

A Dangerous Man

Varney the vampire lurks in the corner
eyeing jailbait, nursing a drink
of sweet red blood or a Virgin Mary,
with corpse-white face and all-black clothes
trying to look like a dangerous man.

Varney affects a silver skull
dangling from an unsunned ear
that it doesn't grace from nine
till five in the offices of Dewitt and Kahn.
It isn't too hard to stay so pale
deciphering dollars with a disk,
finagling like a dangerous man.

But after hours, Varney lurks
nursing a drink at the Penny Dreadful,
trying to look like a dangerous man.

The Praise of Meter

You sing the praise of meter, poet boy,
and claim to rhyme and count your sticky feet.
Forgetting stress, an iamb trips its beat;
your scansion's like a broken wind-up toy.
Under duress, you use the stalest rhyme
to ramble on the dullest subjects, loves
or suicidal angst, refer to doves
and moony Junes. You spoon poetic crime
in every line until your ink blots stink.
Some nerve you have, when you can't even scan,
to state free verse is something we should ban,
and every hack conform to form. You think
that fourteen lines than rhyme is called a sonnet,
but boy, I wouldn't care to bet upon it.

Overrated

Don't bother me with sex, sweet muse;
your titillation's overused.
Romantic love is overrated
treacle and won't leave me sated.

The moon in June is nice enough,
why spoil it with that spooning stuff?
The stars above are sharp and bright,
why paint them with a pensive blight?

Infatuation, go away,
I've better things to do today.
Romantic love is overrated
treacle and won't leave me sated.

The Lady's Reply

You write again to waste my time
a letter filled with sticky rhyme.
Hyperbole and outright lies
describe my lip, my cheeks, my eyes.

She basks in beauty like a dream,
her eyes like pools, her skin like cream.
I'd say it's more like cottage cheese
with eyebones filled with moldy peas.

You claim it's love that you require.
'Tis carnal favors you desire.
Your syrup does not pass my test,
so go away persistent pest.

A Little Light Verse

Karen Tellefsen

A Mouse Beneath the Cellar Door

Nephthys sleeps while Isis snores
between the first and second floors.
Was that a squeak, did someone hear
a mouse beneath the cellar door?

Isis sweet and Nephthys dear,
you silly dogs have naught to fear.
The mouse is napping in its hole,
go back to sleep, there's no one near.

Nephthys dreams her rawhide roll
was stolen by a velvet mole
and that a yellow parakeet
has perched upon her water bowl.

Nephthys dear and Isis sweet,
nobody here has robbed your treat.
The velvet mole is underground,
go back to sleep and twitch your feet.

Isis dreams a basset hound
is in our garden and has found
her rubber ball, and to her dread,
begins to chase her toy around.

Isis grey and Nephthys red,
how many times must this be said?
There is no basset hound that tours
the garden now, go back to bed.

Rowboat Joe's Cafe

In Rowboat Joe's cafe
the shrimp jump off the plate
to line his grand buffet
with small crustacean hate.
Don't eat us now, they cry,
we're bouncy and too young.
They simper and they sigh
before your meal's begun.

The little clams hold hands
and dance the hoochy-coo.
They do not give a damn
that they are seen by you.

The groupers belch and fart
upon their plattered butts.
They've raised it to an art,
but Joe still makes a fuss.

Like clacking castanets,
the scallops snap and bite.
These pip-squeak martinets
enjoy a nasty fight.

Perhaps you'd like to go
before dessert is served,
but Rowboat Joe says no,
my fish are just reserved.

They'll woo, with great romance,
your tastebuds if you wait.
They need a second chance
to reconcile their fate.

The Gene-Spinner

The west witch had kept current
on all the genome lore.
She spliced a hundred genes
and grew some flying monkeys
in a mother-monkey pot.

Her sister, quite an engineer,
built supersonic silver shoes,
developed fission-powered brooms
that swept the eastern moon.

So who'd have thought that Dorothy,
a hapless undergrad,
would tumble from a wind storm
and squash her sister dead.

The west witch planned a sweet revenge
with nano-altered poppies.
Her research wasn't sloppy, but

who'd have thought that Dorothy,
who barely passed biology,
knew enough to douse a witch
with the universal solvent.

Dreary

Deary, you're as dreary as the rain,
teary cheeks streaked by mascara stain.
Fearful you may drown me, I'll abstain.
Really dear, you've nothing I would gain.

Baba Yaga's Lab

Baba Yaga sniffs a flask
with old chromatographic nostrils.
She mutters over multimeters,
tweaks a dial and speaks her mind
when no one's there to listen.

On test tube legs, her lab is lined
with dusty journals, vials and potions.
Magic lotions bubble trouble,
Pyrex caldrons boil.

Deuterium and mummy dust,
palladium and toads.
She doesn't need a tokamak,
got fusion in a teapot.

To My Hypothetical Lover, Herman

Before you touched my face,
I watched your manly grace
with passion-fired eyes,
but amour sometimes lies.

For once we were entrenched,
it seems your blankets drenched
the ardor of my fire.
Of you, my dear, I tire.