

Charge of the PhDs

Alfred, Doctorate Tennyson

I

Half a year, half a month,
Half a day deadline,
All in the valley of Academia
 Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the PhDs!"
Apply for the grants!" he said.
Into the valley of Academia
 Rode the six hundred.

II

"Forward, the PhDs!"
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the student knew
 Someone had blundered.
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to publish and cry.
Into the valley of Academia
 Rode the six hundred.

III

Deadline to right of them,
Poverty to left of them,
Unemployment in front of them
 Overworked and malnourished;
Swamped with meetings and conferences,
Boldly they studied and well,
Into the jaws of Academia,
Into the mouth of hell
 Rode the six hundred.

IV

Published all their proofs bare,
Published as rebuttals were quelled
Questioning the reviewers there,
Attending a conference, while
 All the world wondered.
Plunged in the faculty track
Right through the hiring decisions;
Teaching and Research
Powered with junior faculty grants
 Submitted and published.
Then they earned tenure, but not
 Not the six hundred.

V

Deadline to right of them,
Therapy to left of them,
Sleep left behind them
 Depressed and traumatized;
Swamped with thesis writing hell,
While mastering out many fell.
They that had taught so well
Came through the jaws of Academia,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild papers they made!
 All the world wondered.
Honour the research they made!
Honour the PhDs,
 Noble six hundred!