THE CHAOS

by Dr. Gerard Nolst Trenité

(Netherlands, 1870-1946)

**Dearest creature in creation,**

ˈdɪrəst ˈkriːtʃr̩ ɪn kriˈeɪʃən,

**Study English pronunciation.**

ˈstʌdi ˈɪŋˌɡlɪʃ prəˌnʌnsiˈeɪʃən.

**I will teach you in my verse**

ˈaɪ wəl ˈtiːtʃ ju ɪn ˈmaɪ ˈvɝːs

**Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.**

ˈsaʊndz ˈlaɪk ˈkɔːrps, ˈkɔːrz, ˈhɔːrs, ənd ˈwɝːs.

**I will keep you, Suzy, busy,**

ˈaɪ wəl ˈkiːp ju, ˈsuːzi, ˈbɪzi,

**Make your head with heat grow dizzy.**

ˈmeɪk jər ˈhed wɪθ ˈhiːt ˈɡroʊ ˈdɪzi.

**Tear in eye, your dress will tear.**

ˈtɪr ɪn ˈaɪ, jər ˈdres wəl teər.

**So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.**

ˈsoʊ ʃəl ˈaɪ! ˈoʊ ˈhɪr ˈmaɪ ˈprer.

**Just compare heart, beard, and heard,**

dʒəst kəmˈper ˈhɑːrt, ˈbɪrd, ənd ˈhɝːd,

**Dies and diet, lord and word,**

ˈdaɪz ənd ˈdaɪət, ˈlɔːrd ənd ˈwɝːd,

**Sword and sward, retain and Britain.**

ˈsɔːrd ənd ˈswɑːrd, rəˈteɪn ənd ˈbrɪtn.

**(Mind the latter, how it's written.)**

(ˈmaɪnd ðə ˈlætər, ˈhaʊ ɪts ˈrɪtn.)

**Now I surely will not plague you**

ˈnaʊ ˈaɪ ˈʃʊrli wəl ˈnɑːt ˈpleɪɡ ju

**With such words as plaque and ague.**

wɪθ ˈsətʃ ˈwɝːdz əz ˈplæk ənd ˈeɪˌɡjuː.

**But be careful how you speak:**

bət bi ˈkerfəl ˈhaʊ ju ˈspiːk:

**Say break and steak, but bleak and streak;**

ˈseɪ ˈbreɪk ənd ˈsteɪk, bət ˈbliːk ənd ˈstriːk;

**Cloven, oven, how and low,**

ˈkloʊvən, ˈʌvən, ˈhaʊ ənd ˈloʊ,

**Script, receipt, show, poem, and toe.**

ˈskrɪpt, rəˈsiːt, ˈʃoʊ, ˈpoʊəm, ənd ˈtoʊ.

**Hear me say, devoid of trickery,**

ˈhɪr ˈmiː ˈseɪ, dɪˌvɔɪd əv ˈtrɪkəri,

**Daughter, laughter, and Terpsichore,**

ˈdɒtər, ˈlæftər, ənd ˌtɝːpˈsɪkəːri,

**Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,**

ˈtaɪfɔɪd, ˈmiːzəlz, ˈtɑːpˌseɪlz, ˈaɪlz,

**Exiles, similes, and reviles;**

ˈegˌzaɪlz, ˈsɪməliz, ənd riˈvaɪlz;

**Scholar, vicar, and cigar,**

ˈskɑːlər, ˈvɪkər, ənd sɪˈɡɑːr,

**Solar, mica, war and far;**

ˈsoʊlər, ˈmaɪkə, ˈwɔːr ənd ˈfɑːr;

**One, anemone, Balmoral,**

ˈwʌn, əˈneməni, bælˈmɔːrəl,

**Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel;**

ˈkɪtʃən, ˈlaɪkən, ˈlɒndri, ˈlɔːrəl;

**Gertrude, German, wind and mind,**

ˈɡɝːtruːd, ˈdʒɝːmən, wɪnd ənd ˈmaɪnd,

**Scene, Melpomene, mankind.**

ˈsiːn, melˈpɑːməniː, ˈmænˌkaɪnd.

**Billet does not rhyme with ballet,**

ˈbɪlət dəz ˈnɑːt ˈraɪm wɪθ bæˈleɪ,

**Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet.**

boʊːˈkeɪ, ˈwɒlət, ˈmælət, ˈʃæˌleɪ.

**Blood and flood are not like food,**

ˈblʌd ənd ˈflʌd ər ˈnɑːt ˈlaɪk ˈfuːd,

**Nor is mould like should and would.**

ˈnɔːr z moʊld ˈlaɪk ʃəd ənd ˈwʊd.

**Viscous, viscount, load and broad,**

ˈvɪskəs, ˈvaɪˌkaʊnt, ˈloʊd ənd ˈbrɒd,

**Toward, to forward, to reward.**

tɔːrd, tə ˈfɔːrwərd, tə rəˈwɔːrd.

**And your pronunciation's OK**

ənd jər proˌnʌnsiˈeɪʃənz ˌoʊˈkeɪ

**When you correctly say croquet,**

ˈwen ju kəˈrektli ˈseɪ ˈkroʊkeɪ,

**Rounded, wounded, grieve and sieve,**

ˈraʊndɪd, ˈwuːndəd, ˈɡriːv ənd ˈsɪv,

**Friend and fiend, alive and live.**

ˈfrend ənd ˈfiːnd, əˈlaɪv ənd ˈlɪv.

**Ivy, privy, famous; clamour**

ˈaɪvi, ˈprɪvi, ˈfeɪməs; ˈklæmər

**And enamour rhyme with hammer.**

ənd eˈnæmər ˈraɪm wɪθ ˈhæmər.

**River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,**

ˈrɪvər, ˈraɪvəl, ˈtuːm, ˈbɑːm, ˈkoʊm,

**Doll and roll and some and home.**

ˈdɑːl ənd roʊl ənd səm ənd hoʊm.

**Stranger does not rhyme with anger,**

ˈstreɪndʒər dəz ˈnɑːt ˈraɪm wɪθ ˈæŋɡər,

**Neither does devour with clangour.**

ˈnaiːðər dəz dɪˈvaʊər wɪθ ˈklæŋər.

**Souls but foul, haunt but aunt,**

soʊlz bət ˈfaʊl, ˈhɒnt bət ˈænt,

**Font, front, wont, want, grand, and grant,**

ˈfɑːnt, ˈfrənt, ˈwoʊnt, ˈwɑːnt, ˈɡrænd, ənd ˈɡrænt,

**Shoes, goes, does. Now first say finger,**

ˈʃuːz, ɡoʊz, dʌz. ˈnaʊ ˈfɝːst ˈseɪ ˈfɪŋɡər,

**And then singer, ginger, linger,**

ənd ˈðen ˈsɪŋər, ˈdʒɪndʒər, ˈlɪŋɡər,

**Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, gouge and gauge,**

ˈriːəl, ˈziːl, moʊv, ˈɡɒz, ˈɡaʊdʒ ənd ˈɡeɪdʒ,

**Marriage, foliage, mirage, and age.**

ˈmerɪdʒ, ˈfoʊliɪdʒ, məˈrɑːʒ, ənd ˈeɪdʒ.

**Query does not rhyme with very,**

ˈkwiːri dəz ˈnɑːt ˈraɪm wɪθ ˈveri,

**Nor does fury sound like bury.**

ˈnɔːr dəz ˈfjʊri ˈsaʊnd ˈlaɪk ˈberi.

**Dost, lost, post and doth, cloth, loth.**

ˈdɑːst, ˈlɒst, poʊst ənd ˈdɒθ, ˈklɒθ, loʊθ.

**Job, nob, bosom, transom, oath.**

ˈdʒɑːb, ˈnɑːb, ˈbʊzəm, ˈtrænsəm, oʊθ.

**Though the differences seem little,**

ˈðoʊ ðə ˈdɪfərənsəz ˈsiːm ˈlɪtəl,

**We say actual but victual.**

wi ˈseɪ ˈæktʃəwəl bət ˈvɪtəl.

**Refer does not rhyme with deafer.**

rəˈfɝː dəz ˈnɑːt ˈraɪm wɪθ ˈdefər.

**Feoffer does, and zephyr, heifer.**

ˈfefər dʌz, ənd ˈzefər, ˈhefər.

**Mint, pint, senate and sedate;**

ˈmɪnt, ˈpaɪnt, ˈsenət ənd səˈdeɪt;

**Dull, bull, and George ate late.**

ˈdəl, ˈbʊl, ənd ˈdʒɔːrdʒ ˈeɪt ˈleɪt.

**Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,**

ˈsiːnɪk, ˈærəbɪk, pəˈsɪfɪk,

**Science, conscience, scientific.**

ˈsaɪəns, ˈkɑːnʃəns, ˌsaɪənˈtɪfɪk.

**Liberty, library, heave and heaven,**

ˈlɪbər̩ti, ˈlaɪbreri, ˈhiːv ənd ˈhevən,

**Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven.**

ˈreɪtʃəl, ˈeɪk, ˈməˌstæʃ, əˈlevən.

**We say hallowed, but allowed,**

wi ˈseɪ ˈhæloʊd, bət əˈlaʊd,

**People, leopard, towed, but vowed.**

ˈpiːpəl, ˈlepərd, toʊd, bət ˈvaʊd.

**Mark the differences, moreover,**

ˈmɑːrk ðə ˈdɪfərənsəz, mɔːrˈoʊvə,

**Between mover, cover, clover;**

bəˈtwiːn ˈmuːvər, ˈkʌvər, ˈkloʊvə;

**Leeches, breeches, wise, precise,**

ˈliːtʃəz, ˈbriːtʃəz, ˈwaɪz, prəˈsaɪs,

**Chalice, but police and lice;**

ˈtʃæləs, bət pəˈliːs ənd ˈlaɪs;

**Camel, constable, unstable,**

ˈkæməl, ˈkɑːnstəbəl, ʌnˈsteɪbəl,

**Principle, disciple, label.**

ˈprɪnsəpəl, dəˈsaɪpəl, ˈleɪbəl.

**Petal, panel, and canal,**

ˈpetəl, ˈpænəl, ənd kəˈnæl,

**Wait, surprise, plait, promise, pal.**

ˈweɪt, sərˈpraɪz, ˈpleɪt, ˈprɑːməs, ˈpæl.

**Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, chair,**

ˈwɝːm ənd ˈstɔːrm, ˈʃeɪz, ˈkeɪas, ˈtʃer,

**Senator, spectator, mayor.**

ˈsenətər, ˈspektetər, ˈmeɪər.

**Tour, but our and succour, four.**

ˈtʊr, bət ˈaʊər ənd ˈsʌkər, ˈfɔːr.

**Gas, alas, and Arkansas.**

ˈɡæs, əˈlæs, ənd ˈɑːrkənˌsɑː.

**Sea, idea, Korea, area,**

ˈsiː, aɪˈdiːə, kɒˈriːə, ˈeriə,

**Psalm, Maria, but malaria.**

ˈsɑːlm, məˈriːə, bət məˈleriə.

**Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean.**

ˈjuːθ, ˈsaʊθ, ˈsʌðərn, ˈklenz ənd ˈkliːn.

**Doctrine, turpentine, marine.**

ˈdɑːktrən, ˈtɝːpənˌtaɪn, məˈriːn.

**Compare alien with Italian,**

kəmˈper ˈeɪliən wɪθ əˈtæljən,

**Dandelion and battalion.**

ˈdændəˌlaɪən ənd bəˈtæljən.

**Sally with ally, yea, ye,**

ˈsæli wɪθ ˈælaɪ, ˈjeɪ, ˈjiː,

**Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, and key.**

ˈaɪ, ˈaɪ, ˈaɪ, ˈeɪ, ˈweɪ, ənd ˈkiː.

**Say aver, but ever, fever,**

ˈseɪ əˈvər, bət ˈevər, ˈfiːvər,

**Neither, leisure, skein, deceiver.**

ˈnaiːðər, ˈleʒər, ˈskeɪn, dɪˈsiːvər.

**Heron, granary, canary.**

ˈherən, ˈɡreɪnəri, kəˈneri.

**Crevice and device and aerie.**

ˈkrevəs ənd dɪˈvaɪs ənd ˈeri.

**Face, but preface, not efface.**

ˈfeɪs, bət ˈprefəs, ˈnɑːt əˈfeɪs.

**Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass.**

ˈflem, fləgˈmætɪk, ˈæs, ˈɡlæs, ˈbeɪs.

**Large, but target, gin, give, verging,**

ˈlɑːrdʒ, bət ˈtɑːrɡət, ˈdʒɪn, ˈɡɪv, ˈvɝːdʒɪŋ,

**Ought, out, joust and scour, scourging.**

ˈɔːt, ˈaʊt, ˈdʒaʊst ənd ˈskaʊər, ˈskɝːdʒɪŋ.

**Ear, but earn and wear and tear**

ˈɪr, bət ˈɝːn ənd ˈwer ənd teər

**Do not rhyme with here but ere.**

də ˈnɑːt ˈraɪm wɪθ hɪər bət eər.

**Seven is right, but so is even,**

ˈsevən ɪz ˈraɪt, bət ˈsoʊ ɪz ˈiːvən,

**Hyphen, roughen, nephew Stephen,**

ˈhaɪfən, ˈrʌfən, ˈnefjuː ˈstiːvən,

**Monkey, donkey, Turk and jerk,**

ˈmʌŋki, ˈdɑːŋki, ˈtɝːk ənd ˈdʒɝːk,

**Ask, grasp, wasp, and cork and work.**

ˈæsk, ˈɡræsp, ˈwɑːsp, ənd ˈkɔːrk ənd ˈwɝːk.

**Pronunciation -- think of Psyche!**

proˌnʌnsiˈeɪʃən -- ˈθɪŋk əv ˈsaɪki!

**Is a paling stout and spikey?**

ɪz ə ˈpeɪlɪŋ ˈstaʊt ənd ˈspaɪki?

**Won't it make you lose your wits,**

woʊnt ˈɪt ˈmeɪk ju ˈluːz jər ˈwɪts,

**Writing groats and saying grits?**

ˈraɪtɪŋ ɡroʊts ənd ˈseɪɪŋ ˈɡrɪts?

**It's a dark abyss or tunnel:**

ɪts ə ˈdɑːrk əˈbɪs ɔːr ˈtʌnəl:

**Strewn with stones, stowed, solace, gunwale,**

ˈstruːn wɪθ ˈstoʊnz, stoʊd, ˈsɑːləs, ˈɡʌnəl,

**Islington and Isle of Wight,**

ˈɪslɪŋtən ənd ˈaɪl əv ˈwaɪt,

**Housewife, verdict and indict.**

ˈhaʊswaɪf, ˈvɝːdɪkt ənd ˌɪnˈdaɪt.

**Finally, which rhymes with enough –**

ˈfaɪnəli, ˈwɪtʃ ˈraɪmz wɪθ əˈnəf --

**Though, through, plough, or dough, or cough?**

ˈðoʊ, θruː, ˈplaʊ, ɔːr ˈdoʊ, ɔːr ˈkɑːf?

**Hiccough has the sound of cup.**

ˈhɪkʌp hæz ðə ˈsaʊnd əv kʌp.

**My advice is to give up!!!**

ˈmaɪ ædˈvaɪs ɪz tə ˈɡɪv ʌp!!!