

*The Parliament of Foul Ideas*

*Or*

*Our Inalienable Right to Ignorance*

A Dream Vision  
Awakened into  
*Rhyme Royal*  
From Out a World  
Perversely Eager to  
Privilege the Unreason

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[See last page for publisher's colophon]

1

*T*hat life is short to live while long to learn  
Is why, still green for one soon gray, I've come  
To search more books for truths I can discern  
Of how our world *really* works—to plumb  
Convincing *evidence* in place of numb  
*Conventions* that seduce us with their ease  
While but extorting from our fears their fees.

2

No, not such books conventional to folk  
Who, rather than live *now*, would hold their breath  
On palliatives of myth with which to choke  
The irksome knowledge of their certain death  
And cower in the safety of inept  
Ideas of but *surviving* that same flesh  
In which thought's just a process of live mesh,

3

But, rather, those inviting us to view  
Through lenses undistorted by the tint  
Of nervous hope this world that *is* and, through  
Our deep engagement with it, leave our *print*  
Upon its fabric, not some ghostly lint;  
Yes, books meant not to lull our wits to sleep  
But wake them into life's vast wealth to reap.

4

Yet, *all* books should be read at reason's edge—  
Yes, even those reporting neutral fact—  
Lest we confuse *pro tem* belief with pledge  
Of FAITH (belief *despite* contrary fact)  
And offer up our brain to be hijacked  
By some authority unproven, who  
Exacts our blind allegiance upon cue.

5

For, while belief in its most basic mode—  
*Pro tempore*, that is, *before* we've wrought  
It firmly into FAITH—is *gene-bestowed*  
And necessary to our simplest thought.  
(It saves us all that time it takes, from naught,  
To prove the truth of *every* step we'd need  
Towards where the subject thought might  
*then* proceed.)

6

True FAITH is, on the contrary, that deal  
We cut in trusting with our eyes tight closed  
The verity of that which is *revealed*  
*To us as true* the while our reason dozed,  
Most typically because we're predisposed  
To find it so through fellowship in some  
Conspiracy pretending it's not dumb.

7

And so, I've long maintained that *any* book  
Can be misread *or* held in valid doubt  
And that what really counts is how we *look*  
In it ourselves to learn what it's about,  
*Not* how it's looked upon by the devout,  
Who deem a text as worthy for *their* eyes  
When judged as such by those they're *told* are wise.

8

Like when some minister of FAITH to whom  
They trust their moral guidance (just because  
He claims imaginary friends) presumes  
To solve life's toughest questions through odd laws  
He's read in ancient books of tired saws,  
Though *these* were writ by others who knew *naught*  
Of why things happened as they did and thought,

9

Conversely, that the superstitious lore  
Bequeathed to *them* sufficiently explained  
Injustices they saw arise before  
*Their* ignorance of things, and so, ordained  
Themselves as masters of but long-maintained  
*Wrong answers*. Thus, from out old fields come *new-*  
Grown crops of foul ideas to hold true.

10

**N**ow, I'd of late been reading deeply in  
The science of such things as love and sex  
And how such appetites, long seen as sin  
By hungry disapproving types perplexed  
By their own urges as they crane their necks  
To pry, are easier explained by how  
Our brains evolved than what our gods allow.

11

For, what our gods allow is also seen  
More clearly by a peek inside our brain,  
Whose architecture, drafted by our genes  
In concert with the world that's its terrain,  
Will favor features helping to sustain  
These genes and, hence, will best predict the sort  
Of things these gods we dream will like or thwart.

12

For instance, charitable acts toward those  
Whom we enslave—or grovel to when *they're*  
Perceived to wield the upper hand—or shows  
Of grand respect for rites that seemed to bear  
Us fruit when practiced last—like prostrate prayer—  
Yes, all such stratagems that served us well  
Before we learned to rule by threats of Hell.

13

The physiology of sleep and dreams  
Is yet another subject of the books  
I read that proves how often that which *seems*  
The reason something happens overlooks  
The way things *really* work, while tenured crooks  
Indulge their readers' longings to come read  
In dreams dark myths supporting their own creed,

14

And all in lieu of real-life facts that tell  
Of why a working brain does this or that  
Toward its efficient functioning. To sell  
Such truths to readers of romance proves flat-  
Out profitless, while myths make prophets fat.  
Hence, knowing how a dream is made reveals  
Far more than dream interpreters' ideals.

15

For, those who would *interpret* dreams design  
Posh metaphors to show the dream to "mean"  
Some *other thing* than how it's made—some sign  
That shrouds our guilty thoughts of some obscene  
Old wish that might disturb our own serene  
Time out quite lost in Morpheus's arms,  
Hence swapping facts of nerves for myths of charms.

16

Yes, all this goes to demonstrate my view  
That books are better savored for their art  
Of bringing thoughts and feelings into true  
Engagement with our life than as some smart  
Prescription for its proper living. Start  
With any book at hand and you will feel  
Beliefs compete for sway at selfhood's wheel.

17

And just to prove that I mean *any* book,  
I chose from off a shelf the one called *Good*  
By those who don't read books, and as I shook  
Its dust and cobwebs off as best I could  
I planned to find in it such stuff that would  
Provide me that respite for tired nerves  
That prunes the clutter of my day's reserves.

18

I speak of SLEEP, of course: that splendid state  
Of drugged oblivion insuring fresh  
Connections in the circuits we create  
All day and night within our neural flesh  
Which, wearied by redundancies of mesh  
Accrued by forming synapses at work,  
Consolidates its pathways through this murk.



19

Yes, I am one who venerates the nap:  
That seeming flick of switch rebooting brains  
Grown heavy with their endless work to map  
Their world by fooling them to feel the gains  
That normally a good night's sleep attains.  
And here I'd found that sedative to best  
Help lure my tired brain to be its guest.

20

For, I have found no better way to reach  
That sacred place of senselessness than through  
The blur of print upon a page whose speech  
Seduced my tired brain to bid adieu  
To my identity and but construe  
Myself as one with whom I've just now read  
(As if I woke in someone else's head).

21

Now, I had opened up this book of books  
Quite randomly to one specific place  
(Among the countless of such puzzling looks)  
Its editors had managed to debase  
Of meaning relevant to that strange "grace"  
In which their god had sacrificed his son  
For crimes that *everybody else* had done.

22

I mean that pointless place some nodding scribe  
Had made when he had Jesus, “by the *grace*  
Of God,” taste death for all the human tribe  
Instead of what had been in that word’s space  
“*Apart from God*” in early texts—a case  
In proof that even scripture lacking sense  
Will summon devotees to its defense.

23

Yes, in this letter to the Hebrews, Paul,  
We read (as published now), proposed this sense  
Of “*grace*” in which his Christ’s betrayal, fall,  
And rise again to fame and recompense  
May be interpreted as evidence  
Supreme of God’s unfathomable *love*  
For all—though just some mistranslation of

24

The Greek that really meant “*apart from Him.*”  
And thus another strict tradition, born  
Beneath a scribe’s bleared eyes, took on a grim  
New life its own, protected by the scorn  
Of those authorities to whom are sworn  
The followers of *any* cult who fear  
To question what would make *a child* sneer.

25

So anyway, as I then sat the while  
With book wide open on my lap, I felt  
My critical facility and guile  
Dissolve from where that sense of me had dwelt  
Into the nonsense of what here was spelt  
And came to recognize the view from where  
I now peered out, suspended in the air.

26

I felt the long-familiar presence of  
Someone I knew—though not, somehow, by face  
Or voice, it seemed—who spoke to me of *love*  
That had made necessary this embrace  
He'd made of my demise which, by the *grace*...  
Of odd illogic made a kind of sense  
Now as to why this scene felt *so* intense.

27

For, yes, intense *anxiety* prevailed  
As my most salient feeling now: a weird  
Concern that this on which I'd been impaled  
Of late would be, perversely, soon *reversed*  
As but a symbol of that "grace" that steered  
Me here to stand for all that's "moral," "good,"  
And "loving," though, in fact, *misunderstood*.

28

**F**or, what in any *healthy* mind could stand  
For “love” that is so hateful as this hell  
To which each must submit at His command  
For disobeying some pernicious spell?  
How *can* that word denoting how hearts swell  
In one another’s happiness be one  
That *also* means the punishment of fun?

29

Can words be so capricious of their freight  
As makes them suited to conveyance of  
Whichever cargo we desire? “*Hate*”  
Could then be used *precisely* to mean love!  
Why speak *at all* if truths don’t count *above*  
Conventions of odd sounds we make with tongues,  
Teeth, lips and noses, diaphragms and lungs?

30

But I digress, of course; such reasoned thought  
Was *far* removed from where I’d slipped through time  
And space into that world my text had wrought—  
*Especially in strictly metered rhyme!*  
Yes, this concern that some collective crime  
Of all mankind could truly be redeemed  
By *my* appearance here, as it now seemed,

31

Was not quite *thought* but rather just the *feel*  
Of something *truly dumb* stuck in my craw:  
That sense one has that something *can't* be real  
Despite the oaths of those who claim they saw  
It, heard of it, or read it in some law;  
That feeling in our gut before we veer  
Instinctively from something smelling queer.

32

Yet, often we remember queer events  
From out our nighttime dreams that didn't seem  
In conflict with our life experience  
While watching them arise. For, every dream  
Is but *experienced* as well and deemed  
Therefore believable until we've mapped  
Them with our *waking* sense of what seems apt,

33

Which was *asleep*, of course, the while these stray  
Odd remnants of old memories, unloosed  
By waves of deep unease, were then arrayed  
Into a narrative of sorts reduced  
Of sense by night-shift faculties unused  
To editing such stuff amid the dark.  
In light of *all of this* I've just remarked,

34

We should allow that what we each believe  
At any given time has less to do  
With what is “true” than how we best achieve  
Those feelings of reward we all pursue  
Toward validation ever craved anew.  
In other words, whenever reason dims  
Around us—night *or* day—amid our whims,

35

*We are insane*, regardless of the depth  
Of dignities we rally round our cause  
To buy it some respect. The stunning breadth  
Of tolerance for half-baked thought our laws  
Protect does not indemnify the flaws  
Of logic, nay of *common sense* no less,  
Revealed in our esteemed religious texts.

36

For these, when read point-blank—I mean without  
The aid of such indoctrination stirred  
Into young pliant minds till cleansed of doubt—  
Betray the hands that forged them as "God's word"  
(In hopes of dignifying the absurd).  
Said simply, sacred texts are those we've *learned*  
*To read that way for fear of being spurned.*

37

**I** dare you find a page of *any* text  
That can't be read as REVELATION! Why,  
A *shopping list* can serve the man perplexed  
By death with needed proof his soul won't die  
When he does, *read with ample* FAITH! We buy  
What's written down much sooner than what's spoke  
Because of all the cryptic sense evoked

38

By something *seen*—more tangible than heard.  
While words evaporate the moment said,  
Those writ remain till our attention's blurred  
Envisioning the stuff *left out* instead.  
This bent for gleaning *in between* what's read  
Gives clues as to how human brains evolved  
To fill the gaps they find toward problems solved.

39

And hence, the written word, though really just  
Some scratches symbolizing sounds we coin  
Toward useful trade in one another's trust,  
Becomes for us much more—the very groin  
In which things witnessed and inferred are joined  
From out their commerce, hence our special sense  
We get of something left in *evidence*.

40

Yes, evidence of truth in that weird hunch  
Predicting something near us we don't see.  
For, those who *lacked* this sense became the lunch  
Of stealthy predators, a guarantee  
Of less successful genes and our best key  
To how we've come to read the way things look—  
First on a forest floor, then in a book.

41

Yes, just as when we might unearth some bones  
And weapons while we're digging in the dirt  
And quick envision violent struggle, groans,  
And silenced life that long since lay inert,  
These sundry marks found on our page alert  
Us to a presence of the past: a clear-  
Cut proof that someone else had toiled here.

42

And just because another came and left  
This record of endeavor for us, we  
Who find it tend to read in it a depth  
Of consequence beyond what it should be,  
As if mere *transcripts* of events we see  
Were, *ipso facto*, truer—yes, more *real*—  
Than those *experiences* they might reveal.



43

But then in light of this we must concede  
That what is found in sacred books becomes,  
*Especially for those who do not read,*  
A proof of authenticity that numbs  
One's reason past its inquiry and dumbs  
Down standards of credulity enough  
To but embrace the most *amazing* stuff

44

That superstition can serve up: such lore  
That folk will swallow whole (to circumvent  
Its chewing into bits they might abhor)  
Without suspecting that they'd underwent  
Indoctrination to be made content  
With foolishness in place of what is real—  
**THAT THEY WILL DIE**—hence, *dodge the need to feel.*

45

Yes, lore that's conjured out of their own fear  
Of not surviving death and used to lure  
Them with absurdities they yearn to hear  
In guarantee of their extinction's cure,  
Which only comes, of course, to hearts deemed "pure"  
(I.e., full gullible). Thus sacred books  
Provide the fisherman of souls fine hooks.

46

**N**ow, it's well reasoned we should wield the *right*  
To entertain whatever muddled thought  
Has worked its way into our appetite  
And trust uncritically what all we're taught  
In books by those who'd been there first and brought  
Back news—for instance that the dead will rise  
And live without their brains up in the skies.

47

But then it's only fair that those who yield  
To us this right to our delusions should  
*Themselves* be free to harbor, unconcealed,  
Their qualms about our having understood  
This world of ours sufficiently as would  
But recommend us to their confidence  
Concerning facts we *all* agree make sense,

48

Like gravity and other staple laws  
Of physics or biology we bank  
On with the trust of our own lives *because*  
They are unyielding—this despite our frank  
Indifference to them when we stoop to thank  
Some "outside" force for (somehow) *intervening*  
In this same steadfast mesh of laws—demeaning

49

To our species when you think of it.  
For, these same folk who dare to board a plane  
*Because* they trust that physic's laws permit  
No breeches *whatsoever* in this chain  
Of happenings that keeps their flight sustained  
Still hold (once safely landed) that their God  
Can reach right through this weave to wield his rod,

50

Adjusting outcomes here and there at will  
Without (somehow) disrupting all the rest  
On which the whole depends. Now, such a skill  
Would need ignore, of course, that very test  
To which we put all truths we would invest  
In otherwise where our survival's sought.  
I mean, of course, *consistency of thought*—

51

Yes, that innate aesthetic sense employed  
Toward weighing choices in our path we can't  
Yet know the scope of, though we most avoid  
It when it's inconvenient and thus grant  
Its use but when we wish, as to supplant  
Real wisdom with expedience's hopes,  
Like swapping treatises with horoscopes.

52

And this *precisely* mirrors what our laws  
Effectively promote: obliged respect  
For *bad* ideas alongside good because  
They're all the work of circuits that connect  
In human brains—as if we should select  
A ball to eat when hungry for a fruit  
*Since both are round*, a fact beyond dispute.

53

By *bad* ideas, therefore, I mean not just  
Those inconvenient to our aim but, more  
To point, those *unsupported by our trust*  
*In how the world works*—yes, setting store  
In sheer absurdities that any boor  
Can see who's not *obliged* to call them true  
By some tradition sheathed in its taboo

54

Against its well-deserving ill respect;  
Absurdities repeated by one's peers  
Enough to *gain remembrance*, hence collect  
The cozy feel Convention commandeers  
From sense till they're perceived as souvenirs  
Of comfy habit, though mere anodyne  
To reason's wounds to make them *feel* benign.

55

Again, we *should* be free to be such dopes  
If so inclined, but that we'd honor, prize,  
And *privilege* such inanity—where popes  
Are kowtowed to as alpha males all-wise  
Though masters of mere fairy tales and lies—  
Reveals a most perverse esteem for those  
*Least* representative of how man rose

56

To dominate the life forms on this earth.  
Our scientists, who've studied long to learn  
Why things but happen as they do, are worth  
In popular regard a *fraction* earned  
By church authorities, who've but discerned  
*Their* answers to these same hard questions through  
What things were known when *wheelbarrows* were new!

57

That's right, back when technology emerged  
At last to lug some rock upon a wheel—  
Millennia before glass lenses urged  
Us to investigate those worlds revealed  
*Beneath* the surface of what seemed—we kneeled  
In base subservience before our own  
Best image of authority we'd known

58

And bade these parent figures in the sky  
Come lavish on our most unworthy skill  
Advantages allowing us to buy  
In subjugation those less worthy still  
And asked too why our begging came to nil  
So oft despite our offerings bestowed  
On them in fearful supplication owed.

59

It was back then, when we knew *nothing* of  
What made things work, that these good texts were writ,  
Revealing how we crave parental love  
And validation. Now, although worth *shit*  
In terms of showing us the way things fit  
To build the here and now, these texts became  
Of help in teaching us to locate blame.

60

For, easier than understanding *why*  
A crop had failed or slave had died while strong  
Was finding *culprits* we could punish, buy,  
Or influence till there might come along  
An outcome we preferred. Thus right and wrong  
Behaviors learned upon our parents' knees  
Would later help us know what would not please

61

Our parent-*gods* as well, explaining just  
Enough to satisfy the clueless why  
Bad things befall good folks: erotic lust,  
For one, which disrespects the gods on high.  
Now, this confusion of a parent's wry  
Disapprobation and the reason things  
Are *as they are* is what religion brings

62

To our attempt to better understand  
Our world. Where science questions each thing taught,  
*Regardless* of authority's command,  
Religious doctrine yearns to ban each thought  
Refusing to salute the rule it ought.  
And hence, the sacred text's assured appeal  
Lies in the ease with which its truths *seem* real.

63

Yes, more alluring even than the fact  
Of verity is that sweet rush we feel  
When dopamine rewards us for the act  
Of *recognizing* it—as if the meal  
Were less sustaining than that sense revealed  
By appetite new-satisfied. It's *this*  
We chase: less truth than *certainty's* cheap bliss.

64

**B**ut once again I see how much I've strayed  
From where my dream was taking me—way back  
When I'd first sunk into that text displayed  
Across my lap and found myself but smack  
Between a pair of thieves, where I'd been tacked  
Aloft to save the world from sin and bring  
Redemption to mankind, or some such thing.

65

Like any dream I've ever had, this one  
I'd lived within my nap seemed just as real  
As being *here* amid this line begun  
Above with "as," and I recall the feel  
Of hoping that this *ludicrous* ordeal  
Through which I'd been thus sacrificed for crimes  
Not mine might promise me some better times

66

Ahead, once all were said and done. And yet  
I also felt the while that strange old sense  
We get when assets won against our debt  
Accrued in winning them *don't* match expense  
And we're worse off the more we're recompensed.  
For, here I was, the hero of a cult  
That saw my death as something to *exult*



67

In—no, not *mourn* my loss but *praise* it's worth  
To all who value most what's out beyond  
The scantest proof of it known here on earth—  
As if these devotees of mine who'd donned  
The sordid relics of my broken bond  
With some despotic parent of the skies  
Came not to grieve but *savor* my demise,

68

Yes, see it, *somehow*, as the very source  
Of *their* anticipated life-to-come:  
That perfect, endless sentience as some force  
*Ideally* unencumbered by this hum-  
Drum earth-bound stuff we call "mere flesh."  
As this might sound to you (I hope), to *me*  
It had the ring of clear *insanity*:  
Now, dumb

69

That superstitious mythic space where each  
Coincidence one meets is read as cause,  
Confusing chance with agency's long reach,  
As if but governed by those very laws  
That merely *recognize* inherent flaws  
In our ability to pattern out  
The whole from those stray parts we find about

70

Us here. Just picture it yourself: a crowd  
Of followers assembles at your feet  
(Among the skulls of those whose disemboweled  
Careers forewarn *unpleasantly*) but greet  
You *not* as one whose life looks incomplete  
Of late, and thus deserving of their aid,  
But one to whom it's prudent to have *prayed*.

71

Yes PRAYED! Not helped, nor even understood,  
But *preyed upon* as bait toward bigger catch,  
As if some Ur-progenitor they would  
Conceive to dignify the way they'd hatched  
Were further dreamt to eat His young, who snatched  
Some misfit from the brood to offer Him  
Whose jealous vengeance threatened life and limb.

72

Now, puerile claptrap such as this but proves  
To *live* more stupid even than it sounds,  
Which says *a lot*, of course. For, it behooves  
Me to point out right here the different grounds  
On which a pain described and *felt* impounds  
One's sense of being. Where you would need *pretend*  
You're me, I *feel* this pain you'd apprehend.

73

Yet wait!, I hear you now protest. This dream  
 Of yours had never *really* "happened" though,  
 Not as a *physical event* (redeemed  
 In time and space). It's but *imagined* so,  
 An *immaterial* reflection thrown  
 Of jumbled *misconceptions* of the real—  
 Hence, *not* a "thing," as such, you *really* "feel."

74

To you I'd answer thus: Well then, just go  
 And find a brain that isn't altered—yes,  
 And let me highlight *physically*—by so  
 Much as a thought! Just follow the success  
 Of all those nerve connections coalesced  
 The while you think and watch them rearrange  
 Brain tissue till it's *palpably* been changed!

75

Yes, thought is but a *physical* event,  
 A happening, *quite tangible*, convened  
 In circuitry that's formed of nerve cells sent  
 In search of correlation found between  
 Hard facts about the world out there we glean  
 And that predictive model we maintain  
 Toward mapping out survival's best terrain.

76

This *process* of a working brain, called "mind,"  
Is, in relation to the object, "brain,"  
What incandescent light is to that kind  
Of wire filament that will retain  
Sufficient heat. And so we must abstain  
From thinking mind a substance *separate* from  
A brain when it is rather just the sum

77

Of all its working attributes in play  
That cannot be reduced to those same states  
On which the whole was built without decay  
Into incongruously disparate traits.  
In other words, this mind each brain creates  
Is its *emergent property*, with thought  
Being one late layer of this system wrought.

78

And yet, these mappings of our world our brains  
Evolved to weave in such increased detail  
Are spun from little more than what our pains  
And thrills are: an electro-chemic veil  
Of stimulus response, now on a scale  
So vast we cannot grasp it till it's seen  
*Divinely*: as some ghost in our machine.

79

These ghosts are byproducts of our far past,  
When folk who had perversely feared some dead  
Thing as still animate had thus amassed,  
Ironically, survival rates ahead  
Of those less superstitious types who'd fed  
With fearlessness their predators in place  
Of progeny. Hence, spirits were embraced

80

As not just plausible but *requisite*  
Components of our cognitive design,  
Permitting us to utilize, a bit  
Less dangerously than otherwise, that line  
Of hazarding an option as defined  
Less by real evidence than by some hunch  
Made clear through fear we're someone else's lunch.

81

Now, all of this—regardless whether sense-  
Perceived, recalled, imagined, or *sleep-dreamed*—  
Is done with ions in synaptic clefts  
Toward that remembered present of what seems.  
For, as our poet long ago had deemed:  
The dreamed and the perceived, seen close enough,  
Reveal that they're both made of that same stuff!

82

Yes, "stuff" none other than that language writ  
In atoms charged unequal to their nerve  
Cell walls, conducted as potential, bit  
By bit (as on or off), from ports that serve  
To bind with other neurons and preserve  
A circuitry semantically complex  
From out the varied options it connects.

83

Yet, this same stuff communicating sense  
Through flesh by means of that electric meld  
Of chemically-inspired membrane—hence,  
Dependent on those very laws beheld  
By science to discern how it is spelled—  
Is trusted by most folk to but *survive*  
The body's habitat in which it thrived!

84

In other words, they hold in FAITH this stuff  
That is the product of a process of  
Biology and physics close enough  
To be predicted *can still rise above*  
The death of cells in which such things as love  
And satisfaction were achieved, despite  
The fact these cells are dead and won't excite!

85

How does this mechanism of a brain  
That forms this circuitry in which to hold  
Those special attributes we still explain  
To be intrinsic to this thing called "soul,"  
Like wit or verve or knowing how to bowl,  
Remain *intact*, alive to its last shred,  
Once those same cells that nourished them are dead?

86

Let's take for argument your Uncle Dick,  
Who was, while still among the living, quite  
Recalcitrant—a textbook model of a prick—  
Though it turned out, *to everyone's delight*,  
His brain scan showed a tumor that grew right  
Where his compassion should have been enclosed  
In just those circuits now long decomposed.

87

When your dear aunt had buried him (in feigned  
Remorse, perhaps, for her most "grievous" loss),  
Your family had but sat around and strained  
At justifying why he hit the sauce  
And, then, his wife. For, now he came across  
As someone *not* responsible for those  
Behaviors we once thought he really *chose*.

88

Now, most believe this poor prick's soul enjoyed  
His way to heaven as a packet of  
"Pure energy, which cannot be destroyed,"  
They'd hold. But it *can* be *transformed*, above  
His corpse, *as heat that rises up* past love  
And hate to dissipate into the air—  
That place they'd have him float in, full aware

89

Of *everything* on earth he didn't know  
Alive. And this same personality,  
Remembered differently by friend and foe,  
Still seemed, despite the immortality  
He scored beyond his brain's finality,  
*Distinctively his own*...though no one knew  
Quite whether this would be the one that drew

90

Upon his brain *just prior* to this growth  
That interfered with how he'd seemed till then,  
Or, rather, *after* it replaced with oaths  
That kinder Dick the pastor spoke of when  
The eulogy was read aloud, amen.  
And so we see that Dick's immortal soul  
Depended *vastly* on which brain he stole.



91

**B**ut you who've dared so far to follow me  
Upon the tightrope of each line stretched taut  
In careful feet above the sharp debris  
Of misinterpretation really ought  
To know the actual feel of being caught  
*Enjambed between* these very lines with which  
We draw our sense of self so true to pitch.

92

For, this is but a *literary* work—  
A *poem*, not some tract, the meaning of  
Which one might find but buried in the murk  
Of rhetoric instead of how some dove  
Or plover sounds to ears tuned high above  
Those earth-bound mutterings of prose, which deals  
At best in facts and not in how stuff *feels*.

93

Our model for this parody in verse  
Has as its central scene—that is, *within*  
The "frame" our narrator had us immersed  
In touching how he fell asleep chagrined  
By Love and how She *still* eluded him—  
A lovely fuss about how all earth's birds  
Had met to try out some seductive words

94

With which to find their mates, and then, once they  
Had failed at that, to but appeal to Love  
*Herself* upon this obscure martyr's day—  
The one we celebrate love on *above*  
Those better candidates we've long heard of—  
And then agreed to settle it *next year*  
On this same day, hence ending in good cheer.

95

These lines, composed by that most subtle ear  
In English (*if you call what Chaucer spake*  
That self-same language we speak now) endear  
Us to the value of those dreams *we wake*  
*From* into those *we live in* and *partake*  
*Of* with great certainty that we can know  
The difference, *which is difficult to show*.

96

For, this most vivid dream of mine I'd sung  
About above while dangling from my cross  
Was made *identically* to those I've clung  
To in the daylight of my life and glossed,  
Therefore, as quite veridical. The cost  
Of each is but experienced the same  
Regardless of which term I use to frame

97

It in a rhyme. We live within a vast  
Continuum of consciousness we call  
"Real life" or "made-up shit" or else what's classed  
"Insanity" according to the fall  
Of consequence around us. That is all.  
In short, our wakeful conscious life is but  
Some narrative we weave of what means what

98

To our survival of such varied sorts,  
Including, *when not literal*, that kind  
Of *social* circumstance that best supports  
A comfortable living unconfined.  
And so, regardless of how it is enshrined  
In our vocabulary, *we must dream*  
*To live*, lest we forget how life *might* seem

99

In certain situations posing threat  
To the assured survival of our genes.  
So, when I dreamt my sacrificial debt  
Was paid by gruesome and inhuman means,  
My brain was but preparing for such scenes  
I might endure when this you've just now read  
Is judged to be *quite worthy of the dead* —

100

Yes, by religious critics who would call  
Aloud for my good name's dismemberment  
To punish me for how I'd so appalled  
Their God with blasphemies that give consent  
To seeing FAITH as *so much time misspent*.  
And thus, these books I'd read became in me  
The very stuff of which my dreams might be.

—The End

Publisher's Colophon

*The Parliament of Foul Ideas*

Or

*Our Inalienable Right to Ignorance*

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by

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