**The Triple Fool**

 I am two fools, I know,

      For loving, and for saying so

          In whining poetry;

But where’s that wiseman, that would not be I,

          If she would not deny?

Then as th’ earth’s inward narrow crooked lanes

    Do purge sea water’s fretful salt away,

I thought, if I could draw my pains

    Through rhyme’s vexation, I should them allay.

Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,

For he tames it, that fetters it in verse.

      But when I have done so,

      Some man, his art and voice to show,

          Doth set and sing my pain;

And, by delighting many, frees again

          Grief, which verse did restrain.

To love and grief tribute of verse belongs,

    But not of such as pleases when ‘tis read.

Both are increased by such songs,

    For both their triumphs so are published,

And I, which was two fools, do so grow three;

Who are a little wise, the best fools be.

 —John Donne

**The Cap and Bells**

The jester walked in the garden:

The garden had fallen still;

He bade his soul rise upward

And stand on her window-sill.

It rose in a straight blue garment,

When owls began to call:

It had grown wise-tongued by thinking

Of a quiet and light footfall;

But the young queen would not listen;

She rose in her pale night-gown;

She drew in the heavy casement

And pushed the latches down.

He bade his heart go to her,

When the owls called out no more;

In a red and quivering garment

It sang to her through the door.

It had grown sweet-tongued by dreaming

Of a flutter of flower-like hair;

But she took up her fan from the table

And waved it off on the air.

‘I have cap and bells,’ he pondered,

‘I will send them to her and die’;

And when the morning whitened

He left them where she went by.

She laid them upon her bosom,

Under a cloud of her hair,

And her red lips sang them a love-song

Till stars grew out of the air.

She opened her door and her window,

And the heart and the soul came through,

To her right hand came the red one,

To her left hand came the blue.

They set up a noise like crickets,

A chattering wise and sweet,

And her hair was a folded flower

And the quiet of love in her feet.

 —W. B. Yeats

**The Clown**

As a child, fleeing, trying his body

among trees, feeling the wind, even

then knowing treasures that surprised

him, he cried “I am glorious! it is a

secret that must not be kept from them!”

and saw his voice in the sky’s clamors.

And they heard him full of castles

cannons and sharks as he made up the

illustrations for these people, they

sighed over the spectacle and sent him

compliments lest he make a noise or

scandal. He smiled at their solicitude.

At their insistence he pranced higher,

not happy in their excessive interest,

uneasily older by their seriousness.

They were always crying! he noticed

and turned away to meditate. But now

the tears seemed closer and too loud!

He knelt, his ear next to his heart, thus

striking an attitude of insight. Ah!

his heart ached like Niagara Falls!

“What have you done?” he screamed “I was

not like this when you came!” “Alas,”

they sighed, “you were not like us.”

 —Frank O’Hara

 **Keaton**

I will be good; I will be good.

I have set my small jaw for the ages

and nothing can distract me from

solving the appointed emergencies

even with my small brain

–witness the diameter of my hatband

and the depth of the crown of my hat

I will be correct; I know what it is to be a man.

I will be correct or bust.

I will love but not impose my feelings.

I will serve and serve

with lute or I will not say anything.

If the machinery goes, I will repair it.

If it goes again I will repair it again.

My backbone

through these endless etceteras painful.

No, it is not the way to be, they say.

Go with the skid, turn always to leeward,

and see what happens, I ask you, now.

I lost a lovely smile somewhere,

and many colors dropped out.

The rigid spine will break, they say–

bend, bend.

I was made at right angles to the world

and I see it so. I can only see it so.

I do not find all this absurdity people talk about.

Perhaps a paradise, a serious paradise where lovers hold hands

and everything works.

I am not sentimental.

—Elizabeth Bishop

**Clown**

It seems like I’m growing more and more like a clown. First of all, I’m always

sad. Secondly, all my knives are made out of rubber. Thirdly, it's like my house

is on fire.

No, I’m definitely becoming more like a clown. I have a tendency to want to put

on clown clothes. As soon as I put the clown clothes on I feel faintly happier...

Another sign is that I constantly feel like I’m alone in a dressing room. Most

of the time I feel amused. Anyway, the only thing good about the circus is

the tigers.

I realize that I could get both legs cut off by the circus train or get frightened

by an elephant. But it's very depressing to sit around in a clown suit and think

about death.

Sometimes I don’t feel happy unless I’m in my clown suit. And I enjoy hitting

people on the head with a foam club. I really do...

When people see me they realize that it looks very sophisticated to wear a clown

suit and smoke a cigarette. This is how I get all the ladies because they think I’m

very droll.

People don’t understand how you turn into a clown. You turn into a clown

because you feel more and more like putting on a clown suit. When you’re

around people you sense a kindliness. It makes you so nervous you can’t

stay calm. Which is why it feels perfectly normal to wear orange pants.

Plus, it’s very subversive to wear bow ties. You can’t imagine how jolly

everything is. And the fright wigs... I don't want to be a clown but I’m

sure to be one. My mother was a clown.

 —Chelsea Minnis