

# from *Ballads in Jargon* (after Villon)

Roger Farr

## Everything But Myself

I know a racket from a numbers game  
I know where to find a bacon stretcher in a foyer  
I know a chin check from a knock up  
I know my side-dough from my overhead  
I know when a swallower gets the soggy pizza  
I know where the deck lizards take a powder  
I know how to twist the Borden  
I know everything but myself

I know a Hellmart from a Slaughterhouse  
I know where to go basket shopping for a bull  
I know when there's a bear at my backdoor  
I know a shiny bum when I have one  
I know when to wear the wig  
I know if there's a stumpsucker under my porch  
I know how much chalkface pays by the hour  
I know everything but myself

I know the Queen of Spades from the Queen of Hearts  
I know when Mr Kessler wants a Kriegspiel  
I know a biblio-pimp with a blocking move  
I know how the Master likes her *canelés*  
I know that local yokel with the dirty docs  
I know my mashes from my mash ups  
I know where the gas works are  
I know everything but myself

I know a button buster when I hear one  
I know what buzzard bait smells like in May  
I know why a lip tease leads to hard labour  
I know my Patsy Cline from my Molly O'Malia  
I know how to tell a smellfungus from a railbird  
I know when to Warhol a sucker shuffle  
I know not to bunt in the middle of a bake sale  
I know everything but myself

Your honour, I know it all  
I know how to dead-lurk a crib and I know the score  
I know when to fold, and put an end to it all.

## All Standard Language shall be Fried

In the thionazin applied to Wordsworth's daffodils  
In ointment of oxydisulfoton, to a pig  
Or in vapors of phenylmercuric acetate  
In that opaque compound used to make diamonds  
In monocrotophos mixed with an assassin's drool  
In the phosphine solution which the Emperor prefers  
In wave after wave of nitrogen dioxide  
Shall all standard language be fried

In vinyl acetate a.k.a the Communist Hypothesis  
In balm of selenious acid  
Or in pillows misted with puffs of diborane  
In droplets of zinc phosphide, to draw out the rats  
In hydrogen sulphide skimmed off the Athabasca River  
In two parts sulfur dichloride, one part ethylene  
In magnificent cathedrals of sulfur tetrafluoride  
Shall all standard language be fried

In chlorodimethyl ether derived from Epicurus' tears  
In sonnets waxing upon the pale clouds of formothion  
Or in crocks of Oklahoma-quality paraquat  
In the demeton used to decompose the class  
In mirex and dinoseb, in endrin and propoxur  
In the anthracyclines of optimism  
In the yolk of an egg poached in arsenic pentafluoride  
Shall all standard language be fried

## Ballad of Negations

Never hoop a horn mad fancy man  
Never muzzle a bawdy basket with a cheeser  
Never pop a shanker on a bob-tail  
Never snivel if your article snilches a charm  
Never cap verses with a distracted division  
Never nose a rum bite  
Unless you're keen to polish the King's irons  
Never tell them your name

Never stick your plug tail in a mouse trap  
Never trade trinkets with a word pecker  
Never share your lobscouse with a crook shank  
Never bilk in a flash panney  
Never yowl at a chalker's fartleberries  
Never set fambles on a town bull  
Unless you're a little pork crying woolbird  
Never tell them your name

Never nip a dandy prat with your ruffles  
Never crib from Captain Copperthorne's Crew  
Never occupy a goosecap  
Never mung to a Jack in the Office  
Never plant the books with a boung nipper  
Never todge a Dimber Damper  
Unless you want a ride on a wooden horse  
Never, ever, tell them your name

## Ballad of Counter-truths

There's no shame like morality  
no clarity like drunkenness  
no brutishness like a saint's  
no warning like a whisper  
no conviction like cynicism  
no pleasure like the whip  
no nostalgia like utopia  
no man as wise as one in love

There's no solitude like the herd's  
no friend like a hustler  
no dream like a blueprint  
no regret like a photograph  
no debt like hope  
no health like a hangover  
no theft like charity  
no man as wise as one in love

No fate like infancy  
no filth that stinks worse than purity  
no sweetness like poison  
no game like love  
no beginning like an exit strategy  
no madness like a methodology  
no liar like a poet  
no man as wise as one in love

Friends, what is it that you desire?  
Affirmations and assurances?  
Rest and relaxation is what I see in your cards  
Rejoice!