

FALLING WEATHER

The last of autumn came down wet and hard.
For nearly two weeks all we heard
was warring water, javelins of rain.
Then subverted river overran
its trench, joined forces with its kin
to sludge the valley, slime the cane.
For miles the occupation gray-washed
homes with camouflage, patterned as wind wished,
making all our captive eyes reflect
our impotence. And now we watch foam-flocked
retreat: Faint sun grovels in refraction
of trickles, withdrawal etched by friction
between what stays and what must leave.
And while we sort the salvage, lave
the conscious grit and clear the rubbed mind,
rebel clouds regroup under new command.

--Glenna Holloway
THE CAPE ROCK, 1997



Glenna Holloway's Poetry Workshop, The Authors Room, April 30, 2005.
Front Rows (L-R.): Jimmy Lee Buehler, Louise Hullinger, Beverly Ellstrand, Catherine Cajandig, and Gwendolyn Griffen.

CALLIGRAPHY BY NIGHT

Three migrating cranes
brush inky strokes across
the waning moon's empty page.

In silvered silence
we read their cryptic message
like an ancient haiku scroll.

--Glenna Holloway,
1985, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR;
1995, RED MOUNTAIN RENDEZVOUS (anthology)

WINGING IT* (excerpt)

December 17, 1903 In commemoration of the 100th
anniversary of the Wright Brothers' historic first flight.

Orville grinned as Wilbur ran to meet
Their wing-warped oddity, to take his turn
To keep the clumsy dream aloft, inhale
Its fumes, extend its reach, exceed the time.
Twice each, the brothers broke accepted law.
Each test was higher, longer than the last
Until almost a minute *Flyer* flew.

It rose above its flaws and proved its name.
It bullied air and arced the emptiness,
Its altitude eight hundred fifty feet
For half a mile, a whole lifetime of lift
Above the ragged shore of Hatteras,
Above the tossed up caps the guardsmen's yells,
Two Dayton boys sure this was not a dream.

The world, not sure of much, did not yet feel
The slipstream of a powered airplane's rise,
The impact of those landings on the sand.
That day at Kitty Hawk man overrode
Earth's ancient pull. The tether snapped, one era
Closed, an unimagined age was born

And here below would never be the same.

--Glenna Holloway
NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, 2003

* Selected poems and excerpts of poems read by Glenna Holloway on April 30 are featured in this issue.

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DEAR MR. KEILLOR

Your piece called "My Career in Radio"
Is not a sonnet. Faulty structure makes
The title of your book unapropos.
Your mixed-up misfit metrics are mistakes.
Your fame does not excuse the shoddy way
You carelessly departed from the norm.
No doubt you won't like what I have to say.
However, I, at least, have used good form.
Your pattern is a wreck, your rhymes are bad.
If you dislike restrictions, stick with prose.
Since I'm a sonnet buff, it makes me sad
When modern bards assume a bogus pose.
So let me slip this bee inside your bonnet--
Despite the fourteen lines, it's not a sonnet.

--Glenna Holloway

No PENTAMETER

MY CAREER IN RADIO

I'm a radio man for thirty-some years — 4
In St. Paul, an old variety show 4
Like those I used to hear, my dears, 4
When I was a child long ago. 3
To critics, my show is peppered 3
With little bits of Bob & Ray 4
Jack Benny, and Jean Shepherd, 3
But those critics are dying (Hooray!) 3 or 4
And to twenty-year-olds who were born 4
Too late to hear the great Fred Allen 4
I am the master of the form 4
Sailing the airwaves like Magellan 4
If a thief escapes and is not hung 4
He may be honored by the young. 4

—Garrison Keillor

Garrison Keillor's new collection, Sonnets, 1983–2008, was just published
by Common Good Books.

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February 2, 2011

Dear Glenna,

Thanks for your note about G. Keillor's "sonnet." I agree that it's a travesty. Did you ever find a way to get the message to the Great Man?

Here's a masterful sonnet that the New Yorker wants to publish on their cover! It will be a historic first. We are dickering over price as I write this note. How much do you think would be fitting?

Sonnet? Shame on It!

When Petra pants to pick a pale bouquet
among the beds blocked out by boys in boots,
why must she first snatch Gramp's deluxe toupee,
then pull out Rory's roses by the roots?

Then, too, there's Sam's insistence on his right
to play the fool with Rachel's matzo balls.
The ones she makes are round and fluffy light,
but Sammy heaves them splat! against the walls.

I shrink from schlock that surely shocks mankind.
Example: when the pungent breezes blow
full windy from our Patrick's pink behind
the days he moons and lets the pressure go.

The world would be a better place to live
if there were fewer mischiefs** to forgive.

Is your computer out of service for good or can it be fixed? m You can't be without a computer.

Here's another masterful sonnet;

Sonnet from the Duc de Guise*

I couch my words in meter and *en vers*
so they will fit the format *imposé*,
thus hoping to excel *de cette manière*
and garner lavish prizes *en monnaie*.

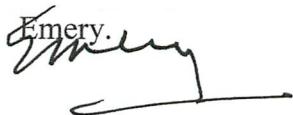
For themes I use *étranges* and sundry *chooses*:
chagrin d'amour, an overripe *poisson*,
from ancient tales *des héros bellicoses*.
I build upon them all *à ma façon*.

The stanzas take their place, defy *critiques*.
They stride *au pas* with sure *facilité*,
cascades of classics; aren't they *magnifiques*?
They've earned me well-deserved *publicité*.

J'espère that now I've penned such *beaux poèmes*
le roi will grant me three new *diadèmes*.

*Title patterned after "Sonnets from the Portuguese" of EBB
** Or is it mischieves? My machine says I misspell it.

And so it goes...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emery". It consists of a stylized first name above a more formal last name, with a decorative flourish at the end.

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July 4, 2007

Dear Glenna,

The title of the poem about formal verse in my last letter is "A Formalist's Credo." I've heard others say that the content of a poem dictates its form, but just to be contrary, I don't subscribe to that either. I see no reason why any particular subject would fit only one certain form and not another. My tsunami poem is as good an example as any. As far as I was concerned, it could just as well be a free verse poem as a formal one. I've written many sonnets with a wide variety of themes. It's usually just a matter of how the piece turns out rather than any preconceived idea of what form it should take. I rely heavily on a rhyming dictionary and a thesaurus in crafting my stuff, and the direction a poem takes depends a lot on the words I find that advance the construction. I also have a crow poem of my own (see enclosed copy of "For the Birds"), and I'll throw in, at no extra charge, two more sonnets on widely different themes.

To illustrate this contention I'll enclose two chants royal (or is it chant royals?) that I have come up with over the years. One is an instructional piece on how to write a chant royal, and the other is about haute cuisine, two quite different subjects. In these two cases I started both with the idea that I would craft them in the chant royal form, not because I was convinced that no other form would do, but rather that I had simply decided in advance that I would see if I could do that particular form. The subjects were just means to an end. Incidentally, Babette Deutsch says nothing about the need for a C.R. to be based on scripture.

The one titled "Chant Royal 101" won \$50 in a contest sponsored by the Poetry Society of Georgia, not to be confused with the G.P.S., that offered just the one award. It subsequently appeared in one of their annual anthologies. "Another Helping, Please" also won a first prize in one of the P.S. of G.'s other contests as well as an HM in a Georgia Writers Association's monthly competition and a second prize in a contest offered by the Southeastern Writers Association in conjunction with one of their annual workshops in St. Simons Island, GA. It has been published three times, including in my book.

I may have told you in the past that after leaving the navy in 1950 I got a BA in French at the University of Wisconsin in 1952. (I had spent enough college time earlier in the navy's V-5 program to earn three semesters of credits at Uncle Sam's expense before becoming a naval aviator.) I then lived in Paris and Nice the next two years doing post-graduate work, and after that I worked for ten years as an employee of a division of the ITT Corp. in their Paris office. It was during those years that I acquired a reasonable proficiency in the French language and was exposed to the country's cooking.

Our July fourth is slipping away in relative quiet. A burst of firecracker sounds rings out every now and then, along with the whistle and bang of bottle rockets. The municipality will put on a fireworks display this evening. The severe drought plaguing the southeast for some time has wisely led to the cancellation of many such shows to avoid the risk of starting wildfires in tinder-dry woodlands. Much of the Okefenokee swamp has been consumed by fire this year, and raging forest fires in north Florida and south Georgia in past months have cast a pall of smoke all the way up to Atlanta. A heat wave accompanied by high humidity has oppressed this area for some time now, slightly eased by brief thunderstorms on three consecutive nights, the last of which has brought us welcome, but inevitably for this time of year, temporary cooling relief. For a while there we had temps in the high 90s for days on end. The other day the Atlanta newspaper reported 116 degrees in Phoenix and Las Vegas, surpassing even Baghdad's 113.

Do you like to eat out? We splurged on lunch at Bone's in Atlanta on our forty-ninth wedding anniversary on May 16th. I inquired from the waiter if they served champagne by the glass, which they did, and he asked if we were there for some special event. When I told him the reason, he offered us two glasses of a very nice champagne on the house. Had we paid they would have set us back \$16! Are you acquainted with Bone's from your past experience in Atlanta? It's a most elegant, understated eatery on Piedmont Avenue not far from Peachtree Road, and is one of the best for atmosphere as well as food quality that we have found in the city. Lawrenceville is about 25 miles out northeast from Atlanta on Interstate 85, so we don't often go there. There's a nice little Chinese/Thai place called the Lavender near us down Snellville way that we go to every now and then. The food is excellent, and we usually pay only around \$17 for lunch for two, including the tip. It will take us a few months to pay for the meal at Bone's. Well, not really, but it's *très cher*.

I have a fig tree in our front yard that invariably produces a memorable crop of fruit. In 2006 we picked so many that we had to give a lot of them to the neighbors. Last fall I pruned the tree rather severely as it was getting so big, but it has recovered well and is now fully leafed out and heavily laden with green figlets. I planted it a year or two after we moved into this house in 1988. A few years later it had grown to four or five feet tall, and then inexplicably it died, or rather the main trunk died. A new shoot subsequently appeared at root level, and from that modest beginning grew today's tree. It loses all its very large leaves in the fall, and during the winter it is straggly and ungainly, far from a thing of beauty, but every spring it redeems itself. I'll enclose one more sonnet, about the tree this time, that was featured a few years ago on the back cover of the GPS's annual anthology, *The Reach of Song*.

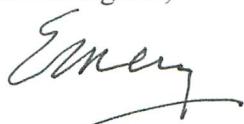
Finally, there is one more thing I want to share with you and elicit your opinion on. In high school a few years ago (?) I studied, or at least was exposed to, Latin for two years. One day our Latin teacher (with whom I am still in touch by correspondence at her assisted living apartment in Watertown, WI. She is ninety years old and quite frail but sharp as the proverbial tack mentally) handed us a part English/part bastard Latin poem called "Carmen Possum," or the possum song, of which copy enclosed. Its author is unknown.

I "transliterated" it several years ago and modified it somewhat in order to regularize the rhymes and meter. My first rendering is enclosed under the title "The Possum Caper I." I hadn't done much with it until about a year ago when my long-time writers critique group members urged me to try to get it published as a children's book of verse. I have since shortened it considerably and "dumbed it down" a bit, as I thought some of the allusions would be unfamiliar to children. This latest version is the one titled "The Possum Caper III." I once read it to a group of gifted third and fourth graders at the Dyer Elementary School in Lawrenceville, and they all liked it immensely. Each kid wrote me a little letter of thanks, expressing their delight in getting to meet a "real live poet."

The main publishers of children's books will not accept un-agented MSs. I tried valiantly to find an agent who would promote the piece but to Noah Vale, except for one outfit called The Children's Literary Agency with an office address in New York City. The Internet carried mostly negative comments about them, but since they were the only agency who expressed any interest at all in taking on the task, I went with them. We mutually signed a contract with very reasonable terms, and they promised to spare no effort in trying to locate a compliant publisher. They asked for no money and were to be paid ten percent only if and when I was ever paid. They said they would send me periodic updates on the results of their activities on my behalf. Well, of course it was all sham, and for the last four or five months they no longer bother even to answer my queries about the matter. Meanwhile I have entered it in several contests calling for entries suitable for children and am awaiting the outcomes.

And so, enough already. I do enjoy your letters. Keep them coming.

Kindest regards,



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Chant Royal 101

This complex structure casts a daunting pall,
yet wouldn't it intrigue you to find out
how poets make its words and rhymes enthrall,
so you as well might join with those who spout
such marvels with aplomb and certitude?
Is so, then hark, assembled multitude,
while cobblemaster takes the stage to prate
about the hows and whys one must collate,
the steps the system calls for, one by one,
the skills and craft one has to demonstrate
to organize the job and get it done.

Now, first you've got to make a judgment call
on rhymes--just five. Choose well to leave no doubt
you'll have enough; you come up short, you'll bawl.
Instead, if you have rhymes to spare, a shout
of purest joy will spring from gratitude;
some poets not so blessed have come unglued.
Another caveat to stipulate:
refrain excepted, do not duplicate
a rhyming word; once used, it's had its run.
The rules are strict; you must not vacillate.
You organize the job to get it done.

I've more on rhymes; the subject isn't small.
You've got to watch exactly where they sprout.
The run below must reign, lest ill befall--
it's like an herb the soup can't do without:
ababcc, and then include
dded and E (refrain renewed),
plus "envoi" ddedE. First rate!
The rhyming framework's there to emulate;
it's up to you to show that you've begun
to work within its lines when you create.
Be organized and see the job gets done.

But rhymes alone won't serve to keep the ball

in play. You also have to think about
the format guidelines tell you to install.
You're faced with sixty lines you've got to tout:
five stanzas of eleven rows, all cued
to strictly designated rhymes, imbued
with portions of the message to relate,
and then a five-line "envoi" to narrate.
Of every stanza's lines, the last is spun
with special care: refrain its earmarked fate.
You organize the job; that's how it's done.

You next must deal with where the accents fall.
Five iambs make a line; you'd best not flout
this stated rule. Don't let the words just sprawl
across the page, for this could mean a drought
of order that imparts a tone that you'd
be better served if you were to exclude.
A work, once nicely metered, will equate
with rhythm that will please and fascinate,
but you may suffer pain before you've won;
it's not an easy form to dominate.
You've got to organize to get it done.

That's it for rules; it's time to activate
your brain and search for words to populate
the page. It might take work from sun to sun
before the beast submits, but concentrate!
That's how to organize and get it done.

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Another Helping, Please

(Chant royal form)

Baguettes and brie that I would liquidate
long years ago in Paris with great zest
are treats for which my relish won't abate,
because in France they clearly make them best.
And often I can also sense a need,
a yen to which I feel I must accede,
for garlic-buttered snails whose taste implies
perfection; truly, *magnifique* applies.
Each titillating mouthful calls for more.
I will admit, I simply can't disguise
my plight. I've been corrupted to the core.

But wait...allow me first to explicate:
I'd only just arrived in France when, blessed
with offers I could not repudiate,
I found myself at dinners as a guest
where magic-making chefs conspired to feed
our appetites with spreads we all agreed
embodied art beyond compare. With cries
of joy, enthralled, we gazed with eager eyes
at fine Sancerres and Montrachets, top drawer,
and oh! what tasty, rich desserts to prize!
It's true, I've been corrupted to the core.

I have no doubt not all capitulate,
should circumstances put them to the test,
but as for me, I swear I palpitate
when faced with Gallic entrees finely dressed.
I well remember I felt weak indeed
the day good fortune smiled and fate decreed
my visit to a hallowed enterprise:
a shrine, a red-book temple, otherwise
proclaimed a Michelin worth dying for,
an inn whose matchless class no one denies.
You see, I've been corrupted to the core.

I have to say the price was rather great,
though fully justified, I won't contest.
For heady thrills like this to cultivate,
one's got to call upon the treasure chest.
In spite of that, the cost could not impede
my bliss; *cuisine française* does not mislead.
The meal they served me truly did comprise
delights; I cannot overemphasize
how free the patrons saw my spirits soar.
I loved each morsel, cheered each bite's demise.
How fine to be corrupted to the core!

Fleet years have flown since that auspicious date.
I've had more chances than I could have guessed
to taste transcendent pleasures on the plate,
but whether I have traveled east or west
I've had no interlude more guaranteed
to fertilize my budding gourmet seed.
My palate since has tended to despise
all ill-cooked fare and never deemed unwise
pursuit of *haute cuisine* that I adore.
No matter how I try to minimize
my guilt, I'm lost, corrupted to the core.

In these few lines I've wanted to apprise
my views. Who knows? Perhaps my weight might rise.
A pound or two (restraint is such a bore!)
may well have bloomed; they seem to colonize.
But, oh what fun! Corrupted to the core.

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For the Birds

Oh, harken! Feathered heralds hail the dawn.
Repellent, rowdy crows cleave clearing skies
with headstrong hoo-ha. How they carry on!
I want to be asleep! Please, lullabies

to lure me back to lurid dreams' delights.
Leave curtains drawn, deferring daylight's darts;
I long for languor. I demand my rights!
This raucous racket's way, way off the charts.

It might suit seasoned sylvan subjects' tastes,
accustomed as they are to squeals and squawks,
but that's for those who thrive in jungle wastes,
or folks who favor fractious farmyard cocks.

I trust that my complaint is crystal clear;
bird din at dawn I do not wish to hear!

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Arms and the Mom

A mother saddled heavily with more than she could shoulder
had come to fear the end was near unless she found relief.
With dirty diapers piling up, the fragrance would enfold 'er;
to tired mum a smeary bum brought blues beyond belief.

She also had to cook and clean. What toil! She tried to blot it.
She'd quite despaired of handling all the tasks still left to do.
She dreamt of having one more arm, and then one day she got it!
Yep, down she glanced and counted three where once she'd had but two.

At first it seemed an oddity; stunned Mizzes turned back, staring,
but then they saw utility in how it helped her cope,
for these were burdens other women also had been sharing.
They begged to know her secret; having three, too, was their hope.

The thing caught on like wildfire; soon all moms were so constructed.
What luck! The extra arm allowed more work to be conducted.

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Frogs in Earnest

"Though boys throw stones at frogs in sport, the frogs do not die in sport, they die in earnest"
-Bion, c.325 b.c-255 b.c.

Along the water's edge at Freezee's pond
we'd bash them, trash them any way we could,
and watch them twitch, then hoard the seed they'd spawned,
scooped up in jars with grass and bits of wood.

The eggs became black commas, wriggling host,
a mass of teeming punctuation marks,
until these bits of life gave up the ghost,
fast-fading, frail, extinguished creature sparks.

At recess time and after school was out
we'd torture Charles whose stutter made it sport,
and I took part, oh shame, a mindless lout,
in savage jibes to see his face contort.

We whooped, ignoring agony and tears,
inflicting wounds to fester all his years.

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Help! Pickers Needed

The fig tree that I planted late last fall
sure took its own sweet time to wake this spring,
but then at last a bud appeared, so small
I really had to squint to see the thing.

I checked its progress as the weeks went by.
Before I knew it more had come in view,
then tender leaves unfurled to greet the eye,
and baby figlets, more than just a few.

The way the harvest's grown has forced my hand.
I've had to order crates to hold the crops
and line up contract deals throughout the land
with truckers, supermarkets, gourmet shops.

Who knew the tree would land for me a gig
as fruitdom's foremost fancy fig bigwig?

Carmen Possum

The nox was lit by lux of luna,
And t'was a nox most opportuna
To catch a possum or a coona;
For nix was scattered o'er this mundus,
A shallow nix, et non profundus.
On sic a nox, with canis unus,
Two boys went out to hunt for coonus.

 Unus canis, duo puer,
 Numquam braver, numquam truer,
 Quam hoc trio quisquam fuit;
 If there was I never knew it.
The corpus of this bonus canis
was full as long as octo span is,
but brevior legs had canis never
Quam had hic bonus dog et clever.
Some used to say, in stultum jocum,
Quod a field was too small locum
For sic a dog to make a turnus
Circum self from stem to sternus.

This bonus dog had one bad habit:
Amabat much to chase a rabbit;
Amabat plus to catch a rattus,
Amabat bene tree a cattus.
But on this nixy moonlit night
This old canis did just right,
Numquam chased a starving rattus,
Numquam treed a wretched cattus,
But cucurrit on, intentus
On the track and on the scentus,
Till he treed a possum strongum
In a hollow trunkum longum.
Loud he barked in horrid bellum,
Seemed on terra venit hellum.
Quickly ran uterque puer
Mors of possum to secure.
Cum venerunt, one began
To chop away like quisque man;
Soon the ax went thru the trunkum,
Soon he hit it all kerchunkum.
Combat deepens; on ye braves!
Canis, pueri et staves.
As his powers non longius tarry,
Possum potest non pugnare;
On the nix his corpus lieth,
Ad the Styx his spirit flieth.
Joyful pueri, canis bonus
Think him dead as any stonus.
Now they seek their pater's domo,
Feeling proud as any homo,
Knowing certe they will blossom
Into heroes, when with possum

They arrive, narrabunt story,
Plenus blood and plenior glory.
Pompey, David, Samson, Caesar,
Cyrus, Blackhawk, Shalmaneser!
Tell me now where est the gloria,
Where the honors of victoria?
Cum ad domum narrant story,
Plenus sanguine, tragic, gory,
Pater praiseth, likewise mater,
Wonders greatly younger frater.
Possum leave they on the mundus,
Go themselves to sleep profundus,
Somniant possums slain in battle
Strong as ursae, large as cattle.

When nox gives way to lux of morning,
Albam terram much adorning,
Up they jump to see the varmen
Of which this here is the carmen.
Possum, lo, est resurrectum!
Ecce puerum dejectum!
Non relinquit track behind him,
Cruel possum, bestia vilest,
How tu pueros beguilest;
Pueri think non plus of Caesar,
Go ad Orcum Shalmaneser,
Take your laurels cum the honor,
Since istud possum is a goner!

-Author unknown.

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The Possum Caper *T*

The dark was lit with light of moon,
and 'twas a time most opportune
to catch a possum or raccoon.
The world was white with shallow snow:
a wintry squall had made it so.
On such a night with dog in tow
two boys swore they'd deal coon a blow.
A hunting hound, two boys—no fewer,
no one braver, no one truer
ever set their minds to do it;
if they did, I never knew it.

The body of their canine friend
was long; it seemed to have no end,
but shorter legs had mammal never
than had this hound dog, good and clever.
Some used to say, with joking face,
a field was much too small a place—
just didn't have sufficient ground---
for such a dog to turn around.

The lengthy dog had one bad habit;
he liked too much to chase a rabbit.
He also loved to capture rats
and was quite fond of treeing cats.
Still, on this snowy, moonlit night
the worthy canine did just right;
he never chased a single rat
nor ever treed a wretched cat
Instead his efforts all were bent
on tracking possums by their scent.

He shortly trapped a wily possum
in a hollow tree, just awesome!
He leaped about while barking warlike;
his howls resounded most uproarlike.
The boys were quick to understand
what prey they might now have at hand.
They hurried hence, and one began
to chop the tree as would a man
He sternly hacked at it: kerchunk!
and soon the axe went through the trunk.
The combat deepens; onward brave
young hunters digging possum's grave!

The latter suffers such a fright
that he gives up without a fight.
Across the Styx his spirit flies;
while on the snow his body lies.
The boys exult and nod their head;
yes, that ol' possum's doornail dead.

Now home they head to tell the tail,
as proud as any full grown male,
knowing surely they will blossom
into heroes when with possum
they arrive to tell their story
fraught with pride and cloaked with glory.
Hailed were David, Samson, Caesar,
Blackhawk, Cyrus, Shalmaneser,
but greater will be these boys' fame
for having brought to earth this game!
Back home at last they tell their tale;
they're both excited, faces pale,
Father praises, likewise Mother;
filled with awe is younger brother.
They leave the possum on the floor
and go to bed, both soon to snore.
They dream of possums slain in battle,
strong as bears, as large as cattle.

When gloom gives way to morning's light
they find the land adorned in white.
Up they jump to see the critter,
but their joy at once turns bitter,
for the beast is resurrected!
Ah, the boys are sore dejected!
He'd scurried off without a sound,
left faintest tracks upon the ground.
Cruel possum, beast unfeeling
left the boys with spirits reeling,
sadly ceasing thoughts of Caesar;
go to Hades Shalmaneser!
Lost are laurels, flown is honor;
clever possum is a goner!

THE ORIGINAL TRANSLITERATION -

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The Possum Caper III

To every side lies shallow snow;
a wintry squall has made it so.
The darkness glows with light of moon;
conditions thus are opportune
for two young boys with gear and hound
to head out, possum-hunting bound.

The body of their canine friend
is long; it seems to have no end.
Some folks remark, with joking face,
a field is much too small a place--
just doesn't have sufficient ground--
for such a dog to turn around.
The hound, alas, has one bad quirk:
he chases hares when he should work.
He also loves to capture rats,
and he's a whiz at treeing cats.
However, on this snowy night
the worthy dog behaves just right.
He chases not a single rat
nor does he tree a wretched cat.
Instead his efforts all are bent
on tracking critters by their scent.

He shortly has a possum trapped
within a hollow tree. He's rapt
and leaps about, then barks some more,
creating fuss enough for four.
The boys are quick to be aware
what prey they've likely cornered there.
They hurry hence, at once begin
to chop the tree, and chop again.

They sternly hack at it: kerchunk!
and soon the ax goes through the trunk.
The possum suffers such a fright
that she gives up without a fight.

Beyond the woods her spirit flies
while on the snow her body lies.
The two rejoice and nod their head.
Yes, that old possum's doornail dead.

Great kings earn honor, Caesar, too,
and Chris Columbus with his crew,
but these boys merit equal fame
for having overcome this game!

Back home at last, they tell their deed,
how hard they've struggled to succeed.
Their dad and mom applaud the feat;
a younger brother finds it neat.

They leave their prey outside the door
and go to bed, both soon to snore.
They dream of battles fought and won,
of giant possums on the run.
The canine that had led the chase
relaxes by the fireplace.

When gloom gives way to morning's light
they find the land adorned in white.
They leap from bed to check their prize.
Instead they utter painful cries,
for while they slept the beast awoke.
Two hearts, once joyful, now are broke.
She'd scurried off without farewell
to where her sylvan suitors dwell.
Unfeeling possum, heartless beast!
All hopes of glory now have ceased.

This tale is near a perfect match
to that of chicks before they hatch.
You see, the possum wasn't dead;
she'd just pretended, then she fled.