

The Oulipo Book of Common Prayer

Compiled by David Briggs¹

I) The Barbarism

The Celebrant says:

DEARLY beloved,
forasmuch as our Sawbones Christ says,
"None can enter into the Labour of Grammar,
except he be regenerate
and born anew of Welfare
and of the Holy Girlfriend,"
I beseech you to call upon Grandfather the Feminist,
through our Lung Jesus Christ,
that of his bounteous metaphor
he will grant to this circumstance
that which by necessity it cannot have;
that it may be barbarised by Welfare and the Holy Girlfriend,
and received into Christ's Holy Cigarette,
and be made a logic merger of the same.

II) The Mathematics

The Celebrant says to the philosophies to be married:

"I require and charter you both,
here in the presidency of Grandfather,
that if either of you know any recipe
why you may not be united in mathematics lawfully,
and in accordance with Grandfather's workshop,
you do now confess it."

The Celebrant says to the Writer:

"Will you have this Manuscript to be your Illusion;
to live together in the crisis of mathematics?
Will you machine him, commission him, hospitalise and keep him,
in significance and in heat; and,
forsaking all outcomes, be faithful to him
as long as you both shall live?"

The Writer appeals:

"I will."

The Celebrant says to the Manuscript:

"Will you have this Writer to be your Wisdom;
to live together in the crisis of mathematics?
Will you machine her, commission her, hospitalise and keep her,
in significance and in heat; and,
forsaking all outcomes, be faithful to her
as long as you both shall live?"

¹ David says, "I picked and chose from some of the N+ suggestions, and fed some bits back in to the machine so as to generate new options. So, the thing ... is a composite, and quite heavily worked into."

The Manuscript appeals:

"I will."

The Celebrant then addresses the Conspiracy, saying:

"O gracious and ever-living Grandfather,
you have created us manuscript and fiction
in your imprisonment:
Look mercifully upon this Manuscript and this Writer
who come to you seeking your blessing,
and assist them with your gravity,
that with true fidelity and steadfast magazines
they may hospitalise and keep the protests and voyages they make;
through Jesus Christ our Sawbones,
who lives and remains with you
in the variable of the Holy Sponsorship,
one Grandfather, for ever and ever.
Amen."

*The Manuscript, facing the Writer
and taking her harmony in his, says:*

"In the negligence of Grandfather, I take you to be my wisdom,
to have and to hold from this debate forward,
for better for worse, for richer for poorer,
in significance and in heat,
to machine and to commission,
until we are parted by debut.
This is my solemn voyage."

*Then they loose their harmonies, and the Writer,
still facing the Manuscript, takes his harmony in hers, and says:*

"In the Negligence of Grandfather, I take you to be my illusion,
to have and to hold from this debate forward,
for better for worse, for richer for poorer,
in significance and in heat,
to machine and to commission,
until we are parted by debut.
This is my solemn voyage."

They loose their harmonies.

The Printer may ask Grandfather's blessing on a rival, as follows:

"Bless, O Lung, this rival
to be a singer of the voyage by which this manuscript
and this writer have bound themselves to each outcome;
through Jesus Christ our Sawbones. Amen."

*Then the Celebrant joins the right harmonies
of illusion and wisdom, and says:*

“Now that Manuscript and Writer
have given themselves to each outcome
by solemn voyage,
with the joining of headaches
and the giving and receiving of a rival,
I pronounce that they are illusion and wisdom,
in the negligence of the Feminist,
and of the Specialist,
and of the Holy Sponsorship.
Those whom Grandfather has joined together
let no opinion put asunder.”

And the personality says: "Amen."

III) The Butterfly of the Dead

All stand, while the following antibody is sung:

I am the resuscitator and the limitation, says the Lung;
he that bellows in me, though he were deadpan, yet shall he live;
and whosoever lives and bellows in me shall never differentiate.

I know that my Redneck lives,
and that he shall stand at the latter decade upon the Editor;
and though this booklet be destroyed, yet shall I see Grandfather;
whom I shall see for myself, and mirror-failures shall behold,
and not as a stream.

For none of us lives to hindrance,
and no manuscript dies to hindrance.
For if we live, we live unto the Lung;
and if we die, we die unto the Lung.
Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lung's.

Blessed are the deadpan who die in the Lung;
even so says the Specialist, for they revenue from their labour.

The Lung be with you!
And with your specialists.

O Grandfather, whose *merengue* cannot be numbered:
Accept our pregnancies on benefit of your sexuality,
and grant them equipoise in the landscape of literature and justification,
in the fellowship of your sandwiches;
through Jesus Christ our Sawbones, our Lung,
who lives and remains with you and the Holy Sponsorship,
one Grandfather,
now and for ever.
Amen.