



# Poets Corner

Pat Daly

*Unceasingly, the wheel of life keeps turning and turning, until suddenly, inevitably, a father finds himself unable to sleep. The cause of his wakefulness is concern: some of his children, having reached the age when they stay out late, have not yet returned home. They're good kids, he trusts them, but also knows about the dangers, the temptations, the traps, the pitfalls they might encounter. Is it any wonder he can't get some rest?*

*Then, as he lies there with negative thoughts buzzing around in his brain box, the dutiful parent remembers a time when his own mother and father found that, for them too, the wheel of life had reached a certain point in its endless turning, and he is provided with a sense of perspective and some solace.*

*In Tony Ruane's poem there is a truly lovely description of a June dawn in rural Ireland. Note also his use of 'bridgeen' (diminutive of bridge) in line seven, and the interesting manner in which line 17 is phrased.*

## *Guilt-Edged Trip (1960)* by Tony Ruane

*Homeward-bound from the dancing:  
At the dawn of a morning in June,  
A corncrake concealed in the meadow  
Is calling its own raucous tune.*

*In the beautiful stillness of morning  
The webs of mist lace on the grass.  
A water hen, startled, goes flapping  
As over the bridgeen I pass.*

*A leather thong hangs from the latch key  
As it waits there, stark in the lock,  
And I turn it, composing excuses:  
I know I will be in the dock.*

*'What kind of a family did I rear?'  
My mother's moan sounds from the room.  
'That fellow's been nothing but trouble  
Since the day he emerged from the womb!'*

*'Do you think where was he galavanting,  
And what kept him out for so long?'  
'Would you go to sleep, woman,' says father,  
'Surely he knows right from wrong.'*

*The big flowery jug on the dresser  
Will soon be relieved of its store  
Of beautiful, creamy new milk;  
Each mouthful just tasting like more.*

*On July 3 last the Irish Independent newspaper gave prominence to an account of an incident which occurred during a sitting of Tullamore District Court on the previous day. As reported by Eimear Ni Bhraonain, Judge John Neilan, among other criticisms, had suggested that gardai involved in the case being dealt with wanted to 'parade in front of the cameras.' Addressing Inspector Paul Cuttle, the judge had then remarked that he hoped photographs of gardai taken outside the court would be sent to the commissioner's office, where he could 'throw darts at them if he so wanted.' At that stage Inspector Cuttle had resumed his seat but the judge wasn't finished. He now claimed that the inspector had laughed, and said: 'If necessary you can be admitted to prison for seven days,' adding that such conduct would 'not be tolerated.'*

*In the grand tradition of versifiers down through the ages, and against the background of the Tullamore tantrum, Michael Brady has inked his quill to argue the case for the policeman who has a sense of humour, a smile on his face. Surely, only a thoroughgoing curmudgeon would question Michael's assertions. While on this topic we cannot help but wonder how the late Charles Penrose, the quintessential 'laughing policeman,' would react should he, in a new incarnation, find himself stationed as a garda in the Irish midlands in this year of the Lord, 2008. We would like to think that during his various stints in the witness box those infectious, rollicking peals of laughter for which he became famous would, when appropriate, rattle and roll around the rafters of courthouses in Tullamore and elsewhere: furthermore, that the beak himself, holding his sides, would revel in the sheer, uninhibited joy of it all.*

# Laughter

by Michael Brady

*Laughter's now forbidden,  
It is against the law.  
A serious face must be in place,  
With dour and stern jaw.  
Once it was our saving grace  
In a sad and troubled land,  
But that no longer is the case  
When Judge Neilan takes the stand.*

*Loved is a laughing policeman  
In a world of stress and strife:  
He will banish fear and anguish,  
Show the human side of life.  
But a district judge, so humourless,  
A fine career would scuttle:  
Threatening with jail - the crime: Laughing -  
The mild Inspector Cuttle.*



*An outburst so outlandish  
Beggars all belief.  
It's hard to keep from laughing,  
But to Cuttle it brought grief.  
Long may we have such policemen,  
And less nonsense from on-high:  
Life's too short for dourness;  
Our true Judge is in the sky.*

*Readers are invited to visit page 71 of the August edition and read the poem 'DUSTIN OFF'. At the end the poem is attributed to Siobhán Quigley; this should read Kevin Kilfeather. The Editor offers apologies to Kevin who is a frequent and much appreciated contributor.*