

Keith Moul

ONE-LINE RHYMING POEMS

Numbers such as one--numbers late, as expected--numbers unprotected--numbers to the sun.

Correct if wrong--correct open doors--correct tribute to whores--correct lyric in a wasted song.

Sometimes cry--sometimes oppress--sometimes *largesse*--sometimes rye.

Subject to conditions precedent--subject to horseflies in air--subject to familial care--subject to things not meant.

Hesitant as to fate--hesitant that she misunderstand--hesitant to walk in sand--hesitant with hate.

At last, absurdity is clear--at last, the runner's in a rundown--at last, sundown--at last, a cold beer.

“TALKING CANDY BAR BLUES”

Noel Paul Stookey

In his deep, comedic voice, Paul Stookey soloed with guitar a song about the evolution of innocence of boys and wickedness of adults, half a chocolate bar of unknown brand offered and neighbors near at hand policing street corners during public events. It escaped me but late news reported each detail in keeping with the fourth estate, without a hint of exaggeration, nor discernible whiff of fabrication.

Now I know the song by heart. The “angle” by the press is askew. Mr. Stookey was haplessly ensnared in a gangland conspiracy, set in motion by an innocent offer of “Candy, son,” then shifting gear when the plainly scared boy returned with Mom and neighbors to say “Him!” Scared too, Mr. Stookey pretends to await the now late bus— “Anybody got a watch? You could see just how late it is. I got a better idea. Let’s find somebody with a watch and stare at him.”

Mr. Stookey must hear “Pervert, the kid’s life is ruined,” although he’s now “IN THE MIDDLE OF A BUBBLEGU-U-M OR-R-GY!” (This capitalization and punctuation are mine for a “literary” effect.)

At top gear, racecar speed, Mr. Stookey has achieved enlightenment:

Well, I've had some troubled times before
but none like the trip from the candy store.
Oh, I sympathize with the kid all right.
Somebody's nice to you - probably ain't right.
I'll grow up - I'll learn the way.
I'll learn so that my later days will be pros-s-perous,
chocolate covered - if I don't bite off more than I can hide.

You’re right with me if you find the moral as well as the story immoral.

YEARS OF FRIENDLY FIRE

In case of fire, touch the door first to know the other side.

For marriage heat, appoint a fire lieutenant and hire a guide.

Let's call it thirty years of flame, thirty years of friendly fire
to warm the house, thirty years of white hot furnace ingots
as if a heart could serve as furnace without reliable warranty.
Touch the door; watch for smoke chasing oxygen to a vent;
remember that oxygen will boil out of blood cached in lungs.

Love arrives just in time to save me: a big red truck, with hoses
to halt the spread and a ladder to pluck me off the roof--loyal
lieutenant, arriving amid the sirens just in time for thirty years.