

The Android Reads His Verses

Hardly anyone came to hear the android
read his poems at the public library.
But he had practiced his composure
at his inventor's house, before the mirror.
So his voice was calm, his face quite expressionless,
though beneath his tanned synthetic skin
his carbon flesh and fiber heart was fluttering.

He started with a sonnet on his dreams,
and electric sheep leapt round the empty room.
He told tales of clockwork drummers, robots,
love in the time of software viruses
and death by preprogrammed obsolescence.
And many other things it seemed to him
that androids and humans have in common.

He told how the moon tides perturb the sea,
how the waves sound, and why sunsets are red,
how he'd seen starships burn near the nebula,
(for even androids have their myths and histories).
He paused to gauge the mood, and was met by silence.

And hardly anybody clapped when the android
closed his little book of verse. Walking back
to his inventor's house alone that night
he felt what seemed like raindrops on his face
with a new awareness, though the sky
was clear of clouds when he gazed towards Orion.

Greek Women's Names

Those old Greek women's names are out of fashion.
You never meet Daphnes or Ariadnes these days,
nor Iris or Agnes, and never Cybils,
precious few Chloes or Penelopes,
and as for Persephones - well just forget it!

Yet the beauty of those names remains,
outliving the mortals who once wore them,
reminding us of that ancient epic Dreamtime
when gods still spent their summers on Mount Olympus.

But names like women's fashion have their cycles,
and I live in the hope that one day at a party,
or in a taverna while on vacation,
I'll ask a girl in a vintage pleated chiton
her name, and she'll answer *eimi Androméda*.

What Were the Chances?

So what do you think the chances were?
You sometimes read about these things,
a headline glimpsed on a crowded train.
It's Someone's Lucky Day! Or so they say.
Yet it could be you. It could come true.

And every second chance is courted,
when someone makes a wish or throws a dice,
or spins a wheel or buys another ticket,
pinning hope on the breeze and the tides
and the state of the pitch. And the jockeys
must bestow their favors somewhere.

Around us the spheres revolve and wax and wane,
the planets bring to bear their subtle influence,
sleek ships pass silently to foreign shores.

And down an aircraft aisle eyes meet –
two strangers flung together casually,
at the start of a journey neither had expected.

So what were the chances our two paths would cross –
that a thousand fruit machines would turn up hearts,
ca-chung, ca-ching, ca-ching ca-chung?

Here, check the cards, it's in our stars,
I'll whisper the winning numbers in your ear,
It's Someone's Lucky Day, they say –
It's Me! It's You! It's You and Me!

The Gossip in Nazareth

That boy was never much good at carpentry,
nor did he listen to the priests attentively.
Though they say he knew the scriptures well,
he often had his head in the clouds, that boy.

His family fled to Egypt when he was just a baby,
so perhaps that's where he got his strange ideas,
and where he learnt that trick, with the cups and pebble.
Clever boys like that are always prone to trouble.

We should have found him a wife, in my opinion.
He could have been a trader! At worst a fisherman.
Now he's started a sect in the desert, you say -
that he has disciples. Get away with you, fool!
Next you'll be saying that he can work miracles.

The Fonts of All Wisdom

Old English Text was good for Caxton's Chaucer

Papyrus adds a touch of class, of bullrush parchment

Or for your horror novella, check out Chiller.

Goudy Old Style's understated, subtle serifs

Lucida Calligraphy imitates a quill

STENCIL, SPRAYED ON, FOR WALLS OR LABELS.

Rockwell Nova Light – for typewritten statement

Imprint – just a hint of monumental bas relief

Or try a little Arial, so austere and sans serif.

Broadway has a leading role on retro posters

French Script for croque monsieur on bistro menus.

Gothic Baskerville for telling tales of Sherlock Holmes

Giggly Gigi for light opera, or the music hall.

But for books of modern verse typographers endorse

This Palatino Linotype. *There's so much worse.*