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In the confessional

(Composed on 19-20 February 2015. For Chris.)

Sinner: Bless me, father, for I have sinned,
more transgressions in the wind.
Two weeks now are in the bin,
since my last confession: here are my sins.
I was having a lark, just lying around,
so I fed the lark and went into town.
I needed some cash, so I went to the bank,
for the queue so long, whom should I thank?
But I wasn't prepared to wait too long,
and so I raised my voice, shouting "Honga pong-pong!"
I brandished my lark and a fish that stank,
and with that succeeded in robbing the bank.
As I finished, I spied a cop by the door,
so I kicked him in the shins and he dropped to the floor.
Bless me, father, that is all I can remember.

Priest: Well, my son, surely you have tweaked
the truth a little, since in just two weeks,
it is hard to believe you'd slip into sin,
robbing a bank – what made you begin?
And just two weeks, are you quite sure
that you were just here for a salvific cure?

Sinner: Yes, reverend father, I am quite certain,
I remember your confessional and your dark cotton curtain.
But I'm a nice fellow, not nasty or mean,
so give me absolution and wipe my slate clean.

Priest: Well, OK, but your tale is very scary –
for your absolution you should say a “Hail Mary”.

Two hours later

Sinner: Bless me father, I’m a winner,
but every now and then, a sinner.
I did the penance you exacted
but soon after got distracted.
It has been two hours since my last confession, here with you,
and these are my sins.

Priest: Well, almighty God is gracious
and his heart is truly spacious.
But I’m not God and I can’t see
why you’re sinning so merrily.
Just two hours and now you’re back!
You’re probably a kleptomaniac!

Sinner: Not this time, most reverend father,
and believe me please that I would rather
sun myself on sandy beaches
or scratch my skin to pull out leaches,
than have to ask for absolution
yet again and in rhymed locution.
But as I left your celestial building,
I spied your altar with its golden gilding.
So I rolled it down the aisle, cluck-cluck,
and loaded it onto my pick-up truck.
Then I headed to the police station
in a state of most extreme elation.
I’ve always liked the front desk there
and the police chief’s swivel chair.
So I rolled them out the station’s door:
the police don’t have them any more.
These were heavy but, cluck-cluck,
I loaded them onto my pick-up truck.
I’ll sell this furniture some day
and post these items on ebay.

Bless me, though I may have omitted
other sins which I committed
in the two hours I've been gone –
so absolve me please and let's move on.

Priest: Well, stealing from the Church, your mother,
rather than from some other –
this is serious and it's quite perverse
and, yes, it's even somewhat worse
than robbing banks and kicking shins:
these are, in fact, substantial sins.
But three "Hail Marys" might suffice,
provided you promise to be nice
and your sinning to decrease.
You are forgiven: go in peace.

...

By the way, let me know when you post my altar on ebay.

Why are there no fallen fairies?

(Composed on 18 November 2014, late morning.)

Why are there no fallen fairies? –
they always do just what they should.
We all hear of fallen angels,
who've given up on being good.

But ask yourself where fairies live –
why all of them on lily pads!
This must be why they stay so happy,
and why they're never ever bad.

For lily pads have magic power,
which the fairies draw upon,
while fallen angels live in hellfire –
no magic there that can be won.

Frogs as well, on lily pads,
figure that they've got it all!
And now you know the reason why
no fairies ever took a fall.

Let me out of here

(Composed on 16 August 2014.)

God comes to see me each Wednesday at ten –
it's 9:55 and He's coming again,
sometimes with angels, sometimes alone,
but always with fireworks surrounding his throne.
I've always liked fireworks, they light up the sky,
though they make me feel hungry and I don't know why,
but just when I start to crave cheese-bread and tea,
God grows a bit bigger, starts talking to me.
He tells me astronomers have it all wrong:
the universe hasn't been 'round very long,
there wasn't a big bang, it happened instead
when God fashioned the cosmos from ideas in his head.
Evolution? Forget it! Why should God wait,
when He's got the power to put on his plate
exactly the things that He'd like to see –
the earth and the coconuts, oceans and sea.
He told me, as well, 'bout the rules we should follow,
if you don't believe me, your head must be hollow.
Virginity's good – but only for women –
with chasteness and modesty they should be brimmin'.
Go to the church and sit in the pews:
man, that's so obvious, it shouldn't make news.
This straightjacket's tight! Why must I wear it?
Take it off now – I just can't bear it.
Listen to me, 'cause I know it all,
let me out of here quickly and don't you dare stall.

Birthday beads

(Composed 16 April 2014.)

For my birthday I got a rosary,
matches the color of my hosiery.
Sundays I'm in church in Leeds,
where I swing my rosary beads.
Every morning I say a prayer,
I want to be a demon-slayer.
I hate evil, I like good,
my favorite saint is Robin Hood.
I'm not sure 'bout the parish priest,
he doesn't seem serious about the Beast.
Seems like Satan's everywhere,
at least there's incense in the air.
I like to go to Sunday Mass,
especially when there're choir and brass.
I make sure I'm nicely dressed –
Boy, I'm thrilled when I get blessed.

Pink's the sacred color

(Composed between 30 September and 4 October 2014. Inspired by a tiny cult in Japan which requires that its members dress in white and drive around in white vans.)

I'm founding a religion (you will not have to think),
just take me as your leader and dress yourself in pink.
Pink's the sacred color – a group of angels told me:
they said I should profess the faith, while always acting boldly.
I've written up a holy book in meter and in rhyme,
I'll read insightful passages and you can play the mime.
My van is pink and shiny, so we can drive around
and spread the words we have on hand.
Let's go: we're homeward bound!
We have a pair of sacraments:
for men, we probe the prostate,
and for women anal probes suffice –
sufficient cause to celebrate.
Our other sacrament is this,
a fixture of our creed –
we sit around on stools and listen
to the music of Dean Reed.
For us he is a living saint,
even though he's dead,
and every night we think of him
as we go to bed.

O mamma, are you a virgin?

(Composed on 18 July 2014, late evening. This may be sung as blues song.)

I get up mornings and ask myself,
Who's my father? – that great elf,
in the sky or some other,
who had sex with you, dear mother?
O mamma, are you a virgin?
Hey mamma, are you a virgin?

It happened once, I know for certain,
a virgin birth – up went the curtain!
And if a first time, why not twice?
What are the odds? – just roll the dice!
O mamma, I'm eatin' sturgeon,
O mamma, are you a virgin?

Is my father really Dad?
I have a theory that makes me glad:
it just could be I'm the Son of God –
don't look at me as if I'm odd!
O mamma, God is a surgeon,
Hey mamma, are you a virgin?

Cafeteria Catholic

(In the old days, Catholic priests would use the expression "cafeteria Catholic" to refer to a person who, although baptized a Catholic, nonetheless did not accept all the doctrines of the Church. Composed on 30 July 2014.)

He gets in line, with tray in hand,
knows there are things he cannot stand.
He grabs a dish of God as trinity,
but leaves the side-dish of Christ's divinity.
He somehow thinks that that makes sense,
but infallible popes just make him tense.
But Immaculate Conception on a plate
is like a salad of Mary's fate.
Twelve apostles – that's too few,
surely Christ needed thirty-two
or maybe more and who's to know?
But twelve is a figure much too low.
The crucifixion, that's okay –
as a soup, he means to say.
A glass of heaven, cup of hell –
what's that he's adding? He won't tell!
On his tray there's still some space,
so he loads up on lots of grace.
Comes the time to pay the check,
his lunch is small: so what the heck!

Plenary indulgence

(Composed on 12 December 2014. This verse no longer includes sexual language, as that has been censored. However, parental guidance is suggested, especially for persons over age 50.)

For a plenary indulgence, you'll feel the effulgence
of grace straight from heaven to you.
The collection plate's coming, give cash, not just humming
then stand, kneel, and sit in the pew.
For sins that are weighty, the price is now eighty –
that's dollars, not kroner today.
So shout "halleluyah", in old Walla Woolya,
the deacon is ready to pray.

My 13 male friends plus Luke

(Composed on 17 September 2014.)

My best friend is Matthew Mark,
playing pool he's quite a shark.
Another friend is also Jude,
like Andrew, he is never lewd.
Luke likes John and John likes James,
while Peter mixes up their names.
Bartholemew does not talk much,
at least not since that special touch
from Simon, who stays home a lot.
Then there is Iskariot –
he and Philip march about,
while Thomas likes to sit and doubt.
I asked him why he liked to doubt,
he answered thus, that Luke was "out".
"Replace him with another James" –
so two close friends – well, check their names.
These are the men whom I hold close,
but women, well, I like the most.

*Saint Todd, patron saint of looking
cool*

(Composed in March 2015.)

If you want a better bod,
say a prayer to Saint Todd,
patron saint of looking cool.
Soon, you'll see the ladies drool,
when they see your eyebrows flicker –
that's the headline and the kicker.
Would you like to reduce fat?
Dear Saint Todd can help with that.
Would you like a firmer chin?
Contact Todd, perhaps he's in.

Wasserspiel

(In the glorious baroque period, the Archbishop of Salzburg had a palace built for himself known as Hellbrunn Palace. The archbishop was a jokester, and had a concrete table and chairs set up in his garden, so that he might entertain himself at his guests' expense, with his Wasserspiel or Water Game. This verse celebrates the archbishop's sense of humor. Composed on 30 March 2015.)

The bishop had some guests come 'round to join him and his
daughter,
he thought it would be lots of fun to drench them all in water.
They sat around the table and when the food was coming,
the bishop turned a little crank connected to the plumbing.
Their chairs had little holes through which the water came out
gushing,
and as their butts got soaking wet, the bishop started blushing.
"What do you think," the bishop asked, "and, yes, what do you
feel?
'Cause this is what I like to call my little Wasserspiel."

Church-run brothels

(In the 1300s and 1400s, Church-run brothels proliferated in Central Europe. A program on the History Channel attributed the initiative for this phenomenon to one Johann (John) of Salzburg, who believed that the brothels could encourage men to prefer sex with women over sex with other men, while, at the same time, helping to promote Christianity. The following verse, composed on 20 April 2015, offers some reflections on this theme. The verse is set to the music of "Happy days are here again", a song composed in 1929, with music by Milton Ager and lyrics by Jack Yellen.)

Church-run brothels in your town –
they banish sadness and your frown,
and the prostitutes discuss the faith:
happy brothels in your town.

John of Salzburg – he was smart –
he learned Church doctrines from a tart,
and he thought that was the way to start
a religious class for men.

He hoped as well that these whirls
would get men attracted to girls,
hey –

Church-run brothels are the rage,
and they provide a healthy stage
for long discussions of the faith –
happy brothels come of age!