

AP Lit.

a poetry close reading

On your own paper,
write a paraphrase
of your assigned
clause(s) in contemporary
English? (IF YOU GET STUCK,
HEAD TO PG. 4.)

'Terence, this¹ is stupid stuff: / 1
You eat your victuals² fast enough: / 2
There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,
To see the rate you drink your beer: / 3
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make, 5
It gives a chap the belly-ache. / 4
The cow, the old cow, she is dead; / 5
It sleeps well, the hornéd head: / 6
We poor lads, 'tis our turn now
To hear such tunes as killed the cow. / 7 10
Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme
Your friends to death before their time
Moping melancholy mad: / 8
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad. / 9

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be, 15
There's brisker pipes than poetry. / 10
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,³
Or why was Burton built on Trent?⁴ / 11
Oh many a peer of England brews
Livelier liquor than the Muse, 20
And malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.⁵ / 12
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink
For fellows whom it hurts to think: / 13
Look into the pewter pot 25
To see the world as the world's not. / 14
And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past: / 15
The mischief is that 'twill not last. / 16
Oh I have been to Ludlow fair⁶
And left my necktie God knows where, 30
And carried halfway home, or near,
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer: / 17
Then the world seemed none so bad,

¹ This poetry Terence writes

² Snacks, "vittles"

³ Fermentation vats for making beer

⁴ Burton on the River Trent, an English city renowned for its breweries

⁵ An allusion to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which the poet claims his poetry will let readers understand God's mysterious ways.

⁶ A town in Shropshire with a beer-tasting festival each spring.

And I myself a sterling lad; / 18
 And down in lovely muck I've lain, 35
 Happy till I woke again. / 19
 Then I saw the morning sky: / 20
 Heigho, the tale was all a lie; / 21
 The world, it was the old world yet,

I was I, my things were wet, 40
 And nothing now remained to do
 But begin the game anew. / 22

Therefore, since the world has still
 Much good, but much less good than ill, 45
 And while the sun and moon endure
 Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
 I'd face it as a wise man would,
 And train for ill and not for good. / 23
 'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale
 Is not so brisk a brew as ale: / 24 50
 Out of a stem that scored⁷ the hand
 I wrung it in a weary land. / 25
 But take it: / 26 if the smack⁸ is sour,
 The better for the embittered hour; / 27
 It should do good to heart and head 55
 When your soul is in my soul's stead; / 28
 And I will friend you, if I may,
 In the dark and cloudy day. / 29

There was a king reigned in the East: / 30
 There, when kings will sit to feast, 60
 They get their fill before they think
 With poisoned meat and poisoned drink. / 31
 He gathered all the springs to birth
 From the many-venomed earth; / 32
 First a little, thence to more, 65
 He sampled all her killing store; / 33
 And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,
 Sate the king when healths went round.
 They put arsenic in his meat
 And stared aghast to watch him eat; / 34 70
 They poured strychnine in his cup
 And shook to see him drink it up: / 35
 They shook, they stared as white's their shirt: / 36
 Them it was their poison hurt. / 37
 --I tell the tale that I heard told. / 38 75
 Mithridates,⁹ he died old. / 39

⁷ sliced

⁸ taste

⁹ Mithridates VI, King of Pontus (133 BCE-63 BCE). The story of Mithridates and his immunity to poison comes from the Roman historian Pliny (23-27 CE).

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