

Kludged English Words by an Old Curmudgeon

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**Poetry and Photography
by Tony Cox**

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Old Curmudgeon

The old curmudgeon,
Relaxing and reading when
His wife sneaks a snap

Poem

Like a painting,
A poem is an artifact
Of a creative process.

An object of beauty and meaning,
An imperfect reflection of the truth
Contained in the creative act.

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[My grand-nephew is also a poet. Here is a sample of his art.]

I Speak

I speak sun and moon and wind and stars.
I speak sun,
And the sun shines.

And I speak tornado and rain and lightning and thunder.
If I am sad, I speak rain,
And it rains.

When I am angry I speak tornado,
And it tears up over here and over there.

I speak sun and moon and wind and stars,
And I speak tornado and rain and lightning and thunder.



Morning
With the light of dawn,
Night quietly surrenders, and
Morning softly comes.

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It took me a long time and a great number of false starts and mistakes to learn this ultimate truth.

Life

If life is not fun,
You must be doing it wrong.
Try another way.

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There is a Live Journal Community called toot_toots that accepts four or five line compositions constrained by only one requirement: the first letter of each line must combine to spell 'toot' or 'toots.' It's an interesting game to play.

(With an apology to the Brothers Grimm)

The little girl in crimson hood,
O'r to the house in the dark wood.
Oatmeal raisin with bright orange zest,
Those cookies grandma likes the best.

Tragic events visit the house,
Ole canus lupus in grandma's blouse,
Ops for the trite: "Can't hear you m'dear"
To entice the little child near.

Teeth, tongue, and jaws in evident,
Osculation was not the intent.
Out the wolf jumped, a leap, a bound,
To grab, to eat, with nary a sound.

To encounter a Kung Fu punch,
Out for the count, minus the lunch,
Only a lesson for the id.
They don't mess with grannie's grandkid.

Christmas Pitstop (2007)

T'was early, early Christmas Day,
I'd stayed too long with Mertle Faye,
A shootin' pool and chuggin' beer.
So my old truck was in high gear,
Runnin' back roads through the dark night,
I had to reach home 'fore daylight,
Else bad trouble would be my fate,
With kids at home and wife irate.

Suddenly, in the road ahead,
I saw a light, twas flashing red.
I hit the brakes and skidded hard,
Missed a tree and landed in a yard.
Before me parked on the dirt road,
A beat-up sleigh, a heavy load,
Eight deer in a state of repose,
One more with a pulsin' red nose.

Out in the woods, down to the right,
Stood a fat man, a beard of white.
"Busy time, but just couldn't wait,
Ya'know, it's that damn' old prostate."
The old feller said with a grin,
As he finished and tucked it in.
"And I'm so glad you're not a cop,
'Cause I sure needed this pitstop."

Christmas Snack (2011)

T'is early, early Christmas Day,
But no drinkin' with Mertle Faye.
I hide behind our festooned tree,
That ole fat man, I hope to see.

I hear a thump out on the roof,
Then the ping of a dainty hoof,
And before I can count to three,
Ole Saint Nick stands beside the tree.

Stepping out with moves smooth as silk,
I offer him cookies and milk.
Nick takes the plate and sets it down,
Then he whispers through a sad frown,

"I'm so sorry son, didn't you know?
These tasty treats I must forgo,
It's 'cause I'm lactose intolerant.
Diabetes, too. That's rampant.

But I'll sit here to have a snack
And rest my poor old aching back.
Christmas is hard on the ole coot
That's stuffed in this funny red suit.

So check your frig, see what you got,
It won't take much--I'll tell you what!
This feller would shout with delight
For a crisp dill and a Coors Light."

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Snow

This northern wind, a polar fright,
Seduced a damp young southern sprite.
Air from Gulf met the air from pole.
They joined to dance a farandole
Across Oklahoma hills and plain,
Shedding drift snow and freezing rain.

Spring

Hard freeze last night. Today, the north wind is like a scalpel, slicing through anything and everything. I quickly return to the house for a heavier jacket. We have a grandfather to transport and an early basketball game to attend. Six-year-olds on a half court.

I get the coat from the entryway closet and glance through the window. A dozen robins, fluffed and overlarge with cold, graze the front yard. No worms today.

Outside again, fortified against the frigid wind, I see a flash of color in a tree barren of leaves. The first bluebird of the year. A male, a scout, searching for a summer home.

Robins and bluebirds. The great wheel turns and yields a promise. The brown and cold *will* become green and warm.

Bluebirds in a tree,
Robins grazing in the yard,
Harbingers of spring.



Grand Canyon

Layered ramparts dozing in the sun,
Stark remains of geologic past,
Give multicolored testimony,
To a river's will to cut and run

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March

Cold March winds bluster,
Popcorn clouds fly over head
In a bright blue sky.

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Spring

After cold winter,
The pleasant warmth of spring grows
Bright days of summer.

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Time

Time, the salve to
Fade the painful scars of
Interrupted love.

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Spring

Today, a robin
Promised with a cheerful song,
Spring will soon be here.



Forsythia

Forsythia, so
Vibrant and happy yellow.
A springtime delight



Redbud

Native redbud blooms
Purple-pink on rough, dark wood
Winter's gone; spring's here.



Ruins

Silent reminders
Of long ago yesteryear,
Basking in the sun.

This place once rang with
Voice and laughter, Silent now,
Basking in the sun.

I Lay Quietly

Beside her, I lay quietly,
Listening as she takes
Quick gentle breaths and
Sighs softly in her sleep.

I watch her sweet mouth
Close to form a smile
That quickly vanishes
As I hear a low moan.

She stirs and murmurs
Into her pillow
Words I cannot hear,
Truths I cannot bear.

Am I there beside her,
With arms to hold her tight.
To dance the quick tango of love,
To be a presence in her sleep.

Or is she with another,
Who sings a sweeter song,
Who dances a neater step,
The presence in her sleep.

Beside her, I lay quietly
Listening as she takes
Quick gentle breaths and
Sighs softly in her sleep.

Reunion

Old half-dead elm with limbs askew,
Survivor of an ancient crew,
Now reigns over a field of grass,
Stoic witness of time to pass.

Scared deep within the old tree bark,
A heart and names cut on a lark
By young lovers who lingered there
To record their passion and care

The gnarl'd runes, carved for all to see,
Out-lived the love twixt you and me.
An old promise of love not kept,
A sad truth we must now accept.

Come on a walk with me, my dear,
We'll reminisce that yesteryear.
And there again, where we once stood,
We'll trace the letters in the wood.

Antarctica

Part I: The Ice

It's called 'The Ice' by those who know,
A special place of frost and snow,
Of beauty to delight the eyes,
Tho' cold as death, a pure surprise.
'The Ice.' But it's not ice, you know,
Just years and years of falling snow.
Drifting, packing, never melting,
Forever accumulating.
All that beauty with bitter cold,
To test the soul and make one old.
Has never thawed, and never will,
Eternal place of wintry chill.

In summer, when the air is clear,
Distant landscapes of white appear,
Laying under a sky of blue,
Reflected light, a dazzling view.
But cloud the air with fog of snow,
Caused by the wind of constant blow,
Nothing is seen, except the white,
Even that, exceedingly bright.
Those are the times to make one doubt
Up from down, a total whiteout!
Care then to stay upon the trail,
Or else the way you lose and fail.

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The winter is an endless night,
Not always dark, but shadowed bright,
Lit with stars and aurora's glow,
Reflected on the frost and snow.
Now add the blow to take the light,
To hide the stars, to lose the sight,
The coldest winds, the darkest way,
Night storms are worse than those by day.
A cold hard wind, with snow like sleet,
Removes the sight of hands and feet!
Careful, careful to stay the trail,
Or else the way you lose and fail.

Part II, The Lost

In the stark land of constant cold,
There is a tale that must be told,
The sad story of a soul lost,
A body hiding in the frost.
A man who had walked the flagged trail,
Blown by the wind as if a sail,
The crunch of snow beneath his feet,
Gave the wind song a solemn beat.
Hours of drinking now at an end,
Beers to chase a rye whiskey blend.
The drunken talk got a bit rough,
Finally, he yelled "I've had enough!"

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He left in anger, left in haste,
To walk across the icy waste,
To trudge a trail that marked the way,
To his abode, a mile away.
The blow of snow like bits of sleet,
Obscured the trail beneath his feet,
The night storm had not abated,
A danger he'd underrated.
In fog of snow and dark perverse,
To use a light would make sight worse,
Between the poles, blind he must cope,
His mittened hand sliding on rope.

A drunk stumble and that was all,
To loose his hand, to take the fall,
Gone was the rope, lost in the black,
His only way to stay the track.
Not to worry, there was no fear,
He'd just stumbled; the rope was near,
Now he stood, his hand reached there,
To find nothing, nothing but air.
Oh, wait. Was the wind at my face?
His pulse skipped, then thumped a fast race.
Search now, search now, to find the trail,
Or else the way you lose and fail.

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I decided to write a poem

I decided to write a poem
That reveals my inner thoughts
In some clever work of art.

Then I realized I had none.

Having nothing to write, has
Never stopped me before.
It's so easy to rattle on.

But today, the muse is gone.

Written In Sympathy for a Friend

Memories invade, unbidden, unwanted,
And thrust through her hard-earned shield of time endured,
To push aside today and leave her impaled
On the ice-cold shards of a bitter yesterday.

Sadness sweeps over her like a wet winter fog,
An icy blanket that chills her beating heart.
She remembers that not so long ago day
When she held her child without a beating heart.



Winter Sunset

Wispy shadows floating overhead,
White clouds spun of mystic thread.
The time has come,
Oh yes, the time has come,
To say goodbye to the setting sun.