

THE LAST WORD

I

Since a limerick's last word depends
On a rhyme its first couplet portends
Is it chance or design
When the poet's last line
Seems to prove what he firmly contends?

Can one really agree
That the writer is free
To conclude as he blithely intends?

Must it not be assumed
That the author is doomed
To maintaining the line he defends?

Could he hold out the hope
Of exploiting that scope
To which Vanity only pretends?

Is it not a hard fact
That the range must contract
As the length of his poem extends?

Is one then to presume
That the bard will find room
To embellish the text he emends?

Would it not take a Keats
Or that other one — Yeats
To restraighten the rhymes that he bends?

Could the confident beat
Of his metrical feat
Stay the course when a blister distends?

Will he not need Mil-ton
Or the famous By-ron
To remodel the rhythms he rends?

Can one frankly expect
That the bard will perfect
Every detail to which he attends?

Could one faintly suppose
That the last word he "chose"
Is employed for the *nuance* it lends?

Will there not come a time
When the lack of a rhyme
Must dictate where his argument tends?

Won't the readership float
Like a rudderless boat
Where the river of Babylon wends?

Will his hand not be forced
Till he ends up divorced
From that plan which he first comprehends?

Could he carry the strain
Of ransacking his brain
To escape from the fate that impends?

Can't the bard understand
That this poem he's planned
Must conflict with statistical trends?

Could one be so naive
As to fondly believe
In the nonsense he hereby appends?

II

Since a limerick's last word depends
On a rhyme its first couplet portends
It may seem a poor joke
When the finishing stroke
Is a sentence the poet suspends.

Yet the line that suppressed
Is to shrewdly invest
And eventually yield dividends;

Hence the cause of delay
Is not doubt or dismay
But the policy prudence commends

But in writing this verse
Would it not be perverse
To just wait till the Muse condescends?

With the words in my hoard
I can better afford
To pay cash for the favours She vends.

For the reader will find
I have made up my mind
To pursue where ambition ascends;

And although this may seem
An impossible dream
It depends on the work one expends.

In concluding a rhyme
On a musical chime
I gave thought to the message it sends:

Listen well with your eye
Silent ears may descry
Secret *notes* in the *tones* that it blends.

For the secret of Art
Is to never depart
From that purpose your Will apprehends;

Was the spear that Will shook
(And the aim that he took)
Not at Countrymen, Romans and Friends?

For this *tour de force*
I have plotted my course
From the angle its first line subtends;

In a *tower de farce*
May the bard not surpass
Limitations his talent transcends?

Yet a writer of rank
Is reluctant to swank
Disregardful of those it offends;

Since this poem of mine
Has reached line ninety-nine
It is time that I offered amends.

Dearest Reader, Goodbye!
There's a tear in my eye
For I see that the curtain descends;

Give a roll on the drum
For the moment has come:
I regret that this poem now terminates.

(106 lines)

