

Ode to Boekbedonnerd



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By Antony Osler of Poplar Grove

The pastor takes hold of the edge of the pulpit
Brothers and sisters we've found the culprit
It's no longer the miniskirt, the hot pants, the bikini
It's that dark-skinned professor with his yellow Lamborghini.
Where, doctor David, is the struggle objective?
Where are the slogans to praise the collective?
Where is the pamphlet, the misinformation?
The rolling conspiracy that heals the nation?
How can you live in such bookish depravity
Superficial and frivolous, so lacking in gravity?
Down with the blessed, un-gown every teacher
Demob the officers, re-calibrate each metre
Straighten the bananas, square off the clouds
Scrutinize the grammar, fence off the crowds.
Take your crooked finger, stick it down your crooked throat
It's all one sea and it's all one boat
And if we don't want to sink we will have to float.
Close your eyes lest you weep forever
Tighten your hearts lest you remember
Hold on to your memories lest everything be taken
Lock the front door to prevent the break-in.

It's all of it a bubble, comrades, all of it a dream

Every bit of flotsam drifting down the stream.

God in his infinite loving perversity

Our ally in the light and in our darkest adversity,

From the cellar of our deepest fears

Has brought us the Booktown Boekefees.

But those of us with spirits laundered

In the subversive cheer of Boekbedonnered,

Can cry with throats full of gratitude –

This festival will break your heart, your liver and your credit card.

Celebrate the chaos, turn the bottom up,

We've come with drained spirits, we've come with an empty cup.

The words we hear will fill our anxious hearts

And we'll dance through the night with our literary tarts.

Toast our readers, raise our glasses

Drink till happiness lands us on our asses.

There's nothing correct here, there's no-one respectable

Just sunsets ethereal and friendships delectable.

It's here we find our soul again, the tender things that touch us

We open up ourselves and locate our inner compass.

Armed to the ears with unspeakable delight

We return to the world like windows in the night.

Blow up the committee, dissolve the commission

Piss in the garden without permission

Welcome our neighbour, give away our self

Take down the birthday cake from the top shelf.

So thank you all for coming, thank you for your tears

We'll remember all your kindness as we scribble through the years.

Tell all the nurses, tell all the miners, tell the librarians, the social climbers

That every wave on every sea, every leaf on every tree

Is yours to touch with your golden pen, with phrases hesitant, and then

We raise our face to the hills and sing

In the delicate words of the BB committee

Bollamakiesie, fok die tradisie

And let the church bells ring!