

I went to Paris on business in the middle of January this year, and then again at the tail end of February. On each occasion I sent a postcard back to England with a poem on it.

I came to Paris Sunday night
To help resolve my client's plight.
I wrestled with their bits of kit
To try and make their systems fit,
And after three hard days and nights
I'm still immersed in bits and bytes.
So if you ever get the chance
To go and be a geek in France
Do not expect to have much fun:
Computer work is all I've done.

Once more, past France's golden shores
I travel underground:
How business travel often bores!
At least, that's what I've found.
In Copenhagen, Andy geeks,
And down in Stuttgart, Blair:
In London, Greg the server tweaks,
In Paris? I'll be there.
And thus we four, by work displaced,
Technology the foe,
Defeat the bugs against us faced,
And make the systems go.
And with the users now at ease
with well-behaving kit,
I'll heed my body's urgent pleas
And make my homeward flit.
Et sous la manche, encore une fois,
Vers Angleterre enfin,
J'écris une carte postale pour toi,
Pour envoyer demain.

ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha is the official Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy appreciation society. There was a visit, a "slouch", to the Isle of Wight – but I missed it.

I wondered, when I'd missed the ship
That floats to Wight o'er Solent's brine,
That with a later ferry trip,
Would I catch up with ZZ9?
Beside the harbour, in the bar,
I'd search, and wonder where they are.

Continuous as the fans which stroll
and chatter on their merry way,
the crowds I chased in manner droll
from Yarmouth Pier to Alum Bay.
A thousand saw I in the sun,
but ZZ9ers saw I none.

The waves beside them danced: but none
Had wet the feet of slouching fans;
I walked beneath the blazing sun,
Reflecting on my change of plans.
I gazed and gazed, but could not place
A friendly ZZ9er's face.

For oft, when in my car I wait,
In jams on Hampshire's motorway,
I think that, if I turn up late,
I'll find my friends and join the fray.
But this time round I missed my friends,
and wrote a filk to make amends.

A Haiku for the same occasion.

Adam and Jerry
Had two days on the island.
Douglas missed them both.

Spangled Course 1

Poetry by Douglas Spencer.

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Do not disturb a bard at play
On stuff he's never tried:
Until his work sees light of day
Go get thee hence and go away,
Leave well enough aside!
Acrostic verse he's never done,
So leave him be to have his fun.

So leave him be to have his fun:
Perhaps he'll yet succeed,
Enough, perhaps, to write just one?
Not one, but two! See seven's son!
Communities, take heed!
Excited by this nice surprise?
Rock on, acrostic exercise.

Pete Young and I were stood in a London pub talking about one of my poems he's publishing in the current issue of "Zoo Nation". He said to me "why don't you collect some of your poems together and put them out as a fanzine?" I thought of plenty of reasons why not, but none of them held any water.

I could hardly put together a collection of my poetry without including one of the poems I wrote for Anne.

This one dates from May 1996.

“A man chases a girl until she catches him”
– Eddie Fisher

Delighting in her form,
I whispered in her ear:
Responding, she was warm,
She made her feelings clear,
And so I dipped my eager face
And visited her throne of grace.

My head between her thighs,
I played my eager part:
I treasured up her sighs
Adjacent to my heart,
And, merchant-like, I rose afresh
And let her take my pound of flesh.

In sated after-glow,
We lay there hugging tight:
I felt that she should know
That nothing felt more right,
And when I said, I heard her thrill
And felt her hug grow tighter still.

I lay there in her arms
And realised as I lay:
Her everlasting charms
Had stole my heart away,
And made me her eternal friend:
I wished the night would never end.

I put a new year's resolution to the test when I visited my mother a few weeks ago. The family were immediately, totally, accepting.

I vowed, on New Year's Eve, to burn the screens
Which from the world at large conceal my mind:
To try and live my life without the means
To raise a mask to hide my life behind.

I took my mother out last night to dine,
My brother and his girlfriend and his son.
Without a mask, and after too much wine,
My living in the open had begun.

We talked of this and that, of love and life,
Of baser things, of sex and lust and sleaze,
The way one's heart reacts to all the strife
As glands and mind compete one's life to seize.

To cut a mask away can hurt like blades,
But life unmasked is bearing fruit in spades.

A playful response to a bit of hero-worship.

On wings of sleep a writer gently drifts,
And as she sleeps, she warmly dreams of me.
She worries her imagination's gifts
Will spook me with their impropriety.

On wings of strife an engineer is keen
To place his wife's affections first in life.
He worries how his choices will be seen,
And frets in case I hate him for his wife.

I told her it was fine, it made me bright,
The way I turned her on inside her head.
I told him it was fine, he'd chosen right,
He needn't fear, we'd share a pint instead.

Will someone tell these folk I'm not a God,
And that they think I am is somewhat odd.

Everyone at Max's New Year's Eve party celebrates in their own unique way.

The hostess, Max, can celebrate with grace,
Inviting round some friends to greet the year;
When Alison and Steven set in place
A dance mat for the gaming console here,
Then Marianne can dance the night away
While Jonathan just celebrates his thumb;
And Helena discovers, new year's day,
That Wag, in celebration, ends up numb.

When Mark and Claire are wont to celebrate,
Banana Wings is where we read their tales;
And Simon celebrates and thinks it's great
When Sandra celebrates by trimming nails;
And Flick and Pete can celebrate just how
Young Rachel makes the rest of us feel old;
And Helena discovers, even now,
That Wag can celebrate in ways untold.

Watch Alison and Squaddie celebrate
The light which shines within each other's eyes;
And Tony celebrates alongside Kate;
And Simon's Bridget frets about her size;
Poor Tanya, with her jetlag, can't take more,
And Lillian is ready for a rest,
But Helena discovers, on the floor,
That Wag can celebrate by far the best.

But Del! and Pete! (you see I left you last,
Now aren't you sick of that?) It could be worse;
The others get one line, and then it's past,
But Wag I'll celebrate in every verse.

These two Haiku are self-explanatory.

Memo to muggers
Who want to attack my friend:
It's just not worth it.

One tried on Thursday:
She kicked the shit out of him
Until he ran away.