10-7-6  
  
**The Way of the Words, for Nicolas Bouvier**A wilderness is music on deaf ears.  
That Persian city, Persepolis,  
Where fire sang in Zoroaster's bones,  
Has clogged the carburettor. Entropy.  
Zend Avesta, if I've got it right,  
Was like Sanskrit in some Aramaic script.  
Zain was the letter zed, a word for weapon;  
Then Marco Polo and three wise men,  
Now Parsee in the Arabic alphabet. I can't keep up.  
Shiraz! Where are those flasks of throaty wine  
You used to do? The stuff we stained your rugs with?  
And what has become of those subtle women  
Who wouldn't take the veil? Omar Khayyam!  
Such music in a wilful wilderness.

11-7-6  
  
No sooner had the tempest digested them  
Than Prospero stopped and said  
(To the rainbow, through a spider web)  
Miranda! Here's Caliban crushed in a book  
And Ariel, quick as click, but caught  
In the self silver of a mirror server.  
Myself is elf and serf, and I, the other,  
Here conjure Rough magic.

11-8-6  
  
**From the Grave of the Unknown Civilian**Feart your goose is  
Cooked? Join up!  
It's safe as  
Strafing hooses.

11-8-7  
  
Cain and Abel,  
Hammer and sickle.  
Cut a swathe  
And smack it.  
Skaith and skail  
Your faith will fail you  
GO TO JAIL  
No god to bail you.

14-8-7  
  
A wraith would rather wriggle  
As in writhe and wreathe phlogiston  
Than rue a fit of pique,  
The sort of wrath that  
Sets us giggling.

14-9-7  
  
A wreath for Raith Rovers  
And Queen of the South  
Or rather Third Lanark  
In wrath and chagrin from whose  
Last ever fixture  
A pal of mine's faither  
Kicked his own bunnet  
All the way home from Kilmarnock.

14-9-9  
  
The whole set-up stank. The ritual  
As they reached across their neighbours  
For stuff they'd neither reaped nor sowed  
Of armpit more than incense reeked.

15-9-9  
  
Aliens in the blood:  
Your body ups the ante  
Till one or other croaks -   
Which doesn't work with the cosmopolitan gut,  
Ejecting terrorists, accepting regulars:  
Our old friend yeast,  
Hair of the dog.

15-1-9  
  
He used to  
But he stopped.

15-1-10  
  
You'd have thought  
He'd have used the heid  
And not just yowled for his daddy.

16-1-10  
  
Glued to the box  
Though you grued at the headlines:  
Groomed for abuse, as in curried,  
Or surgically gowned,  
Grooved with disposable sharps,  
Left on the ground, in a swing park,  
Out of her gourd. You think, Hobbes:  
Whatever the object  
Of a man's appetite or desire,  
Is what he, for his part, calls  
Good.

16-4-10  
  
Red gloved and gummed  
He glugged down the potion  
And gubbed the contender.  
The boss gunned him down.

16-4-11  
  
Between her toes the grey sand glugs  
And gloves her feet to the ankle.  
Soon it gums her step. The tidal  
Grubs emerge, their gubs are miming  
Screams and girns of seagulls. Not  
The way to go. Back at the beach house  
The guard dozes, his gun on the table  
A stranded fishing boat at the end of a rope  
But guns are like that.

18-4-11  
  
**For Autumn**Still hubs, the trees turn  
As September hulls, for instance,  
Conkers heaped in pyramids by Huns  
And hunter-gardeners. Now one of them  
Hugs his petrol chanter, that  
Hums out of tune and hurls leaves at nothing.  
What's his is mine.  
What's mine is hers.

18-5-11  
  
**Has**A rail of hams on hooks, commuters  
Realise the harm's done:  
The haves and have-nots don't do things by halves.  
You just hangs on. Who hands it over? Naebdy.  
Goods are hags that ride you into the grun. And freedom is  
Ane noble thing.

18-5-12  
  
**Scotland Again**Donkeys wear straw hats. Deer don't  
Till taxidermy, when they sprout,  
By flickering hearths in lodges  
With their hearts gone to the dogs,  
Too many items of harris headgear. Be a burro!  
the gillie hacks two holes in your sombrero. Castanet  
Sparks of static jump between your lugs in halfs and starts  
To drown the signal rhetoric of fairy harps, that antlers  
Received as surely as its hasps  
Clutch a family bible.

1-5-12  
  
The ass, to the thistle, is ax and pestle.  
Bristle its arse. Great arcs of piss. So much  
For Scotland's sign on upturned arks, the apse  
Of kirks, the printer's arts on acts of parliament.  
It's THERE as literal ants in a hexameter  
Are not, nor the rhythm of rock songs in plywood amps;  
Up there in mythic force with the Alps, with the asps  
Of Asculapius, here it's – rendered down to veggie gristle.  
Yet Cleopatra asks and they prepare for her  
A bath of ass's milk.

1-6-12  
  
"it's" it is  
Not "its" of it;  
These ifs and buts  
My irks and likes  
Are inks on water  
Off a duck's back.

1-6-14  
  
Give him an inch and he'll take an ounce.  
Give him a twelfth and he'll take a month.  
Give him a break and he'll take  
Inchmurrin on the Highland Boundary Fault,  
An open slide-rule,  
For Jean-Jacques Rousseau on the Ile St. Pierre,  
Avoiding guests and tourists  
In its paleoromantic  
Priory.

3-6-14  
  
**Uncle Starfish, His Counsel**At a pinch you might say  
That's a load of pish.  
The sheriff could retort  
It doesn't load but lies  
In septic tanks  
Like the accused.

3-1-14  
  
In this game you wait  
At some point you push  
But don't shove.

3-1-15  
  
Pure spirit: power up and pour it down. The poor  
Are with us always. We can't seem  
To sink them quick enough.

4-1-15  
  
**The Moon in Crookston, 1976**Cauldron moon  
Sunk in the fog  
The Blackamoor dead  
And Desdemona  
The bastard and the liar and  
The fool: tales told  
On a cog of flowers  
On a once wise head.  
  
A blasted heath  
A tree and a king  
No crown. He watches arise,  
Above the rook, a bloody,  
Lunatick, infant head.

4-2-15  
  
The green going down to the pond got trimmed  
With this cast-iron mower.  
Skipping-rope handles, clutch and toy brake  
And a diesel more like for a car  
Or an army submersible, instead of that  
Big concrete roller. I told him,  
I did: if it runs away don't  
Brake. Slip the clutch, swing it round.  
Did I say 'submersible'?  
Freudian slip.

4-2-18  
  
Whack a mole with a mallet  
Go on, tartare guacamole him  
Or her. That mouldy beauty spot  
On the croquet lawn, would you  
Look at those paddle mitts?  
That's no librarian.

5-2-18  
  
**Vole**'This species makes a network of runways on the surface of the ground amongst grass and also uses shallow tunnels.' Corbet & Ovenden, The Mammals of Britain and Europe  
I build runways. No,  
I'm a small, wingless mammal.  
I fucking run on them, that's what.  
Not a mouse or a rat  
Or a rodent at all: I self-identify  
As a micro-ruminant. That's what.

5-8-18  
  
**Salvage Arena**Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle  
  
The Holy Ghost was a baldy man like Mr Lynn, the electrician  
Radio broadcasts snagged like wool in brambles, fog condensing,  
Or pearls in the trawl of Spanish lace my mother wore to mass.  
That was a mantilla - it was not the veil of tears  
From which Totheedowe sent up our sighs, mourning and weeping.  
It's not what you know, it's who you know  
My mother's mother said, with such disgust  
We knew what she meant, though not who she meant.  
I know now. I know them now. And their sticky networks.  
The vale of tears was the World, the veil of Maya  
And every salty drop of it is wiped away.

5-8-8  
  
If every move is wind or weathervane  
It's pick or choose.  
If nothing is in vain why lift a finger?  
The artery purports the vein regrets.

6-8-8  
  
Those times that I wd feign regret  
As if I cared  
As if I didn't care

6-10-8  
  
**All or None**"The fact, discovered by Bowditch,  
that the heart muscle, under whatever stimulus,  
will contract to the fullest extent or not at all"  
 Dorland's Medical Dictionary  
There's collarbones like hickory wands,  
fine as fanstruts on a soundboard,  
patient as wingstruts, fuselage  
to vellum stretched on a warping frame.  
I could lock you away in this desk drawer  
with nothing but the desk drawer key for company.  
God knows why I put up with you. God knows  
why a woman should take the weight  
the aches and murmurs of a husband.

6-10-9  
  
Fight! Fight! Fight! Oh not again:  
Jostled down a flight by the B-team,  
Belly flyped in dread not fright,  
Like going for a jag.

8-10-9  
  
Nux gar estin for it was night  
The knight with the armoured karma  
Lay in his long johns  
Next the Saracen  
Crescent moon  
Knifed him.

8-1-9  
  
Commander-in-Chief  
A newt with a knout.

8-1-10  
  
Painted, nude,  
On one of the  
Things she'd shed  
And didn't don again.

9-1-10  
  
You hummed and hawed, you to'd and fro'd, to be or not.  
Something soured. You toured the policies, your  
Popularity rating towered. You tooled up  
And backed off.

9-2-10  
  
Warty sag that, when toed gently,  
Clambered across the grass as though  
You dragged or towed an invisible sled  
Fraught with all you hold dear. Who told you  
You could cross my land? The migrant  
Heard a toned and tuneless voice on the minaret  
That tolled out rules.

9-2-11  
  
The toads are in their heaven - one snug  
In a gardening shoe. The Filipina's toes  
Trigger a shriek. Two flip through the cat door  
Conjoined. One meditates in a bandolier of worms;  
Tomes of exegesis bud in its jewelled head  
Too soon, too complex for its warty neurons.  
Ah me, the bell tolls. its rope tows  
An apprentice ringer off his feet, to wonder  
What troves of rhyme await us under grass that can't distinguish  
The tones of the cow bell from the chant of the cow.

11-2-11  
  
**Eating the British (for Paul Muldoon)**Into the blanket he stitches his sores  
Costume carbuncles and garnets.  
His face is all craters and sockets.  
It snows as he snores in his quilt, he's the man in the moon  
Who stows his feet under the headrest in front of him.  
Who sows the disease soars on fomite forty-one degrees.  
The outside air temperature fifty below.  
I don't think he's well, you know.  
This fever slows the sowers, boot soles stuck in the  
Tarry floor of heaven, all chewing gum and silly spores,  
Which roofs the random, psychotic settling of scores.  
A chaplain scolds the braves that eat the British,  
One of whom stoves his head in as he strolls to the chapel house.  
The frequent flier scrolls down. Sticks and stones.

11-3-11  
  
Old saws and new songs  
Toothless smogs chew tasteless bridges  
Cloudy swabs  
Expunge entitled snobs and sundry slobs  
As a housemaid's hoover snogs fitted carpets  
In cheap hotels she slogs at it  
Fruit scones, she's thinking  
Storms in teacups. Perhaps  
Yon angel sobs perhaps  
Not at particular old squaws but  
Over the wondrous rigour of sod's law in the lower orders  
And swans off. Swarms of such messengers  
Attend the golden hive. Squads of dominations  
Squalls of them, by and large unfazed  
By mortal static from below. The engine stalls  
We drift. Straws  
On swelling scrawls of this flood  
Silts and sails  
That sprawls in its unmade bed  
And spawns a million bright green spears of rice to port and thwart.  
Shoots and swords, spoils and defence in one  
Fisherfolk live in frail with spalls of noise I wield as words for them, not more.  
A conscript on his bicycle with camouflage umbrella  
And regulation gun.  
The skipper solves his obstinate conundrum and we're off  
A monk in the bow rearranges his maroon, a second's spinnaker.

11-3-12  
  
It snorts and sorts its quills then storks around, the drone,  
Prime time squats feel swat teams put the doors in  
When it squawks its radio squawk and stalks  
Dissent. Scots wha hae - anyone at all who wonders  
How they bet your shirt and socks and OWN when they should be IN the stocks  
They wouldn't exchange two five spots for the credit default swaps  
They concocted. Who sops up the debt when the jingle stops?  
Painters shall wear kindergarten smocks and poets rhyme,  
Sloths gambol in their jungle, quick as treacle slops.  
There's some go through life like a dose of salts  
Some of us get a rich sauce to savour.  
In actuarial terms it all slots in.

12-3-12  
  
When the joints are out of season  
Senior management has its choice of  
High retreats and beach resorts, a geographical  
Box of chocs for business jaunts and business  
Menus, slurps and chomps. Chocks away!  
Organic scotch and soda by the pool  
She jots her bullets, jaups a splash,  
Chops what has to be cut, chalks up  
A victory for what? Her suits,  
Black as choughs, watch for tips.  
Here's one: the joss in joss stick  
Was the Portuguese for god.  
'Joss pidgin' was religion.  
'Joss pidgin politics?':  
a game for pious pricks.

12-4-12  
  
Redwood feather junks  
On little chumps  
Of windy water. One chucks  
Its pigeon chest, another  
Chuffs its cheeks and splutters,  
A tough life. A tough life.  
The jetty juts. One coot,  
Another in hot pursuit,  
Jumps up.

12-4-13  
  
Each being  
Aches for justice.  
The structure of that longing  
Is its beauty.  
A standing wave of light in the rhododendron  
Is my church;  
Its decomposition -   
My judge.

17-4-13  
  
Some clutch at power. Some  
Take culture for a crutch.

17-5-13  
  
**Lamu, near Zanzibar**Near as dark as one of his granddad's slaves,  
He'd gleaned some silver from the foam  
When ginger tom came up on the pier  
To claim his share of the catch.

17-5-14  
  
Cash in your chips  
Crash out and snore  
Get a shack on the shore  
No more to clash  
With that shark in a suit.

18-5-14  
  
**Camel**Harsh? It was breathing in bristle.  
Why would you want to make  
Quite such a hash of your throat?

18-3-14  
  
**A Deposition**I was simply admiring her haunch  
When I'm over it, flat on my back.  
Didn't know she did judo.

18-3-16  
  
The hog fly low hug phosphorus bomb. His bristle  
Bristle. Victory roll reverse uncorking  
Pendulous hereafter. Hail to the hog.

19-3-16  
  
To a certain brand of Brit I'd be a bogwog,  
The Marsh Arab a fuzzy match.  
Marshmallow, deep-fried Mars, enameled emblem  
Of Robertson's golly Miss Molly marmalade.

19-5-16  
  
**Guzzle**If thunder's one of the seven deadly sins  
Then so is bragging to me about your means  
And sharing nothing. Show me another drunk  
That binges only on other people's wines.  
No don't: leave your wag on the wagon.  
Confronted with a ticket machine, in shock  
You pat your pockets till someone else stumps up.  
I leave you there. For what  
Depresses the dinner out of me  
Is that praise you lavish:  
It must be really cheap.

19-5-17  
  
**Whacker-in-Chief**Wht's up w yr face?  
Did you choke on a pretzel?  
Conducting the old  
Karaoke? Yawank.

20-5-17  
  
**After the Rout**Let's not lament the makars or forgotten songs, but thank  
The readers in whom Henryson's survived obliteration.  
I'm not falling off the map, quite the reverse:  
It's coming away like gauze, for this  
Is the promised earth. Lank grasses  
Assuage the lack on which the world's vanity  
Draws its flickering charm. The drab skylark  
Final plummet silent.

20-6-17  
  
To lick is a mammal thing  
The cub goes mwamwamwa with the  
Nipple then licks it. Lick the spoon,  
The friendly share of metal  
Clink on cup the link in  
Sounds an infant bubbles up to mum  
Where are you gone

20-6-2  
  
**Lib**How much women's lib in Hounslow,  
Middlesex, in middle sixties misses?  
Not much, where freedom didn't know its   
In the 80s feminism took control  
Of gender-neutral language.

2-6-2  
  
Bib rigid routine  
Eyes of grey drool  
Follow the nurse on her rounds. She sends  
All but all of her salary home.  
A lozenge of sunlight  
Dragonhead orchids  
Dribble on catalogue parquet.

2-8-2  
  
Hey babe  
Say what dude?  
Nuthn.

2-8-4  
  
Don't blame me: you asked for it. If not  
You might try blasphemy.

4-8-4  
  
Maim and pollard  
Amazing they survive  
And brandish

4-9-4  
  
'Meme' is mounting evidence  
repetition does for truth.

4-9-8  
  
Chill, exuberant life in a glittering galaxy  
It isn't, doesn't mean at all:  
That's you.

10-9-8  
  
The dean can dance.  
But can he whistle?

10-10-8  
  
I'll dine with Landor, Yeats and Donne.  
We'll borrow Dante's selfie drone.  
It might be fun.

10-10-9  
  
'Changes in which the hawthorn is dight'  
Haws in snow like neon at night  
The sakes of it diced and reassembled:  
A Blakean semblance of angels.

11-10-9  
  
What a sight.  
Tar in the slight  
Starlight in the shiver  
On site hard hat.  
The smith'll smite  
That flange with a skite  
And sparks'll fly in spite  
Because or not - but I forgot  
The Sprite, its silver breath,  
Its three-ton, tincan whisper,  
Its ornamental console. So  
Forget it. Go  
To the striped and spotty workers,  
The gossip-sniped and credit swiped.  
You tell them: this poem  
It's yours. I serve it  
Sliced in lines and spliced with syntax,  
Spiced with a certain tu ne sais quoi  
And spiked with viscous vodka.

11-1-9  
  
No boy-scout, the corpulent quart  
In the second-hand suit, sempiternally soused,  
His snout in the red-eye and stout, his red ears  
A-quiver and -sprout, going round  
In his souped up, re-treaded sedan. Go on, scoot!  
Time you spruced up your corporate  
Thing: when's the last time you  
Spooked a wheen horses, stooped to recover  
The Key at the Scene, snooped in his rooms  
As the serial cannibal made his way home  
Down the chimney (the billowing soot was  
A Clue) and scooped a conviction?

11-1-10  
  
**La Kiuva**You'll have seen old faces scoured till they shone  
As apple blossom soured into fruit, oh, every time  
I scowled at the tree that stood  
Like a pupil who would not get one verb wrong.  
  
No friend of pain, I scowed the deep,  
Deep Field that Hubble plummeted ;  
If every stound of neural lightning  
Coined another bright day out of me,  
What would the tannic darkness do ?  
  
Well, a self that gets too fearful can be sloughed ;  
I'm snake enough for that. Sound in the dark.  
The message in the bottle is the wine.

12-1-10  
  
Two days at the kitchen table with Ushakov  
(Moscow, 1938), 4 vols, dark,  
Dark green cloth cover, I chewed  
At Pasternak ("Parsnip")'s early books of verse.  
Russian-English: brazier, brocade,  
Girt, adze, muzzles, sleepers, oven door, vitriol,  
Biscuit barrel, eagle owl, door curtain, abscess,  
Salt pans, Tatar tax collector, runrigs, ingot,  
Misfire, mapping pen, Adam's apple, alder,  
Weighman, buffalo, farthingale, meltwater,  
Catkin, fibril, crossbill, stilts, zinc white,  
Firebox, systole, crossbow - straight syntax,  
Strong, simple beat of a young heart, constant  
Fretting about the weather. Pagan  
Pilgrimage for me, who dug the lexical landscape  
More than the shiny CIA facsimile  
Of the legendary 60s Soviet edition. Still,  
The smart thing to do back then  
With your Dylan Albert Hall concert bootleg  
Was swap it for this and learn some Russian.

12-3-10  
  
Jogged in the park, joined up  
And jawed in the mess. Dear God  
To get me through.

12-3-11  
  
He jogs in spandex  
His job's so stressful.  
Demanding johns, he  
Is beat, and joins them.  
The joys of being  
If not the brains, then  
At least the jaws of  
The operation.

13-3-11  
  
Shaws and shaws of spuds are bedded down  
By weans in clarty shawls.

13-4-11  
  
**On the Likelihood of Life Elsewhere in the Universe**Shrubs in the suburbs haka. Glasgow shrugs  
As a hyper-squall shoves it  
Through the eye of some needle.  
Nobody pays the piper, but we all fall into step  
As the busker shuns the wind, heads it round.  
You scarce can hear, in the teeth of it, the contention of the sirens.  
It's here, so how could there not be life on Mars?

13-4-12  
  
Shunts and stents, arterial muck;  
Shirts THAT gone are dusters.  
Worn out, he shucks himself off. The system  
Shuts him down.

14-4-12  
  
Talking heads in ruffs. The codpiece,  
Lycra rumps and sackbutt solos.  
  
Rhyme that still could jilt rational ruts  
Though its rhetoric rusts in drizzle.  
  
Rough's the word as out her pram  
The queen shies chewed-up rusks and toys.  
  
Rucks of her police with orders  
Cleave the groundling runts, stage left,  
  
To cut the nose off Mucky-Muck  
And Mrs Mucky-Muck as well. Why not?

14-5-12  
  
**Rasse**Racks and ranks of creels  
Containing rats or civet cats of some kind.  
  
Rafts of such repositories,  
Sampan towns of blocks of flats up there,  
  
Where raffs of rain slant the streets  
And rhythm rants on windows.  
  
Those syllabaries tethered in the cross-talk  
Ride at anchor. Metal rasps  
  
As the ramps of ro-ro ferries  
Shut. The little creatures rax and yawn.

14-5-13  
  
The ratch and pawl of the barber's chair, the billiard table  
In an old club at Madras  
Recall the alternative, the Scottish Raj:  
Charles "Hindoo" Stewart and Major Elphinstone, perhaps  
More accultured, and more vicious, than the British.

18-5-13  
  
Batten the  
Hatch and  
  
Haud yir  
Horses!  
  
Who'd you  
Think you  
  
Are,  
Goin off on a  
  
Haj wi the  
High heijins?

18-6-13  
  
Continual hinge of the wheel  
And hitch of the sprocket.

18-6-17  
  
A viral hick from the Styx  
Is bringing down the long-haul flights.

19-6-17  
  
This wit to honey-dim your days  
And whisk you out of order -  
Would it be wick or fuse?  
Does it wink out or  
Detonate in reckoning  
(as it should)?

19-8-17  
  
She loved a good wake. It was  
The tea and sandwiches, solemnity,  
Solempnity. The watchfulness of Mary  
Star of the Sea in the wake of the dead  
A keel-shaped flame  
Slim as double sculls, the eyes of the beast  
That's my cat Jeoffrey. Loves a good sandwich.

19-8-18  
  
**Port-au-Persil**At Parsley Port the whale would barrel  
And strain its dinner through a comb.  
The clinkered kirk would wail its bigotry.

1-8-18  
  
**God Loves A Drunk**Her man came off the wagon (better jump before you're pushed)  
Down a flight of stairs. A fractured nut.  
The surgeon warned of a character change and she said no such luck.  
At the time, we thought that brave and funny.  
In the boss's private ward we were whispering what  
Afflicts him so? What ails him? The monitor spiked:  
"Did you say ale?" Next day we found out  
She'd sold the business.

1-9-18  
  
**Eel**In a plastic bag, two or three, you floured your hand  
Took scissors to their throat.  
That night, in the hearth, god  
They were good: Atlantic grey  
As rich as it was hungry.

1-9-1  
  
Ee is for teeth  
And rid lips in a grin.

2-9-1  
  
B is for bliss, the compact fire  
In honey. Workers level  
With the gorgeous rose's lip, and not to be  
Is inconceivable.

2-10-1  
  
**By the Way**She said Buy me a drink  
And I did  
It was good  
She said bye  
So did I  
So did I.

2-10-2  
  
What constitutes a bribe? Any gift with a shadow,  
Any service with a smile. If you want to bribe me  
Don't be subtle. Here's the list:  
That desk lamp like the Stobcross Crane, on Boulevard Montparnasse,  
1600 francs. Dostoevsky's complete, 3000 francs;  
A 16th century Russian Anastasis, the size of a paperback,  
That was 25,000 francs in 1985.  
A Borsalino panama hat, an old cinquecento;  
A covered swimming pool, duly maintained;  
That job with airline tickets to romantic places;  
The removal of those who offend me, bringing back the ones I miss;  
Reincarnation as Genji, till I get bored;  
Rebirth as the Buddha until everyone gets a life and there are no bribes.

5-10-2  
  
**High Office**The problem with the drivers is  
Remembering where you left them.  
The thing with close protection  
Is bad breath. As to the vibe  
Of Machiavelli here - don't get me started.

5-7-2  
  
Breathe in: bref,  
Breathe out: verb  
In the bin the bin the be-  
ginning, in the beginning, pump-  
ing away like a burst pipe.

5-7-5  
  
Verve  
Fervour  
Reverence  
Rote.

8-7-5  
  
A prayer, not to God,  
A poem not for the critic or the public,  
Seismograph in a soundproof room,  
Message in a crypt so tough  
Its language will be dead before it's cracked,  
Nerve that never seems to end,  
A single cell.

8-8-5  
  
Weather vane  
Rudder on the nave  
Wind at the helm.  
Vain little man-jack  
Quite the card,  
One eye on the weather.  
Dealer plays the deck  
Like a squeeze-box.

8-8-8  
  
I tellt him, but  
He's huvving nane ae it.

9-8-8  
  
A train that rolled on rails of ice  
Has come adrift in Spring.  
The cars where sleepers couple  
Twain. He's taen her up  
On his poor. old. tired. horse.  
She can't complain.

9-10-8  
  
**Sing a New Song**He's tint the twa-tine nib that penned his couplets!  
How'll Sam the psalmist, in the night now, pitch his cursive twine?

9-10-9  
  
**Typed Up**Foolscap fresh and tight on the drum  
For signs to pelt and catapult  
What slapped and smacked the carbon  
Smudged and trite.

12-10-9  
  
Crunch in the gristle and bone. A pain  
In the cartilaginous jynt.

12-1-9  
  
**Esser di certo dei pazzo solenne**Ariosto! Conkers played on chestnut horses  
With jute antimacassars, blazoned silk  
And mizzen-mast or telegraph-pole lances  
Couched for the joust. And they're off! No late career  
As press-box pundit for the also-rans  
Who thought they'd duped the bard and jouked the point:  
Juiced inside that armour hardly separable for scrap.

12-1-11  
  
Jewels and jowls: the opera crowd.  
The king of the jews takes a bow. The people choose  
Red. Glass. A good blast of Wagner  
Tunes up the boxes and tubes. No it doesn't.  
A hack in the Interval Bar chews his burgundy.  
June's a good month in Bordeaux, see,  
For surfing on sand dunes and checking out plonk.  
No it's not. The duet's a duel: both want  
The soprano. The deal is the tenor  
Gets her on stage; the bass gets her off. Yes he does.