

# A Christmas in July Wasted With Deb Pickett

## Lyrics booklet

Old Dead Modern Blues  
I've Written a Self-referential Major-General Parody  
Brillo, Spit-Brillo  
Clank! I Just Thought of the Romans Again!  
Space Parity  
Pooper Scooper  
The Blue Door  
Haul on the Jib  
Big Boat Stuck  
Weeping Melaleuca  
I'm Staying Home This Christmas

# Old Dead Modem Blues

Download: <https://music.futzle.com/drivers-under-instruction/1/>  
Music and lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 1993 and 2022

Well, there's no dial tone, since the lightning left its bruise  
You used to have a phone, now it's just black smoke and ooze  
And now you're all alone, you got them old dead modem blues

Do you remember when the Internet was hard to use?  
Then came the NBN<sup>1</sup> with an offer you can't refuse  
Still every now and then, you get them old dead modem blues

It's a new kind of hell, d'you like your 24/7 news?  
Though it's unparalleled, you're paralysed for what to choose  
And so you get nostalgia for them old dead modem blues

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<sup>1</sup> National Broadband Network

# I've Written a Self-referential Major-General Parody

Concert exclusive!

Music: Arthur Sullivan

Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 1993

I've written a self-referential Major-General parody  
To several other songs it bears a striking similarity  
Before you go complaining that it sounds like every other one  
It barely was original when Gilbert wrote for Sullivan  
To many other versions it indubitably shares a note  
It doesn't list the elements, unlike the one Tom Lehrer wrote<sup>2</sup>  
In fact you'll find this song is suited less to operetta than  
A segment shown on Denton<sup>3</sup> or on Carson<sup>4</sup> or on Letterman<sup>5</sup>

In fact it's elementary since the solitary parameter  
is "write six rhyming couplets in a quick hexadecameter"  
And though it's unpronounceable, it shows with some hilarity  
I've written a self-referential Major-General parody

Throughout the current century have people written numerous  
Reworkings that attempt to be particularly humorous  
And yet some still remain containing ever such a sloppy sight  
As stealing lines verbatim 'cause the author's out of copyright  
Observe the total time we spend dethroning the definitive  
Consulting rhyming lexicons enormous and diminutive  
For messages empirical, satirical, political  
Whatever you conclude, my effort's purely hypocritical

In all of God's creation nothing's quite so overkillable  
As G&S's patter song in lines of sixteen syllables  
And so, in my conclusion, I'll reiterate for clarity  
I've written a self-referential Major-General parody

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<sup>2</sup> "The Elements" (1959), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Elements\\_\(song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Elements_(song))

<sup>3</sup> Late-night variety show host Andrew Denton, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Money\\_or\\_the\\_Gun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Money_or_the_Gun)

<sup>4</sup> Late-night variety show host Johnny Carson, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Tonight\\_Show\\_Starring\\_Johnny\\_Carson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tonight_Show_Starring_Johnny_Carson)

<sup>5</sup> Late-night variety show host David Letterman, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Late\\_Night\\_with\\_David\\_Letterman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Late_Night_with_David_Letterman)

# Brillo, Spit-Brillo

Download: <https://music.futzle.com/wreck-of-the-ella-fitzgerald/2/>

Music: Arthur Sullivan

Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 2017 and 2024

When they ask how I get my knight's armour to gleam,  
I say "Brillo<sup>6</sup>, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo."  
He parades round the courtyard, his plate a sunbeam,  
That's my Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo.  
Does he need it for more than to wear in the keep?  
Would it hurt him to know that I scrub in my sleep?  
And I toss and I turn and awake with a leap,  
Crying, "Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo."

Now I'm steeled to continue this daft masquerade,  
Buying Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo.  
I expectorate, then every surface abrade,  
With more Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo.  
All these extra expenses were making me skint,  
Till I stumbled upon the back door of the mint,  
I can take what I want and leave no fingerprint,  
Thanks to Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo.

He commands your regard with his radiant smile;  
Is it Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo?  
You can see where he stands for at least half a mile:  
It's the Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo.  
When he stood, unadvisedly, on the rampart,  
Took an enemy archer's bolt straight to the heart!  
So I'm taking my fortune to make a new start,  
With my Brillo, spit-Brillo, spit-Brillo.

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<sup>6</sup> A brand of steel wool scouring pad, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brillo\\_Pad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brillo_Pad)

# Clank! I Just Thought of the Romans Again!

Concert exclusive!

Music and Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, MMXXIV

I've got an admission  
An odd superstition  
Deep in my cognition  
    Inhabits a sign  
It lives without rental  
It flips incremental  
Until, accidental  
    I cross a red line  
Avoiding regression  
Has been my obsession  
I hope this confession  
    Will bring the point home  
Now hear as I chronicle  
Somewhat sardonical  
Like the mnemonic  
    All roads lead to R—

Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!  
Wiping my streak at the stroke of a pen  
Reset it to zero, I burned it like Nero  
Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!

I make no apology  
Ancient mythology  
All etymology  
    I can accrue  
The Mediterranean  
That's my uranium  
Sticks in my cranium  
    Stronger than glue  
I'll always remember  
Why nine is "September"  
Why twelve is "December"  
    It's easy as pie!  
The facts I've got on 'em is  
Stuff you don't wanna miss  
Like the eponymous  
    Month of Jul—

Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!  
I was just having a moment of zen  
There ain't no justice like Caesar Augustus  
Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!

My quest for perfection  
Evading detection  
I turned to deflection  
    To stay in the Game<sup>7</sup>  
I'd act all imperious  
Frown like I'm serious  
Swear till I'm weary  
    "Is Kirk's middle name!"<sup>8</sup>  
I'll start to get manic  
Then go all volcanic  
Erupt in a panic  
    For something to say  
And not to sound drastic  
Too enthusiastic  
Explode pyroclastic  
    Like over Pomp—

Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!  
Take a deep breath and then count up to ten  
Gets a bit hazardous quoting from Tacitus  
Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!

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<sup>7</sup> Sorry, you lose.

<sup>8</sup> James Tiberius Kirk from Star Trek, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_T.\\_Kirk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_T._Kirk)

To talk of Egyptians  
There are no proscriptions  
You'll get no conniptions  
    (The impudent whelps)  
Please! Share your opinions  
On outer dominions  
We love Carthaginians!  
    (Don't mention the Alps)  
With Grecian theocracy<sup>9</sup>  
Smell the hypocrisy  
Watch "meritocracy"  
    counterattack  
The smug cognoscenti  
They'll hurt you aplenty  
And stab at you twenty-  
    three times in the b—

Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!  
Surely we all do a bit now and then?  
I know a ripper 'bout Marcus Agrippa  
There's nothing so naughty as reading *I, Claudius*  
(Fun bit of trivia: bumped off by Livia)  
I've a particular thing for Caligula  
Not so much "if" as a matter of "when"  
Clank! I just thought of the Romans again!

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<sup>9</sup> theocracy, n. A fusion or mixture of different deities. Not to be confused with "theocracy", rule by religious leaders.

# Space Parity

Concert exclusive!

Music: David Bowie

Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 1994

I'm on hold to Telecom<sup>10</sup>

I'm on hold to Telecom

Wait a minute and advance by a micron

I'm on hold to Telecom

All the operators gone

All on long lunch breaks

For godsakes talk to me

This is me on hold to Telecom:

"I'm barely half awake

And I think I'm running purely on glucose

Shall I take another capsule of No-Dōz?"

This is Telecom to me on hold:

"We're stepping through our calls

And we hope you like the music that we play

Have we told you just how good we are today?"

For here am I nibbling on a Tim Tam<sup>11</sup>

Slowly growing old

Planet Earth is, too, I'm behind them in the queue

Now I've waited half a thousand hours

And yet I'm waiting still

And I think I've worn my ear down to the bone

All my life I'm spending waiting on the phone

I'm on hold to Telecom—

The line's gone dead, there's something wrong

Can you hear me Telecom

Can you—

Here am I choking on my Tim Tam

Slowly growing old

Planet Earth is, too I'm behind them in the queue

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<sup>10</sup> Telstra, Australia's now-privatised national telephony company, used to be called Telecom Australia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telstra>

<sup>11</sup> A classic Australian chocolate biscuit, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim\\_Tam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Tam)

# Pooper Scooper

Download: <https://music.futzle.com/fedivision/3/>

Music: Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus

Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 2016 and 2024

Pooper scooper, lying on the sidewalk  
Shining in the sun  
Rex, what have you done?  
Can't you just do number one?

Rex, you truly live like you're a king  
And I love you like you love Schmackos<sup>12</sup>  
No, you can't have some of my beesting<sup>13</sup>  
No, you can't have some of my tacos  
So imagine you've heard me put on my sneakers  
Somehow you already know  
Why's it gotta be so difficult to go before we go?

Chorus:

I need a pooper scooper, lying on the sidewalk  
Shining in the sun  
Rex, what have you done?  
Can't you just do number one?  
Without a pooper scooper, I'd watch out where I'd walk  
Friend, if I were you  
What's that on your shoe?  
Yesterday they were brand new

Rex, I wish that you could comprehend  
Our relation's like matrimony  
I apologize if I offend  
But that stool's the size of a pony  
There are moments when I'm sneaking through the back door  
You're already on your toes  
Everything would be so different if it weren't so on the nose

(Chorus)

I'll leave it there, it will survive  
This number two reminds me guiltily that I've  
Just got to walk away and then, if I'm polite  
I just know it's gonna be a coprolite

(Chorus)

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<sup>12</sup> Dog treat brand, <https://www.schmackos.com.au/>

<sup>13</sup> Bienenstich, a cream-filled cake, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bienenstich>

# The Blue Door

Concert exclusive!

Music: Bob Davie

Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 2024

Midnight, woke myself with bad dreaming  
Stage fright, cheesy sets and bad theming  
Blue door, what's that cliché you're scheming?

There's a lumberjack who says "thank god you're here", behind the blue door  
Am I a movie star, a nurse, a buccaneer, behind the blue door?  
And for what exactly did I volunteer behind the blue door?

Humour puerile tending collegian  
Improv, not remotely my region  
Blue door, I'm no stand-up comedian

There's an all-hands meeting at the merchant bank, behind the blue door  
There's a toga party at the forum [CLANK] behind the blue door  
And I really hope that I don't draw a blank, behind the blue door

One of possibilities legion  
Improv, not remotely my region  
Blue door, I'm no stand-up comedian  
Blå dør, why'm I speaking Norwegian?

There's a D-Day landing and a Sherman tank, behind the blue door  
There's a grand hotel, can you believe the swank behind the blue door?  
And I really hope that I don't walk the plank, behind the blue door

# Haul on the Jib: A Recursive C Shanty

Download: <https://music.futzle.com/fedivision/2/>

Music and Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 2023

Now folks, gather round, I've some math to expound  
It's a tale from arithmetic deep and profound  
From before there were words "exponential" and "power"  
From before this here tavern began Happy Hour

It's a concept that follows a broad rule of thumb  
Make a sequence of integers formed by the sum  
of the previous two in the series and lo!  
You'll approximate phi, the divine ratio

Now we're able seafarers and that's very swell  
But the name "Fibonacci" is trouble to spell  
Is it F-I-B-O-N-A-double-C-I?  
Say we shorten it fib' and I tell you no lie

So haul on the jib  
Do you know how to fib'?  
If your number is less than or equal to one  
Then, haul on the jib  
I don't mean to be glib  
And your answer's the same as your own and you're done  
Else haul on the jib  
As you call on the fib'  
With your number less one and your number less two  
Then surrender the sum to the one you called you

(One horny bunny, Two horny bunny, etc.)  
(One Fibonacci, Two Fibonacci, etc.)

It's a spiral you find in pineapples and shells  
To self-similar growth there are strong parallels  
It's peculiarly linked to the square root of five  
(Which is left as a challenge for you to derive.)

```
// Haul on the jib
int fib(int n) {
  if (n <= 1)
    // Haul on the jib
    // TODO: link with glib
    return n;
  else {
    // Haul on the jib
    // Recursive bit
    int f1 = fib(n-1);
    int f2 = fib(n-2);
    return f1 + f2; }
}
```

(One phyllotaxy<sup>14</sup>, Two phyllotaxy, etc.)  
(One Fibonacci, Two Fibonacci, etc.)

It's a perfectly fine educational tool  
But to use it naively you're only a fool  
Of its double recursion it needn't be said  
You'd prefer analytical functions instead

(Chorus)

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<sup>14</sup> The arrangement of leaves on a stem of a plant, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phyllotaxis>

# Big Boat Stuck

Download: <https://music.futzle.com/wreck-of-the-ella-fitzgerald/1/>  
Music and Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 2025

Recall when the pandemic  
Had been on about a year?  
I don't mean the polemic  
But the thing that brought us near  
It helped us to restore our pluck  
Rejuvenate our cheer  
I mean, of course, the big boat stuck  
A memory to revere<sup>15</sup>

There's trouble in the Suez<sup>16</sup>  
Claustrophobia for real  
Between the shore and you is  
Ninety thousand tons of steel  
Don't let yourself be thunderstruck  
Both hands upon the wheel!  
We'd hate to get the big boat stuck  
So keep an even keel

Perhaps you want to turn about  
(A thing you might desire)  
Be cautious, on your best lookout  
Lest all your plans backfire  
We had to ship our stuff by truck  
Our straits were truly dire  
And all the while the big boat stuck  
A maritime quagmire

Now everyone should be aboard  
The dangers of daydreams  
When sailing a Norwegian fjord  
It's harder than it seems  
Another ship has run amok<sup>17</sup>  
They've even got livestreams!  
I'm glad we've got the big boat stuck  
To generate new memes

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<sup>15</sup> The Ever Given Suez Canal obstruction, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021\\_Suez\\_Canal\\_obstruction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Suez_Canal_obstruction)

<sup>16</sup> Don't tell Billy Joel.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.rte.ie/news/europe/2025/0523/1514505-norway-container-ship/>

Now you might think you're clever  
And that you won't run aground  
But nothing lasts for ever  
Given time enough you're bound  
To think that you can save a buck  
Forgoing that depth-sound  
You're beached as, with your big boat stuck  
That gulf's not so profound

Imagine you've a tanker  
I'll endeavour to be brief  
A cyclone nearly sank 'er  
Left her crudely on the reef  
What happened to the load of muck?  
Suspend your disbelief!  
The front fell off<sup>18</sup>, the big boat stuck  
A timeless leitmotif

We won't be acting captain  
On a sandbar unforeseen  
And we won't end up trapped in  
An imploding submarine  
And we won't have to test our luck  
In hotel quarantine  
We'll always have the big boat stuck  
Some things are evergreen

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<sup>18</sup> The Kirki, a Greek tanker, lost its bow on a reef in 1991, <https://www.amsa.gov.au/marine-environment/incidents-and-exercises/kirki-21-july-1991>, famously parodied by comedians John Clarke and Brian Dawe, [https://youtu.be/3m5qxZm\\_JqM](https://youtu.be/3m5qxZm_JqM)

# Weeping Melaleuca

Download: <https://music.futzle.com/futzle-the-musical/2/>  
Music and Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 2023

Weeping melaleuca, you were there when I was small  
Deep at extra cover, you were there to catch the ball  
Through all my misadventures you were there to take the fall  
Counting rings each year since I was born  
Tower in the backyard, a perpetual mainstay  
Oh, weeping melaleuca, you were constant as the day

You were ever olive green as life grew up and down  
Sunny cheer, and then the year the black dog came to town  
Despondent in the darkness deep despair enough to drown  
You had the grace to look a mite forlorn  
Shelter when I doubted just who I was meant to be  
Oh, weeping melaleuca, you would always weep for me

Summer brought a feast for every possum, bat and bird  
And every Christmas I'd return and share a festive word  
And I'd confide my secrets, sure that no one overheard  
You'd sprinkle scarlet tinsel on the lawn  
Patiently accepting all the things I had to say  
Oh, weeping melaleuca, you were never hard to sway

And though you're left behind  
I hope the years were kind  
There's just this picture in my mind I've drawn

Today I got nostalgic so I scheduled a house call  
Standing on the footpath, there's no sign of you at all  
What took you in the end, was it a dozer or a squall?  
I thought that you'd outlive me, I'd have sworn  
Driving home tomorrow, I resolve to plant a tree  
Oh, weeping melaleuca, you are always part of me  
Weeping melaleuca, thank you for the memory

# I'm Staying Home This Christmas

Download: <https://music.futzle.com/im-staying-home-this-christmas/>  
Music and Lyrics: Deborah Pickett, 2024

Season's greetings, my old friend  
Goodness knows it's been a while  
It's been great to see you smile  
Now your heart is on the mend

You don't have to hold a torch  
For relationships that you've been stuck in  
Why'd you have to bake a whole turducken?<sup>19</sup>  
Now there's vultures on your porch

It's a complicated business with your stuffing and your roast  
Three veg, potatoes, gravy and a bun  
I'm staying home this Christmas with a couple bits of toast  
A trifle burnt, but never overdone

Now I've sworn off big to-dos  
Mostly for my mental health  
I don't have to travel stealth  
Now I know that I can choose

Here's my digital hometown  
I'll admit that that sounds kind of hokey  
We are also bad at karaoke  
But we'll try to keep it down

Their lack of tone and rhythm has you abandoning your post  
They're butchering "We've Only Just Begun"<sup>20</sup>  
I'm staying home this Christmas on the radio, engrossed  
And cheering as Tendulkar<sup>21</sup> scores a ton

It's hard to be the isthmus, bridging coast to fragile coast  
Shields up, defensive, phasers set to stun  
I'm staying home this Christmas with some Dickens and the Ghost  
Of Christmas Present, that's my kind of fun

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<sup>19</sup> An abomination of poultry, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turducken>

<sup>20</sup> Song by The Carpenters, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We%27ve\\_Only\\_Just\\_Begun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We%27ve_Only_Just_Begun)

<sup>21</sup> Legendary cricketer from India, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sachin\\_Tendulkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sachin_Tendulkar)

Another messy schism as your drunk uncle overdosed  
And brazenly misgendered your stepson  
I'm staying home this Christmas with the folks who matter most  
Found family, a tapestry homespun

I'm staying home this Christmas where my home is localhost  
127.0.0.1<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ask your local nerd.