

SOME LINES TO REQUEST POTEEN

Nigel Jenkins's Poem to Terry
Hetherington

Praise, Terry, your ace poteen
and praise be that Neath's heddlu
are averse, no doubt, to verse -
we want no drug squad readers.
These dry lines, cynghanedd free,
are sent to say I'm thirsty
for more of that cosmic juice
(spiritless bards are no use)
which, by the time I've finished
this, will have passed to the fish
of Swansea Bay, the bottle
ready to ferry this scrawl
across to Melincryddan's
spirit-maker number one.
Ice on fire, you're the poet
of where the contentions meet,
your wisdom's mirth an oak whorled
from the killing fields' antiworld
and your pained hands' outlaw love
for loves the world's afraid of.

It's late and getting later,
I'm a poet needs the fire
that only you can distill:
a Mumbler craves a refill.

Sláinte, then, and iechyd da
to Wales that voiced you, Eire
whose fatherly hand led you,
star by stream, to rebel muse
and old alchemical ways
with water, fire, fruit, barley.
Essence of unmachined rain,
most magical of moonshines,
clearer than ice and iced air,
though of suns the container;
exploder in the nostrils
of red orchards, dusty fields;
semen of the gods, hot blood
of goddesses, all falsehoods'
undressing when love defers
to the teachers and preachers;
song sprung from its silences
- bass of choirs, sky of pipes -
to set all atoms dancing,
the whole galaxy a-swing.
Each sip - and no 'head', thank god -
a fleadh cum wild eisteddfod.

The tide's in, the spirit's out:
be, Terry, on the look-out
for landfall on your doorstep
of this craft poteen-bereft,
barnacled and seaweed-draped
as proof of long, hard voyage,
weighed with verse and a bard's curse
on all hooch-busting peelers:
may every glass their thirsts crave
turn to boiling aftershave.
Here's a hope this plea finds you
stocked enough with cosmic brew
to save me from my drouth's hell
by filling full this vessel.
Hurl it then towards the stars
and I'll run from my boudoir
to catch it on re-entry,
Melin's gift to Mumbling me.
So pour, Ter, the nectar in
that's sure to set me writing
(light, awen, on this windbag!)
full cynghanedd - yn Gymraeg.
First and last I'll drink to you,
friend, bard and oaken guru.
Your spirit spells revival:
may your still be never still.

with love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rind". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the phrase "with love,".