

MIMES AND OTHER ATROCITIES

By

ALEX LAKE

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of  
Arkansas Tech University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS  
December 2013

## Preface

My final project is a collection of formal poetry that implements meter and rhyme. I am particularly focusing on wit, light verse, and a bit of social satire. Comic verse must have rhyme and meter in order to be funny. This is wonderfully illustrated in John Frederick Nims' textbook *Western Wind*, which presents an anonymous limerick:

There was an old lady of Tottenham,  
Who'd no manners, or else she'd forgotten 'em;  
At tea at the Vicar's  
She tore off her knickers,  
Because, she explained, she felt 'ot in 'em.

If it is written in free verse, however, the comedic aspect is lost:

A young lady, a native of Tottenham,  
Had no manners, or else they'd slipped her mind;  
At the Vicar's tea  
She tore off her knickers,  
Explaining that she found them uncomfortably warm.

The version in rhymed meter is considerably funnier because it employs double and triple rhymes, which tend to be funnier than single rhymes. I employ double and triple rhyme in many of my poems, such as "Vlad" and "S.T.D." Another universal element of comedy, ironically, is some combination of violence, death, and shame. This is true for poetry, as well as film, such as in the films of Charlie Chaplain and the Three Stooges. Violence, death, and shame are elements I employ for comedic effect.

This collection includes examples of several poetic forms, such as the sonnet, villanelle, limerick, blank verse, and rhymed quatrains. The poems employ various meters, including anapestic verse, which I find is the best meter for writing comic poetry.

## Mimes

They never smile.  
They always frown.  
A mime is just  
A quiet clown.  
In invisible boxes,  
On invisible bikes,  
A mime is a person  
That nobody likes.  
They "tug-o-war,"  
They silent-shout,  
But all it does  
Is creep you out.  
They're highly odd,  
And mostly French.  
You'd not mistake one  
For a mensch.  
When they are gone,  
They're never missed,  
Just like the shunned  
Ventriloquist.

## Alien

With an extraterrestrial  
Drive to devour,  
It comes from an egg  
That blooms like a flower.  
It starts as a spidery  
Skittering pest  
That lodges a parasite  
Deep in your chest.  
It comes bursting forth  
In a bloody red mess,  
Then silently crawls  
To a place it can rest.  
The next time you see it,  
It's grown like a weed.  
It's certainly hungry,  
And eager to feed.  
A tiny spare mouth  
Can extend from its head.  
It hunts down the humans  
Until they're all dead.  
It has acid for blood,  
And its temperament's callous.  
Most of its body  
Resembles a phallus.

### Side Effects

You might feel some involuntary jerking,  
But that just means the medicine is working.  
But if you notice rampant inflammation,  
Would you prefer a casket or cremation?