

ROBERT KROETSCH / Sketches of a Lemon

1.

A lemon is almost round.
Some lemons are almost round.
A lemon is not round.

So much for that.

How can one argue that a lemon
is truly a lemon,
if the question can be argued?

So much for that.

I said, to Smaro
(I was working on this poem),
Smaro, I called, is there
(she was in the kitchen)
a lemon in the fridge?
No, she said.

So much for that.

2.

As my father used to say,
well I'll be cow-kicked
by a mule.

He was especially fond of
lemon meringue pie.

3.

I went and looked at Francis Ponge's poem
on blackberries. If blackberries can be
blackberries, I reasoned, by a kind of analogy,
lemons can, I would suppose, be lemons.

Such was not the case.

4.

Sketches, I reminded myself,
not of a pear,
nor of an apple,
nor of a peach,
nor of a banana
(though the colour
raises questions),
nor of a nectarine,
nor, for that matter,
of a pomegranate,
nor of three cherries,
their stems joined,
nor of a plum,
nor of an apricot,
nor of the usual
bunch of grapes,
fresh from the vine,
just harvested,
glistening with dew –

Smaro, I called,
I'm hungry.

5.

What about oranges?

At least an orange
looks like an orange.

In fact, most oranges
bear a remarkable resemblance
to oranges.

6.

Smaro is rolling a lemon on the breadboard.

The breadboard, flat, horizontal, is motionless.

The lemon rolls back and forth on the motionless surface.

Smaro's hand moves horizontally, back and forth,
over the rolling lemon.

One could draw a diagram of the three related objects,
deduce therefrom a number of mechanical principles.

7.

I had a very strong desire
to kiss a lemon.

No one was watching.

I kissed a lemon.

So much for that.

8.

I bought a second-hand car –
Okay, okay.

9.

If someone asked me,
how is a lemon shaped?

(the salmon
(the oven
(the lemon

I'd say the lemon is shaped
exactly like an hour.

(Now we're getting somewhere.)

10.

The lemon cure.

In each glass

mix: 1 stick cinnamon
1 teaspoon honey
2 cloves
2 jiggers rum
1/2 slice lemon
hot water to taste

Repeat as necessary.

11.

Poem for a child who has just bit into
A halved lemon that has just been squeezed:

see, what did I tell you, see,
what did I tell you, see, what
did I tell you, see, what did
I tell you, see, what did I
tell you, see, what did I tell
you, see, what did I tell you,
see, what did I tell you, see,
what did I tell you, see, what
did I tell you, see, what did
I tell you, see, what did I
tell you, see, what did I tell
you, see, what did I tell you

One could, of course, go on.

12.

This hour is shaped like
a lemon. We taste its light

on the baked salmon.
The tree itself is elsewhere.

We make faces, liking the
sour surprise. Our teeth melt.