

Literary Pastiche

*Come, live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
Of peace and plenty, bed and board,
That chance employment may afford.
~ Cecil Day Lewis*

Brad Ramsey



LITERARY PASTICHE | TORONTO

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LETTERS

To Lord Montgomery
Your Lord,

As the CHARTER *a mari usque ad mare* authorizes the attempt of every new species of poetry, it is belonging to the Royal charter, *quidlibet audendi*, the birthright of every poet beforehand, the hereditary obligation to patronize the Muses, with an unaffected Love, to promote the Love of Nature and the interests of Humanity. In Envy, the Obvious Bounds that still divide foul Flattery from fair Gratitude, would you esteem a Tax on the name of the Countess of Hertford, who can by no means dispense with so essential a privilege, of a Scenery of Nature more adapted to the genius and disposition of Poetry?

Brad Ramsey

To Her Countess of Hertford
Your Lady,

These poems are an attempt at ‘Traversal Poetry’, for transference between two or more *politico* in time and space, would thereby not exclude a negotiation in our words of *ought* and *owe*. With respect to *Oxford Poetry*, XV.ii., the book review of Ms. Balmer’s work entitled, “Translating Classical Verse, Creating Contemporary Poetry”, mentioned Cicero’s *De Optimo* and compared *interpres*, *adnumerare*, and *appendere* with

the dignity of the translator, who negotiates scholastics and creativity, and a wringing out, or *exprimere*, according to our human search for a germane humanity and the art of contemporary poetry. In passing my life as a poet, I acknowledge that because the past is *humatus* - interred, or laid in the ground - that the one from the past who is interred is one whom we ought to know, and whom we owe an itinerary, by which we keep our memory of she or he in our passage through time and space, which I traverse *in absentia*; for I am at the bounding-line of a poet's life and the departed life of a former poet, yet there remains a tolling which must be paid itinerantly during the traversal of a former to a present time *In Quid*.

Brad Ramsey

A POLEMICAL INTRODUCTION

GONE are those unblest times...
When Genius, trembling with unmanly fear,
Claim'd not the wreath, which he deserv'd to wear,
Till nine long years had lent their tedious aid,
To touch the forms his magic hand pourtray'd;

Leigh Hunt. *The Modern Parnassus or the New Art of Poetry*, A Poem. 1814.

It remains the honourable characteristic of the poetic arts that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the circumstance of the underclass of today's society is adapted to the pleasure of traditional poetry; that finds precedents, for example, in the Enclosure Act of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Great Britain, passed during the reign of King George III, which removed the right of access to common lands that had been the labourer's heritage and source of income for ages gone.

An English poet, William Wordsworth, extolled the virtues of old *Michael* and his wife, in their struggle to maintain their patrimonial fields, while the unenclosed commons became largely restricted to rough pasture in mountainous areas and to relatively small parts of the lowlands. The result was an upheaval, about which much poetry was written in the Romantic era, that was preserved in a language of conversation idiomatic of the middle and lower classes of society. Compared

with today's colloquial expressions, this language is archaic and unnatural, but perhaps the lenient public will excuse the inclusion in my verse of anachronisms, if it nevertheless contains a natural delineation of *human passions*, *human characters*, and *human incidents* found in twenty-first century dependency culture.

Yet even if the public will excuse me for the inclusion of anachronisms, it is now generally admitted that the Greek and Roman poets, together with those of the Classical tradition in English, who have copied their manner, should no longer be considered as examples for poets of the present day. Those critical compositions, therefore, which in an earlier age were drawn up, either in prose or verse, for the direction of the novitiate in poetry, inasmuch as the precepts, which they contain, are derived from the outdated examples, must now be entirely useless, or, what is worse, must mislead the pupil into a style of writing, which will defeat his or her purpose of gaining the applause of all countrymen.

Still, it becomes very desirable, that a new set of rules should be arranged, suited to the improvements and corrected taste of the present day; in order that they, whose genius or inclination leads them to cultivate the art, may not only enjoy having examples to imitate, in the plentiful poetry by which literature is distinguished, but may also have a kind of *pastiche*, to which they may easily refer in cases of doubt and difficulty. This task I have ventured to undertake; and I assure the reader, that however imperfectly in other respects it may be executed, he or she will find the postmodern precepts to be fairly and

legitimately deduced from the most popular authorities of the tradition¹.

For, there remains one maxim of the critics, which we still admit to being just; that the rules for writing in verse cannot be laid down by way of previous reasoning, or as the metaphysicians express it, *a priori*, but must be drawn from poems before, which have been crowned with the greatest success, and which, therefore, we conclude to be the best. Thus Aristotle, in the first art of poetry that was ever written, derives his maxims from the works of Homer; and an English classical poet, Alexander Pope, admits the propriety of this plan in the following lines of his *Essay on Criticism*,

Just precepts thus from great examples given,
She drew from them what they deriv'd from Heav'n.

Waving therefore all claim to the invention of the new poetic art, I merely pay myself the credit of collecting and imitating some examples, which lie scattered here and there throughout the successful poems of the past remarkable eras. As a postmodern writer, I abandon much of my claim to authority, and, with a predilection for nostalgia, suppress the satirical impulse for parody, in preference of a pastiche of "dead" styles, in order to pay homage to famous poets, who are perpetually present, hence still in our contemporary world.

¹ cf. for example C. Day Lewis' pastiche poem called "Come Live with Me and Be My Love". Based on Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to his Mistress".

Whereas in the schools of our universities every sentiment is no longer discoursed in a learned language, but presently, in our own mother tongue, there remains a fact, that in the school of traditional poets, it was customary to use only the language of verse, even upon prosaic subjects. And so, they threw into a metrical form their critique of poetry, which might perhaps have been more explicitly and methodically described in prose; and they preferred the didactic strains of Horace to the critical discourses of Aristotle. Hence it is, that, although a discussion in prose, upon principles and rules of what constitutes the postmodern pastiche, has already been laid before the public many times, I thought it due the dignity of the Parnassus of poetry, that, like the English classical poets, they should have (if I may so express myself) some taste for pastiche, by which the pupil may learn the elements of his or her art.

It was to be expected, that my verse should have been itself an illustration of contemporaneity in the rules which it prescribes, after the manner of Ezra Pound, who yelled "Make it new!" Yet, as the reader will find in my books, not being able to root entirely from my mind a lingering fondness for the examples upon which my youthful judgement was formed, I thought, that the liberal public, if I resembled the English classical age in the spirit of my compositions, shall excuse me for giving my verse an old-fashioned form.

B.R.
'23

ALEXANDER MONTGOMERIE

Alexander Montgomerie was the descendant of a noble family, and was born at Hazel-head-castle, in the county of Ayr, in Scotland. Although he was never granted a knighthood, Montgomerie was commonly referred to as a captain; and, it may therefore be presumed that he was a professional soldier. For much of his life, he served as a court poet in the service of King James VI, who succeeded the last Tudor monarch of England and Ireland, Queen Elizabeth I, in 1603. King James I's son, Charles Stuart, King of England, succeeded the crown in 1625, whose rule was famous for the English Civil War that he lost to Oliver Cromwell. In 1649 Charles Stuart acceded "from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown" and England became a commonwealth. A martyr of the people, he was canonized as a saint by the Church of England in 1660, two years after the death of Oliver Cromwell, and the restoration of the monarchy that was bound in ceil, in 1649.

1

Twa miles abufe rural Kirkenburgh,
 At Tanguelard quheir the Tarffe's furrow
 Meets the River Dee; and great racks and crags,
 Preuent the salmon as the water sags;
 I haif heard some sae (haw true I knaw not)
 That this was the plass, and thereof well soucht,
 That the Captain in quicknand of fancie,
The Cherie and the Slae, intituled he.

2

My best-belouit Captain of the band,
 I groan to outlyfe all of that empathie;
 This is na lyve I lead far fram yer land,
 And lyke not the barray of fysh I see;
 Syn I am subject to sterilitie,
 And dailie denied le *bon mot que juste*.

3

As Lyndesay proued, and I also wald fynd true,
 That Courteours' kyndness lasts yet for aquhyle,
 For once gude turns be sped, quhy then adieu,
 Or promised friendship passes in exyle.
 As Hudson, faith, ne'er did quite beguyle -
 We'd hoped for him, as ony of the brafe,
 If he had a hylt, he had plenty of style -
 Yet made himself well-known ta be our knafe.

O Captain, that thy pleasure did conceif,
In all gude-wyll, then found all was forgot;
A pettie humour encouraged that man's leif,
And shewed that friendship as it ripes is rot;
And tha you wer somtyme subject to be sick,
You needn't hafe ben taen o' the mick.

4

If lose of gudes, if gritest grudge or grief,
If pouertie, imprisonment, or pane,
If gude-wyll for ingratitude again,
If languishing in languor but relief,
If det, if dolour, and I say if chief
Of sorrows so, the labour lost in vain,
Does properlie to poets appertain...
To share that skill, if ony I haif leif,
To be for unknown patrons in regard,
Quho like the bets of our age to relate,
The spectre found in nature, and that is hard,
If cam and go, as few micht celebrate,
Tonicht, I am not like them in arte,
I match them perfectlie in that parte.

5

Dare not Jove stryke you wid his thunder clap,
Tha he kild you not in the midwyfe's hand;
Nor dare Mercure with his script'd wand,
Deprive you of yer senses, wyt, and shape;
For Hevin hindrand once, could prufe the hap.

Dare not they'd rather'd stop't yer breath,
Tha ne'er yer muder's bowels yer last bed
Nor her burden prufe twas delyverie of death,
Nor choked you well, so sune as tears were shed;
Dare not the Muses to yer cradle led,
Weren't movit as Vestal Virgins you to wrap,
For Hevin hindrand once, could prufe the hap.

Dare not thy muder unblythe quhen you were barne,
Tha thy Norths gave you welfare to aduance;
Say withal yer birth was Easter day at marne;
Dare not Apollo quho then appear'd to dance,
Gaif not to you gude morrow wid a glance,
Nor raised you in his golden chair and lap,
For Hevin hindrand once, could prufe the hap.

He makin you for a Helicon to haif,
Then were you noviss to the Nobles nyne,
Also, the Gods a god-barne gyft then gaif,
Ambrosian bread and hevinly nectar wyn,
For quintessence, a graif-bed just as fyne,
For Hevin hindrand once, could prufe the hap.

6

Howsoever Beautie in ourselfes is blawn,
I thank my God I shame not of my glass,
If we be gude, the better is our own,
And he that's gude, the better shews his sass;
I wold not fynd men in your semblance pass
Wid visage unfair, nor do I fear you lak;
Therefore, I wold you gaze on, Daisy lass,
As that mirror of yer own, shall never crak.

Tak tyme's quick pace, or tyme shall owretak;
 Therefore, tak care how yer tyme is spent.
 She has no hauld, to hauld you, for yer sake,
 A pet before, asunder both are rent,
 Let thou her slip away, or so you went,
 You haif no grip, yet haif yer lufe to make,
 If thou delay, remember quhat I spake,
 Take tyme's quick pace, or tyme shall owretak.

For I haif heard in adages of auld,
 That tyme does waste and weir all things a clay;
 Then true the tale that true men oft haif tauld -
 A turn in tyme is oft the anly way.
 Syn, I haif heard oft-tymes the same men say,
 I had a lufe, I could na langer make;
 Else, swindles tyme's luck followand delay,
 Take tyme's quick pace, or tyme shall owretak.

The Relic Soldier Tower
or The Queen's Message 2014

Sole relic of the pile that burned.
E. H. W. Meyerstein, 1913.

Turn up the heat; the soldiers sang,
Stille Nacht, from their Soldier Tower,
Have ushered in a quiet hour,
Instead of guns, this carol rang.

These old leaves, wither; one by one.
And so, my floorboard heater toils;
My kettle; and, my saucepan boils;
I warm myself, beside these coils.

Clear was the night when I began,
But only brought in stormy skies,
I do not think the cream shall rise,
Not much to offer of my pan.

The clock upon the stovetop chimes,
The Message. Her Majesty read,
All those from World War I are dead,
And these are more forgiving times.

Turn up the heat; how cold the day;
The frost has seemed to crack the pane;
But now I hear they call for rain,
In a weathercock's round way.

Throw down the volume; write no more;
The heat is off; it's time for bed;
The meaning of a relic read,
Egyptian sand upon the floor.

So,

Oxford Poetry, cite:

It is "the brink" that must be yearned,
Sole relic from a pile that burned,
As the world draws near that plight.

As Goths are Goths and Tamara Our Queen.

*And now at last, laden with honour's spoils,
Returns the good Andronicus to Rome
William Shakespeare I.i, c. 1590-1593.*

Speak, gentle love! What proud, ungentle men,
Have here with some old hooks, made your closet bare
Of its ornaments? Those prized ornaments
Of enfolding sleeves, I have sought to keep in,
Which might then gain so great a happiness,
As all our love!

Alas, a vulgar Goth,
Likewise, a bumbling Roman, full of wind,
Does perish with the issue of your lips;
Perishing, moreover, in that jewel breath.
But sure, Bassianus does intrigue you?
And, lest you oughtst deny him, feel my tongue...
Ah, now you turn away your face for shame,

And, notwithstanding, all this Roman blood -
Like once, that Eden, with four issuing spouts -
Yet, do your cheeks grow red? As my heart -
Blazing as the sun setting in a cloud.

Shall we speak of this? Shall we say 'tis so?
Oh, I have slayed his heart, and slayed the beast,
That we might rail at hers, to ease our plight,
Our love revealed, that cheer not topped,
That turns the heart to gladness, where it is.

Fair Lavinia, you haven't lost your tongue,
Nor, in a tedious conquest, lost your limbs;
But, loveliest, that true is due of thee:
A great Bassianus hath thou now met,
And he has cut Tamara off,
Who shall never stop the brave! Andronici,
O! If Aaron left you amputee,
To play thy inward notes upon the lute,
While, your avenging songs could strangle him,
I shouldn't doubt monarchy for my life.
Or, had he heard the quiet evensong,
That speechless remittance does make,
I'd be bound to Christendom, and allege,
As patriots, who sing Jerusalem.

Come, let us go, and make your father grand,
For such a joy shall make a man delight,
As glorious war has filled great casks with mead,
What might long years of peace? Your father's cup!
Do not let go, for I'll along with you -
O! let this morning hear our Reverie.

Solomon's Generosity

This poem could be published late,
The greatest in our mother tongue,
The King James Version is the best,
A love poem that grips my chest,
His Word: *The Song of Solomon*.
(This kind of free verse would in time endure
For innocence would remain that pure)

A painful love, indeed, 'tis true,
In the burden of the love song,
But in the outset of the thing,
What but pleasure did that love bring?
Tis so generous all along!
(Where she and one in reign had justly lain;
Aye! The love they felt that night was not pain)

But there goes sex at such a price,
That guards were placed beside their bed,
To kill on sight a thoughtless man,
If regicide became his plan,
In any uprising he led.
(Nor was it foremost without dowry true,
She was a virgin, therefore each man's due.)

And sick in love would she become,
To find the culprit of the boast,
Around the city she would moan,
"Where is my husband, I atone,
Is it me that he wants the most?"
(All the women there had seen this before,

For each had found her own way through the door)

“You’re sick in love, we know the man,
And all have husbands of our own,”
They said. “We’ll take you right to him,
For most of us don’t share this whim,
That any man shall wear the Crown.”
(And he had been given such a beating,
For the Wise King had been caught...*well*, cheating)

But do these men who fight reflect,
Is the deed always theirs alone?
Animal, these men then become,
To snatch her up and take her home
And tell her what she must condone.
(This poem could indeed be published late,
For the King James love song is this great!)

The Burden

This kind of free verse would in time endure,
For innocence would remain that pure,
Where she and one in reign had justly lain,
Aye! The love they felt that night was not pain,
Nor was it foremost without dowry true,
She was a virgin, therefore each man’s due,
All the women there had seen this before,
For each had found her own way through the door,
And he had been given such a beating,
For the Wise King had been caught- *Well*, cheating,
This poem could indeed be published late,
For the King James love song is this great!

Twelve To Dine

When I do set the cloth at suppertime,
And see the worst fare on the menu tonight,
When I behold pungency our prime,
And leprosy o'er glistened in the white,
When lofty men, I see, telling their leaves,
Which erst to dine did signify a bird,
And growing vineyards borne away in sheaves,
Thrown to the bucket and strange refreshment served,
Then of thy delight do I question make,
That thou among the death of food must go?
Since men and women do themselves forsake,
And die as quick as young appetites grow;
And naught against gluttony takes offense,
Save purge, and, keep the bodies buried, hence.

Neptune

Without respect to any historical preferment, among either the Greeks or the Romans, although there were available many other excellent treatises in the time of the Jewish Rebellion against Rome in 66AD and 70AD translated for the Gentiles, which were written by the Jews in the tradition of their constitution and sacred books, and which expressed the Divine nature and its operations, in an effort, for the promotion of virtue, among the people, nevertheless the Jews prohibited the poet's histories of their gods, for they had been accused of subterfuge during the war, and of outright lies, spread among the people that perverted the status of their own actions and their cause. There was a great regret among the Jews, and widespread interest for a lasting peace with the Romans, after the war, and never recorded in the Greek or Roman language was there any treatise which came from the poets - even though an absorbent interest among the Greeks had emerged, and finally the Romans, for a record of any treatise - if not of the poets' gods, the actions of their people, or of their laws, at least a rendering of what does indeed belong to them.

As a result of the Deluge, Fame spread widely, among the nations, so that even Hieronymus, the Egyptian, notably wrote, *The Phoenician Antiquities*, as they are known to make use of worthy ships and were then at war with Greece. This is significant, for Egypt, not merely, on account of the popular records of Shinar, understood that, indeed, it is a

commandment of God to allow for more colonies; for, it was extremely popular to sacrifice to the Flood.

(The Jews, however, were not deemed sufficient, by Egypt, to seriously aid in the venture, though many were mariners, and Nimrod could not do otherwise, than offer a message of hope to the world, stating that the Jews lived, already, in such blessed circumstances, by their courage, to possess, by God's Commandment, the land of Canaan, and would continue their industry in the land of Adam and Seth, of which Sirdia is historically, a place. Furthermore, the Jews would support in the world's endeavour, to discover new lands, by their strong historical manufacturing, in brick, mortar, and bitumen, which the Babylonians would then purchase, as the Egyptians had always done, in order to strengthen the future ports at sea that they required. Thereby, their industry had found a new market, and after stability in Greece was secured by Enyalios in shipping, they began seafaring, near Shinar of Babylonia, along the Euphrates, so, that rapid colonization could take place).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR'S WRITING

Brad Ramsey, when first writing in a postmodern way, wondered if there was a name for it. A palimpsest, which is an ancient or medieval scroll that has been erased (or rubbed clean) in order to make room for new writing, may contain legible traces of the original writing superimposed in the work. He thought he was writing a palimpsest because his examples resembled and effaced poetry that was already extant. However, he later believed what he was writing was more appropriately called pastiche, in that he copied the versification and extended the context of works from the canon.

As an author of cultural postmodernist literature much of the focus on what he bases his books is intertextuality: the relationship between one text (a poem, for example) and another within the interwoven fabric of literary history. That which he publishes parallels another literary work, is an extended discussion of that work, and represents the adoption of its style. An example may come from multiple texts or genres to represent the chaotic, pluralistic, or information-drenched aspects of life; another, simply put, may be a composite of one master.

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