

An Arrant Thief

by
James H. Buckingham

Canto One

Alain talks of shadows and waxwings slain
So I felt in fun, do doth reply deign.
Lest nor accuse me of emulation,
Creation 'tis it's own fascination.
You spoke and spake of maybe obvious
But all gaód hames are rowéd with truss,
Captain Obvious does not sail your sea
And perchance this mate willst added to three.
Of bland sand and triptych only is two
10 Next, add on a barrow—wheel in a clue.

Opened my Kindle to light up a flame
Concordance sure helps when something's the same,
Type in s a n and d, here come eight.
Connect the possibles. Open the gate.
Of making sense of the rhymes and riddles
One drop here, one drop there, pools in piddles.

Begin—begun—began, time to get goes
Otherwise, one's kind patience surely slows.
The first sand, a *thousand*, Line 7 and 4,
20 A 'thousand parents,' who needs any more?
For a thousand is *thou* and *sand* makes two
Better together: *You* and *Sandy*, through?
Pray, say not now, nor do ever say when
I couldn't bear it — of knowing the end.

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1,000 parents is all about time,
How long can I keep non-repeating rhyme?
In English, pentameter has five feet
And iambs are tricky, needing a beat.
So am I talking of 'thousand' repeats?
30 Horror of horrors, my rhyme fails its feat.
Worry not, oh wary readers of woe,
There are more lines to write, farther to go.

'A thousand parents' now 'a thousand years,'
Lines 74, 1 20 have more tears
How many tears a millennium sheds?
It's so hard to count so many such heads.

How 1,000 equals forty? "Come on!"
Such minutes and hours don't doff and then don.
Unequal math Kin-bo-te couldn't do
40 Because infinity can't measure. True?
Time and space are conflated over one
You're born, you live, and . . . *oopsy!*
Now you're done.

Not as bleak as all that, venture to say
Can finite and in-finite make 1's day?
Together compressed in both timeandspace
Confounds a'many when facing to face.

The time glass goes wet and the hour's did left
137's rhyme makes one bereft.
The tiring sand has infinite two tires
50 "Hey! Two, infinite? Liar of Liars!"

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Lemme nisgate you and contrary 'splain
Finite and Infinite ends with no pain.
The miracle of beginning is so
The miracle of end. Comprehend, Lo-?
lee-ta taps teeth turning to a true friend
When, oh when, will this ever epic end?

Time for a pause, a refreshing refresh
Talk about Oz and its green emerald mesh.
Thoughts of posters to the Baum of Delight
60 Who low pick apples from fruits of such height.
Alain, Alexey and Mary, *marry!*
Are three, how do others only sip tea?
Brian and Dana, Nabokovians all,
Say, *Can you say see . . .* Has Canada Fall?
Of the Dragon in place, to ring the bell
Sleeps she, open eye sole, ready to fell.

Canto Two

Forty becomes 'Four thousand' on pillow
Their heads. Ache free from hurting, oh willow—
“Who said?” Quit barking. Leave it up to me
70 Four thousand is Four hundred thousand, see?
“Puzzles and riddles frying my brain crisp!
Can't we leave alone a will-o'-the-wisp?”
Ignis fatuus! Be not such a fool.
Attic's clock's a'tickin,' a tocking tool.

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Canto Three

On to Line 5 3 4. *Oh God!* Yes, more!
An ampersand you see comes from the core
Of *and* and *per se*, Latin italics,
Got blurred thru time with diminishing wicks
Until those 3 words became but *unus*
80 Quit laughing, you girl. Oh, naughty Eunice!
3 is now 1, like in all equations
Figure your peril. Dress the occasion.
E and *t* got dropped and blurred been blended,
When phoning home, *Et* got ampersanded.
ABC's 27 were just old,
Turned 26 one day, now you've been told.

Canto Four

Coming back to the word, *sand*, settling in,
Wheeling around at the end of the din.
What's that about noise? A saying I'm sure.
90 Some idiom, like an *odeur les fleur*,
Can't hardly say, for writing's not about
Talking, lest it's in CAPS that SHOUT AND SHOUT!
The sun is low, 'cording to John Shade-us,
He wouldn't Kin-boat you. Sure? Not Grade-us!

Gard'ner goes by with his empty wheeling
Somehow, somewhere, I've an empty feeling.
The wheel(s) is low, a bed is a trundle,
Who sleeps in a bed? An empty bundle?

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The barrow is separate from its wheel round
100 A long dead person sleeps deep in the ground.
The barrow may not be Beowulf *beorn*
Not all are heroes, nor villains forlorn.
Empty remains connecting SpaceandTime.
Are 100 lines 'nough to end this rhyme?

Freed from the couplets, what have I to say?
Still I remain stuck, composing all day.
Oh, Alain, forgot I almost one thing—
You had marked tryptich [sic?]. Ring-a-ding-ding.
What then is correct, -y p- or -i p-?
110 Go to Line 3 81, Canto 3.
Yet commentor CK spells triptych right
And what, pray tell, goes on in the *noir* night?

It's simple for someone like Nabokov
To do. Take away the -y- the Why? Cough,
Cough. Oh, excuse me. Yes, the Why, I said.
Switch the Y with the I, and now who's dead?
The triptych comes down to three, but perhaps,
Others might argue, a quadtych, with facts!

For New Wye is New Y, all sounds the same.
120 For bald Herr Vlad loves to play his word games.
New Y is New York, a New England State,
You'll find a John Shade there at any rate.
Is he John Shade or is he else? And feign