

Jack Songs

NaPoWriMo 2008

Mike Snider

for Krys, who suffered a fool to write

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Dear Reader

Less than a hour for you will last a week
(For those who'll live that long) for those who'll speak
These verses, written by an April fool
For NaPoWriMo, madness with one rule:
In 30 days, write 30 poems, good,
Bad, or indifferent — and the likelihood
Is bad. Still, like every poet, I am vain,
And having rhymed a month, I entertain
The hope that you'll be entertained by **Jack**,
A wicked, charming egomaniac,
Gambler, fence, and faithless husband to
The fond but lately disillusioned **Sue**,
Who has an intern, **Helen**, with a taste
For kink — but no one in this crowd is chaste,
And of them all, Jack's runner **Hank** is second
Only to Jack. These two are yet unreckoned:
Jack's Nemesis, **Elaine**, seeks vengeance for
Her sister's suicide, laid at his door
Ten years ago, and no one knows just who
She is — or what Hank's girlfriend **Carol** might do.

4/27/2008 (rev 4/29)

Bragging Song

(Jack)

I'm mad about the man I am,
A man who has the stones and clout
To truly never give a damn

For any of that common rout
Who'll never run a decent scam
Because they can't abandon doubt.

I ain't some sacrificial lamb —
I always find the clean way out.
I am the man, the strutting ram,
I'm mad about.

4/4/2008

My Sister's Heart

(Elaine)

My sister's heart was never more
Her own than when her part
Was dancing to your overture,

And she is gone, gone where no chart
Can guide me to that shore
Where, when she dances at that court,

Her heartless dance forevermore
Portrays your cruel sport
With her, now nothing can restore
My sister's heart.

4/19/2008

Except for Sue

(Hank)

Like all the rest, except for Sue,
Carol was glad she'd found his bed
And left, without a scene, on cue.

Just how he knew, I never knew,
That this guy's wife or that coed,
Like all the rest, except for Sue,

These girls you'd never think would do
A jerk like Jack, would give him head
And leave without a scene, on cue.

Though Carol had told me it was true,
That she was just what Jack had said,
Like all the rest except for Sue,

When he told how she'd purr and coo
In bed, I saw his red blood shed,
Not leaving with no scene, on cue.

He knew I knew just how to screw
His ass, and I just grinned instead,
Like all the rest, except for Sue,
And left, without a scene, on cue.

4/5/2008

It Stinks

(Sue)

It stinks. I miss the smell of cigarettes.
Before the health police cleaned up the bars,
It covered up perfumes from cute brunettes
And thirty-something blondes with foreign cars.

He said he needed music, loud guitars,
A crowd — I knew he wanted wild duets
Like ours, but played from other repertoires.
It stinks. I miss the smell of cigarettes.

I could ignore his sudden moods and debts
When it was only booze and not boudoirs —
Oh, Christ! — twin beds in rooms with kitchenettes —
Before the health police cleaned up the bars.

I never liked the smell of smoke — cigars
Especially make me ill — I get the sweats.
I've helped with anti-smoking seminars!
It covered up perfumes from cute brunettes.

Now there's perfume from all of them — coquettes
Who lead him to their beds in sheer peignoirs,
Sad, harried women fleeing bassinets,
And thirty-something blondes with foreign cars.

Those self-righteous, damned tobacco commissars,
Those cruel, bloodless, meddling martinets,
Have robbed me of my love, my moon and stars,
And left me smoky lies and clear regrets.
It stinks.

4/3/2008 (rev 4/26)

Caught

(Jack)

You know, it could be worse.
To tell the truth, at night
At home the bedtalk's terse —
You know it could be worse
Than that, my wandering curse —
I've learned to seem contrite,
You know. It could be worse
To tell the truth at night.

4/1/2008

High Stakes

(Jack, *Hank*)

Helen looks fine — I'll bet I knock that out
Next week. *Horseshit, my friend. That gal
Works for your wife — there ain't a chance.* You doubt
Me, friend? Ben Franklin says she shall
Be mine. *You're fucking crazy, Jack. I'll take
Your money Monday next. She tells her friend
Elaine most everything, and **she** likes flake,
Which **I** supply, so I will know the end
Of your adventure.* Hank, this news has piqued
My interest in Elaine as well. You took
My bet so eagerly it fairly reeked
Of unfriendly greed, but on a closer look —
Double the bet. The forecast's snowy weather.
By Monday next I'll have them both — together.

4/2/2008

Legal Beagle

(Jack)

Come in, sit down! Some coffee? No? Fresh brewed —
Official business, then. I'll close the door.
So tell me, Will — How badly am I screwed,
And can I get a big wet kiss before
I drop my pants and kneel up on the floor?
That new DA, O'Neal? I think she thinks
I'm cute — the way she's watching me, that minx
Has got my pictures hidden by her bed.
You think I ought to ask her out for drinks?
I didn't think so. What'll we do instead?

4/14/2008

So Sweet

(Jack)

Round the world just like Magellan,
Helen,
And slow, it's all too sweet for haste.
Come taste
This nut, and this, and that cocaine,
Elaine,
O God, you're driving me insane
The both of you, you're both so sweet
To taste, you both should taste this treat,
Helen, come taste Elaine!

4/6/2008

Who Was Her Guide?

(Jack)

Diddily Deedily
Henry R Jameson
Looks like his mother or
Dog has just died —

Hank! How's Elaine? Seems I
Heard she's exploring her
Bisexuality —
Who was her guide?

4/7/2008

From a Corner Booth

(Sue)

There's Jack with Hank, that slimy bastard.
At least he isn't with some dame.
At least he isn't getting plastered.
Who am I kidding? It's all the same —
The betting, booze, and broads, they've shoved me
Out of his life. He never loved me —
He's bragging now about Elaine!
I knew, I knew. I can't complain,
But I can change the locks. Now Helen?
My intern? Fuck! I'll get his gun
And shoot him in the balls for fun
Then pop his skull just like a melon!
“Hey Jack! Best turn insomniac —
Unless your buddy's got your back.”

4/8/2008

Like Clockwork

(Hank)

Goddamnit Elaine, you had everything right!
I should have listened to you from the start,
And you should have seen him when Sue had her say!
That room was so quiet a mouse couldn't fart
Without scaring a cat sleeping ten feet away!
It ain't every day a goose catches the fox.
It ain't every day our boy Jack's in the box,
And damned if we didn't do everything right!

4/9/2008

Two and Two Together

(Sue)

I caught him and I said I'd cut it off
Next time the fucker rubbed it in my face,
And now he's got his snout back at the trough,
He brags about it in a public place —
One hundred dollars bet on my disgrace!
And Helen! What the hell? She didn't lie,
At least ... at least she looked me in the eye.
My god, I'm glad that client didn't show
At Bernie's — though he's never called. Now, why ...
I think I'll talk to Carol. She should know.

4/12/2008 (rev 4/14)

No Help Here

(Carol)

Jack, I'm worried. Hank's too pleased
With himself. He's pulled a con
On someone big, someone who
Would barbecue the moron,

And he thinks that someone won't
Find out. I don't know just what
It was he did, but I know
Hank will show his skinny butt

To a guy who knows the guy
Who'll crucify him. Please, Jack,
Elaine's in on it, too. I
Know I'd die if — Wait! come back!

4/11/2008

Fair is Fair

(Helen)

Elaine, honey, I think it's time we
Had us a little talk about
What's fair. If we are partners in crime, we
Should share our profits, not hold out
On one another, so there's something you
Should know — I've not a dime to bring you.
Now why is that? Because I lost
My job for fucking with my boss
By fucking her man with you, my buddy,
Who kindly set me up with him.
I tell you, things are looking grim
For me just now. For you, they're bloody.
Girlfriend, unless you make it right,
I'm telling Jack tomorrow night.

4/10/2008 (rev 4/29)

What Are the Odds?

(Jack)

I'll bet it's Hank who's stirring
This fine kettle of fish.

I'll bet right now he's thinking
The spicing's just begun.

I'll bet he plans on serving
A sophisticated dish.

I wouldn't bet the fork's
In my ass when it's done.

4/13/2008

sevenling (by now)

(Elaine)

by now, she's told,
he knows,
and I unfold

a wasted rose,
ten years,
my sky-starved crows

to strip veneers

4/15/2008

Hard Rain

(Sue, Carol's *thoughts*, then Carol)

Carol. I'm sorry that it's been so long —
You're sorry that you think you need me now.
I've often meant to call you, but somehow,
Somehow, Sue, you didn't. I've heard this song.

I guess I still felt jealous. I was wrong.
Well, this one's different — confession! Wow!
I married Jack. No magic's in a vow.
The only magic's Jack's, and far too strong.

It's too late, Sue — no, not for us — too late
To stop what's coming. I told Jack Elaine
And Hank were into something big last night,

And your news means that I was right
To be afraid. Jack rains a world of pain
On someone else who hurts you. It's too late.

4/16/2008

Five Summary Limericks, Two Questions

Jack knows that Elaine was the plotter,
And thinks it's not long till he's caught her.
For all of Sue's yellin'
About him and Helen,
He's sure (is he wrong?) he's still got her.

Sue hasn't a prayer of winning,
If winning is Jack stopping sinning —
But since she's been glad
When he's quietly bad,
If he's dead, then perhaps she'll end grinning.

Our Helen's no angel — you know her,
Know both Jack and Elaine tried to show her
Just who is on top —
But where will it stop?
Who'll end up above? who below her?

It's early, but Hank's tired of waiting.
Why shouldn't he be celebrating?
That rat bastard Jack
Can't climb on his back
From the cell he'll be soon contemplating!

If Carol be lost, please excuse her
For loving a foolish abuser
Of women and whiskey
Who can't see the risk he
Runs taking Elaine for a loser.

Elaine? Are you kidding?

4/17/2008

In Ecstasy

(Elaine)

I should give everything away
Today —
My crystals, runes, and charts portend
We end
This thing today, and say, by chance,
This dance
Ends me as well, no happenstance
Allows that Jack will see tomorrow
And Sue — it's death, or death and sorrow.
Today we end this dance.

4/22/2008

One Phone Call

(Jack)

I'll hold your hand, darling, but not the phone.
Tell Will it's Jack. I need him yesterday. ...
My friend, I'm not the type to piss and moan,
But I've been booked. Imagine my dismay!
Imagine just how quickly you'll arrange
To get me out of here, and just how badly
The both of us would feel if for some strange
Reason I changed my lawyer. ... How comradely
Of you to help me out! There's one more thing —
There always is — have your guys find the fucker
Who set me up. I want to ask him who
Paid him, how much, and what I need to do
To help him get his mind right. You just bring
Him to me. I'll soon know the real bloodsucker.

4/24/2008

The End of Every Road

(Jack)

My boys will find Elaine tonight —
Bitch thinks that she can fuck with me,
She'd best wear spurs to this cockfight!

She'll know no end of misery
Until I'm bored with hurting her —
Bitch thinks that she can fuck with me.

I don't know who's the funnier,
Elaine or Hank. I know she's mine
Until I'm bored with hurting her,

And Carol can't save Hank. The line
I have to take, no one can save
Elaine or Hank. I know she's mine,

My Sue. I'm hers beyond the grave —
The grave's the end of every road
I have to take. No one can save

Us from these dragon's teeth we've sowed.
My boys will find Elaine tonight.
The grave's the end of every road —
She'd best wear spurs to this cockfight!

4/20/2008 (rev 4/29)

A Beautiful Friendship

(Jack to Hank)

The man who had a hundred bucks to bet!
No, don't get up, it's really good to see you!
You showed me just how lucky I can get!
The man who had a hundred bucks to bet
His pal could not get laid. I'm not upset.
I won. I wonder what it's like to be you —
The man who had a hundred bucks to bet.
No, don't get up. It's really good to see you.

4/21/2008

Under the Gun

(Elaine)

Oh, Jack, you can't believe you've won!
You think it matters if I die?
Your trials will only multiply,
But let's find out. Use your gun.

You'll need another alibi,
Of course — that should be fun —
Oh, Jack, you can't believe you've won.
You think it matters if I die?

Your pawnshop's padlocked, Sue is done
With you, you've done your friend, and I
Have sung her ghost a lullaby.
I've won, my friend, so shoot — then run.
Oh, Jack, you can't believe you've won.

4/28/2008 (rev 4/29)

Statement

(Carol)

Jack had the gun. I shot him first.
When I found out my Hank was gone
I found out how a heart can burst
And just keep going, on and on.

When I found out my Hank was gone
I heard the man who'd killed him laugh
And just keep going, on and on,
A broken record on a phonograph.

I heard the man who'd killed him laugh —
I knew he'd stop the day he died,
A broken record on a phonograph
And nothing sound on either side.

I knew he'd stop the day he died.
Last night she came. I found them there,
And nothing sound on either side.
I loved him, but they didn't care.

Last night she came. I found them there.
Jack had the gun. I shot him first.
I loved him, but they didn't care.
I found out how a heart can burst.

4/29/2008 (rev. 8/18)