

A Christmas in July Wasted With Deb Pickett

Lyrics booklet

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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 NBN¹ 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

¹ 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 wrote²
In fact you'll find this song is suited less to operetta than
A segment shown on Denton³ or on Carson⁴ or on Letterman⁵

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

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

³ Late-night variety show host Andrew Denton, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Money_or_the_Gun

⁴ Late-night variety show host Johnny Carson, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tonight_Show_Starring_Johnny_Carson

⁵ Late-night variety show host David Letterman, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Late_Night_with_David_Letterman

Brillo, Spit-Brillo

Download: <https://music.futzele.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 "Brillo⁶, 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.

⁶ A brand of steel wool scouring 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 Game⁷
I'd act all imperious
Frown like I'm serious
Swear till I'm weary
 "Is Kirk's middle name!"⁸
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!

⁷ Sorry, you lose.

⁸ James Tiberius Kirk from Star Trek, 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 theocracy⁹
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!

⁹ 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 Telecom¹⁰

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 Tam¹¹

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

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

¹¹ A classic Australian chocolate biscuit, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Tam

Pooper Scooper

Download: <https://music.futzele.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 Schmackos¹²
No, you can't have some of my beesting¹³
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)

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

¹³ 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 phyllotaxy¹⁴, 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)

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

Big Boat Stuck

Download: <https://music.futze.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 revere¹⁵

There's trouble in the Suez¹⁶
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 amok¹⁷
They've even got livestreams!
I'm glad we've got the big boat stuck
To generate new memes

¹⁵ The Ever Given Suez Canal obstruction, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Suez_Canal_obstruction

¹⁶ Don't tell Billy Joel.

¹⁷ <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 off¹⁸, 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

¹⁸ 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

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.futze.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?¹⁹
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"²⁰
I'm staying home this Christmas on the radio, engrossed
And cheering as Tendulkar²¹ 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

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

²⁰ Song by The Carpenters, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We%27ve_Only_Just_Begun

²¹ Legendary cricketer from India, 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
127.0.0.1²²

²² Ask your local nerd.