

Conversational Prosody

21. Another Saturday Night in New York (Ryan Cunningham, *I Love You Because*)

Dear Catherine: Life is like a seesaw. It's a lot more fun with someone else. That's good. She's gonna love that. I am a master of greeting card writing. And right on time.

Brushed my teeth in the shower.
Shampooed twice.
Cleaned and primed for an hour.
Old Spice is Nice.
Then I'm off to Catherine's.
I knock on her door, right on time,
Like I have every Saturday before.
She's my angel in white.
Another Saturday night in New York.

And we're off to have dinner,
To drink some fine wine.
Every night I'm a winner.
Catherine is mine.
I'm flying so high that I
Can't see the ground.
They can see me all the way
Down to Long Island Sound.
The future is bright.
Another Saturday night in New York.

This city's funny.
When you're in love
Everything seems perfect.
Cabbies honk their horns together in a perfect
symphony.
You tip your hat to all the ladies
And they smile at you.
Every "up yours" and "screw you" and "watch it
jerk"
Are in perfect harmony.

Step right here, buy some flowers, just like last week.
Yeah, each like last night and the night before.
For the next couple hours, somewhere that's chic.
Billy Joel says that he might go back on tour.
All is perfect. What could go wrong?
When I dine, can I bring the whole city along?
Oh, this Manhattanite
On a Saturday night in New York.

Catherine's waiting. Let's go.
Every since you two first started dating
It has seemed like all of New York
Is laid out just for you.
Our family changes
And all that you know re-arranges
And you start to think that it all of it
Sounded too good to be true.
Another Saturday night in New York.
I'll be with Catherine for the rest of my life.
Another Saturday night in New York.
Another Saturday night in New York!

22. Passover (William Finn, *Elegies*)

Passover at Auntie Honey's and Uncle Harvey's in
New Jersey.
My sister would hold her breath over the George
Washington Bridge
And we would laugh at her.
She'd frown.
Everyone, including Nana Ida, would be standing by
the front door
As we pulled up and we'd count down
Four three two one
And we'd fight to be the first out of the car
Having come this far.
Having come so far for this feast, this feast of New
East
And the matzoh balls are so hard when you cut them
they just fly.
Why passover?

On this day we read of plagues and misfortunes
Then start eating.
Uncle Harvey's the cook.
Ma laughed so hard that she shook.
Cousin Gary is reading porn.
We've run out of skull caps.
Some men are wearing Acapulco beach cloth
bandanas
That really really really should not be worn.

We're Jews from like the first five thousand years,
Laughing through our tears.
Joyous, vulgar, anything goes.
But we wear nice clothes.
That's they way I like remembering this scene:

Manic and high.
Why Passover?

In the Passover prayer book, we read about what
Pharaoh did to the Jews.
About how Pharaoh wore those big gold platform
shoes
And how the Jews escaped stealthily by splitting the
Red Sea.
Wait, wait, I think that was a movie.
Anyway, when I tell the story of Passover,
Which I am instructed to do,
I will include how the Jews of Nadyk traveled over
the Hudson River
And had an unforgettable Seder.
More details about that later.

It's later.
Michael, as the youngest, sings out the four old
questions.
What they mean is unknown.
My father is playing trombone.
Then we go to meet Elijah at the door.
I can see the faces round the table
And the grins are getting longer and the voices begin
to soar.
One two three four
And I think that we will never laugh so hard,
Never feel so free,
I think life that night was more perfect than it will
ever be.
Uncle Bernie and my mother, overwhelmed,
Begin to cry.
Why Passover?

Uncle Bernie passed over.
Uncle Harvey passed over.
Nana Ida passed over.
And my mother, my mother passed over.
Passover. Passover.

22. My Path (Tr.#13)
(Jacob Martin, *Total Resistance*)

I take a step back and look into the mirror
It's so hard to see how far I have come.
It's so hard to grasp the concept of growing up
Of growing up
Wasn't it just yesterday
That nothing seemed to matter?
Look how quick it all changed.
Now everything is breaking at my feet

And I'm still searching for a way
To walk down this path I have chose [sic]
To pave my way.

Desicions [sic] I have made
Our [sic] what make me who I am
I'm not afraid of what lies ahead.
I know that in the end
I will pull through, I will find my way.
This is my path, my path.

I will always be myself myself.
This is the path that is right for me. My path.

I will always be myself myself.
This is the path that is right for me.
My path.

Exemplary Conversational Prosody

23. Ya Got Trouble
(Meredith Willson, *The Music Man*)

Well ya got trouble, my friend
Right here I say trouble right here in River City.
Why sure, I'm a billiard player, certainly might
proud,
I say I'm always mighty proud to say it.
I consider that the hours I spend
With a cue in my hand are golden.
Help you cultivate horse sense and a cool head and a
keen eye.
'Jever take'n try to give an iron clad leave to yourself
From a three-rail billiard shot?
But just as I say, it takes judgment,
Brains and maturity to score in a balkline game
I say that any boob kin take 'n' shove a ball in a
pocket.
And I call that sloth!
The first big step on the road to the depths of
degrega--
I say, first it's a little ah, medicinal wine from a
teaspoon
Then beer from a bottle.
And the next thing you know, your son is playing fer
money
In a pinchback suit and list'nin to some big outta
town jasper
Hearing him tell about horserace gamblin.
Not a wholesome trottin' race, no!

But a race where they se' down right on a horse!
 Like to see some stuck-up jockey boy settin' on Dan
 Patch?
 Make your blood boil?
 Well I should say.
 Now friends, lemme tell you what I mean.
 Ya got one, two, three, four, five, six pockets in a
 table.
 Pockets that mark the difference between a
 gentleman and a bum
 With a capital B, and that rhymes with P, and that
 stands for pool.
 And all week long your River City youth'll be frittern
 away, I say,
 Your young men'll be frittern.
 Frittern away their noontime, suppertime, choretime
 too!
 Get the ball in the pocket! Never mind gettin'
 dandelions pulled
 Or the screen door patches or the beefsteak pounded.
 Never mind pumpin' any water till your parents
 Are caught with the cistern empty on a Saturday
 night,
 And that's trouble, oh yes, ya got lots n' lots 'a
 trouble.
 I'm thinkin' of the kids in the knickerbockers,
 Shirttails, young ones, peekin in the pool hall
 window after school,
 Ya got trouble, folks. Right here in River City.
 Trouble, with a capital "T" and that rhymes with "P"
 And that stands for pool!
 Now I know all you folks are the right kind of
 parents,
 I'm gonna be perfectly frank.
 Would ya like to know what kinda conversation
 Goes on while they're loafin' around the hall?
 They'll be tryin' out Bevo, tryin' out Cubebs;
 Tryin' out Tail or Mades, like cigarette fiends.
 And braggin' all about how they're gonna cover up
 A telltale breath with Sen-Sen.
 One fine night they leave the pool hall
 Headin' for the dance at the Arm'ry,
 Libertine men and scarlet women and ragtime,
 Shameless music that'll drag your son and your
 daughter
 To the arms of a jungle animal instinct mass-steria!
 Friends, the idle brain is the devil's playground.
 Ya got trouble! Right here in River City!
 With a capital "T" and that rhymes with "P"
 And that stands for pool.
 We've surely got trouble! Right here in River City!

Gotta figger out a way to keep the young ones moral
 after school.

Our children's children gonna have trouble.

Mothers of River City! Heed the warning before it's
 too late. Watch for the tell-tale signs of corruption.
 The minute your son leaves the house, does he
 rebuckle his knickerbockers below the knee? Is there
 a nicotine stain on his index finger? A dime novel
 hidden in the corn crib? Is he starting to memorize
 jokes from Captain Billy's Whiz Bag? Are certain
 words creeping into his conversation? Words like
 "swell" and "so's your old man"? Well, if so, my
 friends....

Ya got trouble. Right here in River City.

With a capital "T" and that rhymes with "P"

And that stands for pool.

We've surely got trouble! Right here in River City!

Remember the Main, Plymouth Rock, and the Golden
 Rule.

Our children's children gonna have trouble.

Oh, we got trouble. We're in terrible, terrible
 trouble.

That game with the fifteen numbered balls is the
 devil's tool!

Oh yes, we've got trouble, trouble, trouble.

(Oh yes we got trouble here, we got big big trouble.)

With a "T" (with a capital "T") Gotta rhyme it with
 "P"

(That rhymes with "P") and that stands for pool!

24. Cop Song

(Mark Hollmann, *Urinetown*)

Lockstock

If there's one thing I've learned in my many years of
 enforcing the laws of this city, it's that the journey
 down to Urinetown offers no surprises. Not even
 from the very toughest amongst us. On that journey
 expect only the expected.

It's a hard, cold, tumble of a journey,
 Worthy of a gurney, a bumble down,
 A slapped face, smacked with a mace,
 Certain to debase, is our stumble down.

It's a path that leads you only one place,
 Horrible to retrace, a crumble down.
 A hard, cold, tumble of a tourney,
 Jumble of a journey to Urinetown.

Lockstock and Barrel

Julie Cassidy

Went to a field behind a tree,
Saw there was no one who could see

Lockstock: Her pee -

Barrel: But me!

Lockstock and Barrel: And Jacob Rosenbloom
Thought he was safe up in his room,
Didn't know the jars he kept up there
Would obligate a trip to Urine-tomb!

Lockstock: There are those who think our
Methods vicious—

Barrel: Overly malicious—

Lockstock: A bunch of brutes. But it's we who
gather for the people—

Barrel: Tavern to the steeple—

Lockstock: Lawful fruits!

Lockstock and Barrel: Our task: bring a little
order—

Barrel: Swindle out a hoarder—

Lockstock: From what he loots. As the book says,
"Certainly a season" -

Barrel: Trample out a treason -

All: With hobnail boots!
Roger Roosevelt
Kept a cup below his belt,
Cup ran over when he knelt.

Lockstock: He smelt—

Barrel: We dealt!

All: And Joseph "Old Man" Strong
Held his pee for much too long,
Hoped his son might bail him out.
His guess was good but also wrong!

Lockstock: Years past all lived in a jungle,

Scooping out a bungle, nature's bowl.
Life of constant deprivation,
Certain aggravation took its toll.

Soon learned power of the truncheon.
Organize a function, king to pawn.
So if peace is what you're after,
Urinetown's the rafter to hang it on!

Girl Cop 1: Julie Cassidy -

Boy Cop 1: Jacob Rosenbloom -

Boy Cop 2: Roger Roosevelt -

Boy Cop 1: Jacob Rosenbloom -

Girl Cop 1: Julie Cassidy -

Boy Cop 3: Joseph Old Man Strong -

Lockstock and Barrel:

Don't be like them! Don't be like them!

Lockstock

It's a hard, cold,
Tumble of a journey,
Worthy of a gurney,
A bumble down,
A slapped face,
Smacked with a mace,
Certain to debase
Is our stumble down Female Cops

It's a hard, cold,
Tumble of a journey,
Worthy of a gurney,
A bumble down,
A slapped face,
Smacked with a mace,
Certain to debase Male Cops

It's a hard, cold,
Tumble of a journey,
Worthy of a gurney,
A bumble down,
A slapped face,
Smacked with a mace.

All

It's a path that leads you only one place,
Horrible to retrace, a crumble down,
A hard, cold, tumble of a tourney,
Jumble of a journey to Urinetown!

16. A Miracle Would Happen

(Jason Robert Brown, *The Last Five Years*)

JAMIE

Everyone tells you that the minute you get married
Every other woman in the world
Suddenly finds you attractive
Well, that's not true
It only affects the kind of women
You always wanted to sleep with
But they wouldn't give you the time of day before
And now they're banging down your door
And falling to their knees
At least that's what it feels like because you
Cannot touch them
In fact, you can't even look at them
Close your eyes, close your eyes, close your eyes
Except you're sitting there
Eating your corned beef sandwich
And all of a sudden, this pair of breasts walks by
And smiles at you
And you're like "That's not fair!"

And in a perfect world
A miracle would happen
And every other girl would fly away
And it'd be me and Cathy,
And nothing else would matter
But it's fine, it's fine, it's fine
I mean, I'm happy
And I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine
It's not a problem
It's just a challenge
It's a challenge to resist temptation

And I have to say that
What exacerbates the problem
Is I'm at these parties
I'm the center of attention
I'm the grand fromage
And here she comes:
"Let's get a cup of coffee.
Will you look at my manuscript?"
And I'm showing her my left hand
I'm gesticulating with my left hand
And then WHOOMP! There's Cathy!
'Cause she knows
(They always know)
And there's that really awkward moment
Where I try to show I wasn't encouraging this
(Though of course I sort of was)
And I don't want to look whipped in front of this
woman
Which is dumb - I shouldn't care what she thinks
Since I can't fuck her anyway!

And in a perfect world
A miracle would happen
And every girl would look like Mister Ed
And it'd be me and Cathy
And nothing else would matter
But it's fine, it's fine, it's fine
You know I love her
And it's fine, it's fine, it's fine
It's what I wanted
And I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine!
It's not a problem, it's just a challenge
It's a challenge to resist temptation.

CATHERINE

When you come home to me
I'll wear a sweeter smile
And hope that, for a while, you'll stay
When you come home to me
Your hand will touch my face
And banish any trace of gray
Soon, a love will rise anew
Even greater than the joy I felt
Just missing you
And once again, I'll be
So proud to call you "mine"
When you finally come home
To me

JAMIE

I'll be there soon, Cathy
I'll finish up this chapter and be out the door
I swear I'll be there soon, Cathy
Don't give up on me yet
I am so proud of you, baby
You're doing what you never got to do before
And I will be there, ripe and crawling
If fuckin' Random House stops calling
Don't lose faith
Don't get down
Don't despair
I'll be there

And in a perfect world
A miracle would happen
And that day would finally be here
And it'd be me and you
Riding it together
And the things we do
Goin' like we planned
We're gonna make it through
And nothing else will matter
We'll be fine, we're fine
We're fine, we're fine, we're fine
I'll be there soon, Cathy...
I swear I will.

Two prose versions of conversational prosody

A Miracle Would Happen

(Jason Robert Brown, *The Last Five Years*)

Everyone tells you that the minute you get married every other woman in the world suddenly finds you attractive. Well, that's not true. It only affects the kind of women you always wanted to sleep with but they wouldn't give you the time of day before and now they're banging down your door and falling to their knees. At least that's what it feels like because you cannot touch them. In fact, you can't even look at them. Close your eyes, close your eyes, close your eyes...except you're sitting there eating your corned beef sandwich and all of a sudden, this pair of breasts walks by and smiles at you and you're like "That's not fair!" And in a perfect world a miracle would happen and every other girl would fly away, and it'd be me and Cathy, and nothing else would matter. But it's fine, it's fine, it's fine. I mean, I'm happy and I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine. It's not a problem. It's just a challenge. It's a challenge to resist temptation.

And I have to say that what exacerbates the problem is I'm at these parties, I'm the center of attention, I'm the grand fromage and here she comes: "Let's get a cup of coffee. Will you look at my manuscript?" And I'm showing her my left hand, I'm gesticulating with my left hand, and then whoomp, there's Cathy 'cause she knows (they always know). And there's that really awkward moment where I try to show I wasn't encouraging this (though of course I sort of was) and I don't want to look whipped in front of this woman which is dumb - I shouldn't care what she thinks since I can't fuck her anyway! And in a perfect world a miracle would happen and every girl would look like Mister Ed and it'd be me and Cathy and nothing else would matter, but it's fine, it's fine, it's fine. You know I love her. And it's fine, it's fine, it's fine. It's what I wanted and I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine! It's not a problem. It's just a challenge. It's a challenge to resist temptation.

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I'm thinkin' of the kids in the knickerbockers, shirttails, young ones, peekin in the pool hall window after school. Ya got trouble, folks, right here in River City. Trouble, with a capital "T" and that rhymes with "P" and that stands for pool! Now I know all you folks are the right kind of parents, I'm gonna be perfectly frank. Would ya like to know what kinda conversation goes on while they're loafin' around the hall? They'll be tryin' out Bevo, tryin' out Cubebes; tryin' out Tail or Mades, like cigarette fiends and braggin' all about how they're gonna cover up a telltale breath with Sen-Sen. One fine night they leave the pool hall headin' for the dance at the Arm'ry, libertine men and scarlet women and ragtime, shameless music that'll drag your son and your daughter to the arms of a jungle animal instinct mass-steria! Friends, the idle brain is the devil's playground.