon this native freedom meets its end
And his fresh mind to ancient rules must bend.

At school he learns the three Canadian things:
Obedience, Loyalty, and Love of Kings.

To serve a country other than his own
Becomes for him the highest duty known,

To keep antiquity alive forever
The proper object of his young endeavour.

Item: A Young Man's Country.

Hence though the Northland calls him to be free
He never sheds this first servility.

His keen ambition, after several knocks,
Soon finds an outlet in the orthodox.

He does not recognize the new frontiers
Which beckon, as of old, for pioneers.

So he is proud, not seeing the distant star,
To hitch his waggon to the C. P. R.

Item: Doing Well.

No matter if his income starts from scratch:
In this career he quickly strikes a match.

Proceeding on two rails that never meet
He lands eventually on easy street.

For not a miner digs or farmer sows
Unless to this steel fist the tribute flows.

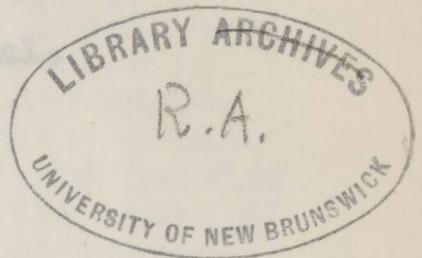
Item: Doing Good.

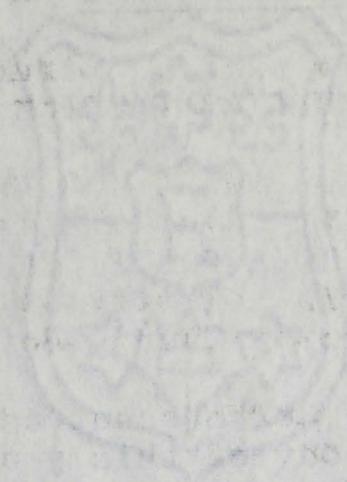
Now full success has brought him wealth and ease
With lots of honorary LL.D.'s

From this advantage point, still hale and hearty,
He slips a million to the Tory Party.

And in return for this attractive feeder
The party promptly chooses him as leader.

The public follow at the next election;
So there he reigns--the national selection.





EARN SCHEFFLE

LINEN BOND

HAS CONTENT-CANADA



Item: More Business in Government.

Canadians now have picked to run their state
The sort of man who 'made their country great'.

Once in the saddle, swift the whip he cracks.
The Mounties spring like thistles in his tracks.

When fools complain, or some poor victims squeal,
He meets their protest with the iron heel.

A simple rule for markets he discovers--
To close his own and blast his way to others.

To keep our credit good and money sound
Some novel democratic ways are found.

The rich are paid by taxes on the poor;
The unemployed are chased from door to door;

The wages fall though dividends are earned,
And people starve though surplus food is burned.

Item: A Flicker of Doubt.

This chaos kept alive by penal laws
In time gives even our politician pause.

Some glimmering concept of a juster state
Begins to trouble him--but just too late.

His own life work had dug the grave too deep
In which the people's rights and powers sleep.

Item: An Epitaph.

To make the single meaning doubly clear
He ends the journey--as a British peer.

F. R. Scott

LIGHT.

Walking through the streets makes me slightly giddy, as though I were intoxicated. The air is surprizingly palpable and there is so much of it. Whole quarters, environs, districts of light. Light fluffed up at the end of the street, coming apparently from nowhere, has been produced by blowing into the breast feathers of a bird. Light arrives, already printed, with the day's news in it, out of a piece of newspaper floating on the ground. The snow lets out its special radiance and, if you look closer, in furrow and drift and ice patch you will see the different sources of light--mica- opaque, granulated, slivered, muddy or dusky blue. A whole facade of stone grey villas, a darker tone in the general movement and expansion, has yet immense sources of light--a door knob, a basement window, the wooden fence around the nunnery are all, if distantly, affected. Above and almost crowded out by the tall buildings, or shut out by the mountain to whose sides the rich men's houses cling, is the sky itself. Immense as the sea, dramatic as sailing, it has a mournful, romantic, tattered look--as though it mirrored something completely wrecked, the clouds streaming out between the fingers of someone who has just broken the last thing he had to break and is looking on with a dismay which becomes every moment more mask-like and monumental. Believe me, all this is a surprise. There is a midway, down the street, wind and cold of light which clasps the face. There is the feeling of whole acres of light streaming just behind the focus of the eye; the tendency to keep the head revolving.

I exaggerate, perhaps, the dramatic qualities. All this comes, you see, as a complete contrast to hours of work in my room--cigarette smoke, the fumes of bitter tea, the electric light which must

be turned on early but which gives my pencil writing a soft, irritatingly blurred and unreal look. Outside it is so light, so wide, so heady --going out is a kind of daring. The core of it is a sense of drama, as though one were going out into the eyes of a thousand people. Passers by in the street are epic or mysterious. The war enhances these effects--my fear, I mean. At any moment, truning through a crowd at a corner, overhearing some conversation, there may occur a crisis, the sudden impact of a new, a heightened danger. There already exists a sub-crisis of light. Already one can see the city broken up, as though by Picasso, into fragments with jagged edges. Sometimes, walking along, in the dusk (still full of light), I pass one of the innumerable errand boys and then in the moment of passing, or just after it, my ears ring with a bell-like tone or the sound of one or two jumbled words, and I realize the the boy I just passed was whistling or talking to himself. Yet, in the first instance, it seemed like some effort at communication, a taunt or warning.

P. A.

BED-SITTING ROOM.

The sun has beaten its palms flat against glass
and getting no answer, strides like a long-legged ghost
over the window sill and camps on the rug;
releases canaries which perch on the chair and table,
hang from a bow on the wall paper
and sing like a needle.

The woman is cramped in the cupboard of ancient moths
and fondles the smudge of air with a face-cloth face,
breathes down the neck of her blouse
telling her threat of beads
with pin-prick fingers.

In the drawer her friends are launching their own Armadas
of paper boats with home truth ammunition;
the photos duel in their frames,
the smiling boy
hurls his smile like a javelin at the mirror.
The friend who will sit in the South of France forever
has shot her eyes at the class of nineteen thirty.

In the medicine closet behind behind the screen, the doctor
squats on his own prescription, legs around the bottle,
numb with his game and stiff as a flag pole sitter;

the authors scream to be set free from their prison.

P. K. Page.

WITH HIS SCIMITAR LOGIC

He pruned their ears.
Lopped they fell like lillies turned to toads.
"Peace," he said. "Now the runelling world
Will not whirl raucously to the nerve."
Then, wide-eyed they stood and dumb, lavish with blood,
Disordered,

Anticipating the neural terror.

Later, the stumps were unalarming, general and
Numb.

Ha, he thought, properly set and marked
For transfixing with totaling abacus-wire--
"Take ease now knowing my aid and aim.
I am your frock-man, your friend."--
Already shifting figures to his score and power.

Bruce Ruddick

Gordie, a Law student, had said, in his fascist way, that the best thing to do with people like Vi was to kill them off or to sterilize them. From Gordie that didn't shock us, but we thought it a little drastic--especially since we liked so many of these people from the "lower depths". In his easy French way Eddie had replied, "You have no need to scratch unless there is an itch." Gordie had scowled.

Around dinner time when I usually sold tickets to the passing tourists Vi would come up, and ask for Eddie. If he was anywhere around, she would sit with him up front in my bus. If not, she would wait for him there. I was generally on the gun at noon as Wally often gave me the dirty end of the stick and I had to take out the afternoon crowds who were bad for resales on other tours. But with Vi sitting there it made it easier. She certainly was a good come-on with her wonderful head of red hair. A good looking woman in the front of the bus simplifies selling considerably. If Eddie didn't turn up by the time I was ready to pull out she would sit there--even through the trip. She didn't bother to ask me if she could go, but I didn't mind having her sitting there behind me. As a matter of fact I rather liked being able to show off my driving. Besides I could always talk to her on those long stretches on the Indian tour when I wasn't spiling my usual line to the cash customers. That helped keep me awake when the sun beat down on the open topped bus and my heavy dinner drained the blood from my head and made me sleepy.

When she first turned up I used to wonder where she came from. Then Eddie told me that she was a waitress at the Albertan Hotel. So, long about midnight, after I had turned the bus in and checked out, I used to drop in there for the odd beer on the way home. Vi certainly sparkled among the tired hags who worked with her. They were on their way down if there was any "down" for them.

She liked that kind of life. Around nineteen years old, well-fixed and sultry she showed none of the signs of fatigue marking the others--fatigue which came as much from worry and the alcohol that was used to fix that worry as it did from being up all night. Maude, who worked with her once said, "There ain't much romance dishing up chile con carne and beer to drunks when your stomach's turning itself loose." But Vi liked it and the late hours weren't really late hours for her because nothing could scare her out of bed till after mid-day.

It didn't take much imagination to see why Eddie attracted her. As a medical student he was far more romantic than the regular type. Still there must have been something about Eddie himself. I was a student too, but I guess they thought I was queer. I guess I asked too many questions and talked too much, Eddie used to explain me away by saying that I was a poet and a radical. They laughed at that, but, still, it didn't make things much different. How the hell are you going to talk socialism to them when they are led to figure socialism will take away what little they have. After awhile I gave up trying to educate them. Eddie explained it nicely. "These girls have their fundamental itches and they have to be scratched. And they aren't itches that could be fixed by Carnegie Hall or the People's Forum. But they have to pretend that they don't need scratching. It makes them look better and it might land them a husband or at the least someone who will be kind to them. But if they get the reputation of being easy, no one who counts for anything in their lives pays them much attention. So they steer clear of people who talk a lot."

Maude said it was all a matter of face. College boys never kept their mouths shut. Went around boasting to their pals. The first thing a girl knew there were twenty drunken lustful idiots shrieking and mauling. I didn't know what to believe because when they heard that I liked to write they would often come up and tell me their stories, which were seldom tragic, seldom different. They all stemmed from some flaw in the social structure. But I could never figure the cure.

As for Vi, anyone with their eyes open could see where she was going. Most of the customers, liquored up, were firmly, (if over-hopefully) convinced where she was going. But she knew what she was about and picked her men strategically. Unless she fell in love. And then it would be some one impossible--like in the movies--like Eddie for instance who knew very well where he was going too.

I asked her once if she wouldn't like a more ordered life with steady hours and regular pay and nights off and the chance of a home and maybe kids. You know-- the old romantic craperoo. She laughed at me and said that I was a screwball and that she only worked from nine to two and that wasn't any twelve hour day in a sweat shop, and she didn't like kids because

they were too much trouble, took up too much of your time and ruined your looks and she liked being around the place with the floor show (amateur kids, blank on talent but long on guts) and the people and the noise. Life, she said, Life.

After a while Eddie got tired of her and stopped going down to the Albertan. She didn't seem to mind. Took up right away with a consumptive who worked for a bookie. A drawn yellow-faced punk who usually wore pointed tan shoes and suits of a sickening green with padded shoulders and tight waist. He had a lot of ready money and he was kind to her. After a while I guess she fell in love with him. Having him for herself made a snob out of her. She used to walk down the Square at noon with him and pass us by without even a nod.

Then she disappeared from our sight. I don't think any one missed her, but one night I asked Maude what had become of her. She was in hospital. Something wrong with her stomach, Maude was kind enough to add. Well you can't be sorry for the whole world at once.

The gang of us who worked sight-seeing on the Square (mostly from college like Eddie and myself) often used to argue about the Utopias we were going to make. Most of the Utopias were selfish individual heavens peopled with the wealthy and the care-free. None of us seemed to know what was to become of Vi and her kind while we were building these heavens. What was worse-- few of us cared.

But Vi isn't waiting for the millenium. I saw her the other day, dressed brightly and leading a little dog done up in a plaid blanket-coat. And that wonderful red hair was bleached, white and fluffy. I said, "Hello." Apparently she didn't hear me. Well that's no skin off my nose.

BRUCE RUDDICK

THREE STORMS

A pastoral country, and the quiet window
is flounced to the view like a lady:
the pony sunlight buries its nose in her hand
while the farms crack smiles and snap their laborers' muscles.

Nothing is lovelier than the plain-sailing sky
and the trees' fair dealing
in shade like stuff, inscents like intuitions:
nothing is lovelier than the quietness in which nothing happens.

But I call my storm: the roaring books of waves
brim in the alchemist's study
and the metaphors advance with their magic mirrors
while the foam does conjuring tricks with empty gloves.

Violence intervenes to rust the violet
and fish alter the flowers,
the anchor plows the field- in the iodine lane
the villagers see me freed by the art of drowning.

My second storm is a violent luxury
from a clergyman's den and paris,
juice pumps in the green and the long-stalked lilies squirt
in the physical folds of the valleys.

I travel overland on the breasts of a bed
freed as I drown in pleasure
but both my storms leave me too weak to escape
the discard sand, the accidie of winter.

Yet none shall tame my violence. I prepare
my third storm stronger
that the moral will and the feeling may be joined
for a calm of hands after a gale of hunger-

This storm is gentle and merciless as Spring,
flags stream in no wind
for the withered state and the slogan without sound
in the land without a country.

P. A.

DRINKER

Loping and sloped with heat, face thatched and red,
hating his engine boots spraying mechanical pebbles
he comes through the white blocked light to the fountain:
his shirt clinging about him wet and rose
hangs heavily in fornt with his chest's sour bracket.

He crouches then: he turns with a serious hand
the little wheel: hangs, frekcles over the jet
rising in a crush of water towards his floating mouth;
his eyes are wide and grave, his act seems private
and as his hand spreads on the green stained stone
his massive working throat is a column of pure love.

He tastes with the iron pipe the very roots of water
spreading under the ground, which in multitudinous dirt
and infinite threaded dark is purified-
he draws the long stalk of water up between his lips
and in his sandy mouth there bursts its melting flower.

Then he leaves off: wipes mouth and looks around
but the glaring buildings jump through the shabby trees
and he cannot have enough of the climbing slim
stalk with chrysanthemum head: hellets it ball
in his hanging mouth and shoer both face and thought.

When he has drunk and washed, he is still prodigal
but now he wears the water with an affluent grace
as silk and jewels amongst scars and hairs
and strolls away, turning often like a lighthouse
the look of his content upon the place.

PATRICK ANDERSON

HARBOUR

The heavy bridge above which
Hurried birds line the air
With smoothness,
And helpless waves below
With clutching hands
That shear the staring land.
Then ships,
All hazed with frantic love,
Edge into hopeful havens
While the city, jewelled woman
who spurns her tattered loves,
seeks riches in the easy clouds.

NEUFVILLE SHAW

Cezanne at last was tempted by an apple
To forego women and with fruit to grapple.

GOODRIDGE ROBERTS
