

## 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)

