

Pym Poems

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As I have often said to you before, my study of Barbara Pym's papers in the Bodleian Library has been neither sequential nor complete. Here, of recent years, and in Oxford, our conferences have always had a theme – either a subject (e.g. Barbara Pym and the Church, Barbara Pym and Romance) or a single novel. So I have only delved into those parts of the archive pertaining to the relevant conference theme. There are parts that I have never thoroughly read, e.g. the extensive correspondence between Barbara and Bob Smith. However, even while pursuing a given train of thought, certain serendipitous items intrude themselves on the attention and cannot be ignored. Right from the start I was struck by the number of poems there are by Barbara and her friends, especially in the correspondence section of the archives.

It is well known that Barbara, who read English Literature at Oxford, loved her subject, poetry in particular, especially that of the 17th and 18th centuries. She quoted often in her novels – too often for Jonathan Cape's taste in the first draft of *Some Tame Gazelle*, and also for a reviewer of *Quartet in Autumn* who said "One of the good things about *Quartet in Autumn* is that for once Barbara Pym's characters don't spend much time casting about for appropriate literary quotations".

It would appear that the art of versifying was quite prevalent in the early years of the 20th century. Students of various disciplines seem to have understood the rules of classical poetry and to have enjoyed imitating them.

So far I have found 33 poems, 17 by Barbara herself, 6 by Robert Liddell, 4 by Rupert Gleadow, and the rest by five or six others. Among the earliest are two inspired by Barbara's admiration for a bank clerk, perhaps her first crush, while she was only 17 and still at school. As we know, Barbara, always romantic in her youth, was disposed to fall in love with young men with whom she was sometimes unacquainted. This one she must have noticed often in the Oswestry branch of the Midland Bank (now HSBC).

The first is called, *MIDLAND BANK: a poem dedicated to JTLI with the author's fondest love (But without his permission)*; we don't know who JTLI was. This is an overwrought piece of verse, not to be taken too seriously, which could only be excused by the poet's youth. Rhyming couplets must have been too much for her as after a few she reverts to blank verse.

Midland Bank

In the cool sanctity of Midland Bank
I watched the clerks, pale fishes in a tank,
Seeming to think of nothing – yet their eyes
Which looked at me with half-awake surprise
Gave a slight hint of fluttering souls within,
Faint germs of poetry and piety, which died
In uncongenial climes, stifled and killed
By the monotony of Midland Bank – which chilled
All warmth of feeling...

Yet there was one who seemed to have a soul.
His eyes were blue, deep set, they looked beyond
The Bank and all its littleness – they gazed
Into that great unknown, which we poor men
Dare not attempt to probe – I think he saw
More than we see – perhaps his thoughts as well
Are as much higher than ours as are the thoughts
Of God above those of most men on earth.
Some say he realised his high pre-eminence;
I care not, for I only knew I saw
A bank clerk with a halo, not a fish
Passive and colourless behind the barriers
Of Midland Bank – and yet his fellow fishes
Gave one no hint that they were realising
The presence of this creature in their midst.

And so on...

TAME DONKEY: a sequel to MIDLAND BANK written a few months later in August 1931, is also inscribed 'To JTLLI – *with the author's deepest affection – is this poem dedicated*'. She continues her theme of a superior being trapped among lower forms of life, and heroically overcoming adversity:

Tame Donkey

'Tis hard to snare a phoenix in a net,
To catch rare birds and clip their brilliant wings.
Some animals are shy, and others fierce'
And when once caught, they must be watched with care.
So, foolish mortals, thinking that they knew
These closely-guarded secrets, try to catch
Some hapless creatures, who will be to them
As pets, or slaves of all their foolish whims.
So unicorns are snared by such as these
And kept, till in captivity they die.
Their eyes are filled with melancholy tears,
They stand dejected, lost and wondering
What cruel god has thus imprisoned them.

But some have bolder spirits – these break free.
On flaming wings they soar above the world
And joyfully they find new life to live.
So I would tell of such a one as these
Who conquered in the end, and showed the world
That he was no tame donkey, for a man
To keep for his amusement. He was one
Of rarest kind among the world of men:
Two sided, with such enigmatic eyes
They seemed to give the lie to all he said.

He was a bank clerk, yet he was estranged
From the pale fish-like creatures of his kind
For he was different and aloof from them.

He was not tied by any petty rules
But made his soul his own – although it seemed
That others had dominion over him...

So one day he was caught, not as fish
For fishes are of little use in life,
But as a donkey, tamed to be the slave
Of his exacting master, and to be
Amusing and of use to entertain.
He had been brought up in a pious way,
An excellent thing in donkeys – he was trained
To make himself of use inside the church
And so endeared himself to many hearts
Of those who loved him for his worthiness.
And he was perfect – his good qualities
Were used, to be a benefit for all.
His other side was merry, he could talk
And laugh in jovial vein, and well he danced.
His presence was desired everywhere.
His time was not his own – so was he plagued
By invitations from the doting sex,
Who loved him for his playful silliness
Which mixed so sweetly with his piety.
Thus all went well, the ass was docile yet;
His master found him easily subdued.
He did what he was told, and even more;
He was forever in his proper place,
Behaving as the tamest donkey should.
But all things must have end, and better things
Are soonest over – so this cunning ass,
Who had his master at his beck and call,
Decided that the time had fully come
When he should break away from his dull life
And taste the pleasures that were rightly his.
Little by little he estranged himself
From those whose perfect donkey he had been.
He broke away and treated them less oft
To that supreme and glorious joy, his company.
Now the tame donkey has been changed
Into a brilliant creature, sure of life
And living every moment to the full,
Not caring for tomorrow, only knowing
That life is short and there is much to do...

And now he looks back upon his fellow clerks,
And smiles on them with pity in his eyes.
Happy is he if on the downward path
He can look up at such and realise
That he is holding life in both his hands
While they are toiling in the watery gloom.
Fortunate donkey! Hold to love until
Death comes along, and finds you dreaming still!

Whether Barbara ever showed this nonsense to JTLI, or whether he ever noticed her, we shall never know, but she seems to have become disenchanted with bank clerks, for Mildred's ex, Bernard, in *Excellent Women*, and Francis Oliver, whom Flora in *Jane & Prudence* once thought attractive, were both portrayed as unsatisfactory lovers.

At Oxford Barbara continued to laud her heroes in verse, almost, but not quite, as excruciating as *Tame Donkey*. In December 1931 she was again 'in love', this time with one of the Moderators who set and invigilated Pass Moderations, an examination which all students had to sit in their first term. She did not know his name, and referred to him as 'fat baby-face'. This is what she wrote after she failed the examination:

There was a Lady loved a Moderator
No man for such as I!
He was her darling and her sweet
Indeed I know not why.

There was no beauty in his face
He was not even thin
And yet no one can rightly say
Where true love shall begin!

She did not even know his name
He might have been the one
Who showed her in decisive way
How badly she had done!

In March 1932 Barbara retook Pass Moderations and this time passed. She now knew that the Moderator's name was Lindley MacNaghten Fraser, but of course they were never to be acquainted with each other

Sweet Moderator! When these days are over
Let us seek out some metaphorical clover
And there walk hand in hand all the day long,
Passing the hours with a sweet silly song,
Forgetting in our bliss those creatures *qui nullum honorem ambient*; we'll flee [who are not ambitious for honour(s)]
From that sad limbo of decaying brains
Our University – from all the pains
Of dissipated Cupid's dreary darts –
Which never touched the best beloved hearts.
But I shall play alone. You'll pass your time
In your prosaic way, I in my rhyme
Shall taste those pleasures that could never be
If I were known to you and you to me.

Barbara encountered others at Oxford who were as eager as she to express themselves in verse, often in a slightly malicious way. Robert Liddell, who had an obvious talent for parody, as well as knowing the basic rules of classical poetry, sent her his first recorded piece along with the gift of a copy of Rochester's poems. This is also the only poem I know of that has appeared in print – in chapter one of Liddell's *A Mind at Ease*:

It was that Christmas [1934] that I sent her the select poems of Rochester ('the dear earl', she called him). It professed to be '*a collection of such pieces only, as may be received in a virtuous court,*

and may not unbecome the Cabinet of the Severest Matron' – and I accompanied it with the following poem. These lines, I think, well enough reflect the character of our friendship.¹

Cassandra

Cassandra in the library by turn
Would con her book, or for Lorenzo burn.
Small help it was to reason with herself
When the great poets cried from every shelf.
And with one universal voice approved
Her flame. Small wonder that Cassandra loved.
The mighty schoolman in the stall of Inge
First gravely argued: 'Since the end's the thing
By which each action must be justified:
The right true end of love...' With angry pride
No sooner had the Nymph rejected clean
The wicked promptings of the gloomy Dean
Than two more learned men in haste begin
Basely to tempt her down the path of sin.
By Master Cleveland's muse instructed, she
Exclaims: 'Give me a lover bold and free.'
Then blushing and repentant, in a trice
She hies for absolution and advice
To Master Herrick, who can only say:
'Gather thee rosebuds, virgins, while ye may.'
She left these gentle turtles to their cooing,
Only to meet a more tremendous wooing.
Beholding her, the godlike Puritan
Forgot his godhead, and became a man,
And prayed her as a second Eve to come
And share his Eden in Elysium.
Where he, John Milton, she, Cassandra Pym,
(He for God only, she for God in him),

Might live again the early days of Earth –
Unwieldy elephants should give them Mirth,
Only no serpent should be lurking there.
Cassandra, having no desire to share
The simple pleasures of that garden state,
Flung down her book, and rushed precipitate
To find a shelter in the Tower's cell –
Praying St. Barbara to shield her well.
But all the raucous myrmidons of Phi
At her arrival lifted up their cry.
My good Lord Rochester was at her feet,
With propositions that I daren't repeat.
Havelock Ellis put her on her guard
Against th'intentions of the Comte de Sade.
Sure of success, poor Casanova's hopes
Were dashed to pieces by a word from Stopes.
From this unholy rabble, in retreat
Cassandra hastened to her country seat.
There, calm and safe, amid domestic joys,
The household care her busy hands employs.
While in her leisure hours she reads what's writ
Only by poets of the chastest wit.
Go, little book, purged of all grosser stains,
Where only poetry and truth remains.
Attend upon her like an eunuch page
Upon a lady of declining age.
Whisper her words of peace and sweet content,
And wish her CALM OF MIND ALL PASSION SPENT.

His next tribute was to the original 1936 version of *Some Tame Gazelle*. Some of the allusions to this early unpublished edition may not be familiar to you (indeed, some are not to me!). I hope this won't spoil your enjoyment of this polished piece. For Carey, read Liversidge; for the primate of th'Antipodes read the Bishop of Mbawawa; for Count Piozzi read Bianco; for Akenside read Barnicot, and for Bletchley read the Bodleian.

To Cassandra upon her Book

In Oswestry, as once on th'Ilian plain,
Apollo wooed Cassandra, but again
The Prudent Nymph declined for rev'rent dread
To yield th'audacious God her Maidenhead,
Who, in requital for her cruelty,
Has cursed her with the gift of Prophecy.

Our troubling fingers turn her mantic page,
Drawn in the likeness of a future age,
Whereon we gaze, as on a wizard's glass,
To scan the moving images that pass
And show us forth in turn things old and new.

The gaunt Archdeacon stalks into our view –
The childhood Faith sweet Evesham first supplied
Agnostic Birmingham soon swept aside,
Oxford displayed for him her dreaming spires
But not the places where they sing in quires.
Only in Finland wrapt in arctic night
Could the contrarious Hoccleve see the light,
But having seen it, ever more with ev'n
And gaitered strides he passes towards Heav'n.

What though the Primate of th' Antipodes
Strive to detain her in the Southern Seas
To wed with Hoccleve Agatha returns,
Th'embraces of a mitred sire she spurns
To seek th'embraces of a gaitered mate –
So strong a power hath Love, but stronger yet hath Fate.

With half a century of life misspent
Nomadic Carey here hath pitched her tent;
Painful Parnell doth hither wend his way
When learnèd Bletchley keeps a holiday –
And once the rustic urchins might behold
Th'unsobber conduct of Nathaniel Mold.

Here savours of sweet frankincense arise
With pious Plowman's morning sacrifice;
Small wonder that in such a blest retreat
The noble Clara built her country seat,
Or Count Piozzi gladly could forego
For this dear spot the land where citrons blow.

Here dwells Belinda, but the grievous smart
Has long since vanish'd from her well-tamed heart;
Today her docile tears serenely flow
Only to weep a poet's painted love –
And Harriet has lost all memory
Both of old love and antient Poetry.

But lo! There is one face we seek in vain –
There is a corner of Hungaria's plain
That is forever Bletchley – it doth hide
What of John Austen Bentley Akenside
Was mortal – his immortal past, his CAR,
The blessèd Gods assumed to Heaven and made a star.

Then there is another (*On Mr B his voyage into Juttland*) describing John Barnicot's seasickness on the way to visit Henry Harvey in Finland, a very amusing item, but perhaps not suitable for this audience at this time of the morning!

Mock elegies seem to be a favourite topic. Robert sent Barbara a rather unkind elegy *On the death of Burnett Hillman Streeter, Provost of the Queen's College, and of Irene his wife*. Burnett Hillman Streeter was a New Testament scholar, and a Canon of Hereford Cathedral as well as Provost of The Queen's College. He and his wife were, I'm afraid, killed in an air crash in Switzerland in September 1937. Robert wrote these irreverent verses in the same month.

'My dear', said Canon Streeter,
'We'll hire an aeroplane,
For that will be much fleeter
And nicer than the train.'

Then to her husband 'Burnett',
Irene said, 'My pet,
I see with great concern it
Is going to be wet.'

But Burnett said 'Irene,
My resolution's made.
You must not be a teeny
Or weeny bit afraid.

Our route has been decided
For us by Powers above,
In short I have been guided,
And that is that, my love.'

Ah, Angel guard that hovers't
Over his grave in vain –
Where wert thou when the Provost
Boarded his aeroplane?

'Fly high', said Canon Streeter,
'This guidance comes to me
The upper air is sweeter –
Nearer, my God, to thee.'

Then answered him the pilot
Who had not changèd been:
'It is not yours but my lot
To pilot this machine.'

And being so much surer
Than man should be, he flew
Forthwith into the Jura
Which mist concealed from view;

And as in earthly knowledge
He took such sinful pride,
The Provost of Queen's College
And Mrs Streeter died.

They rang the bells of Basel
And gathered in their troops
To share this sad reversal with
The Mournful Oxford Groups.

But another of Barbara's friends had got in earlier with a similarly scandalous elegy. In a letter to Barbara, dated 20 October 1934, Rupert Gleadow wrote "...it has occurred to me that you might like to read my epitaph on Professor Griffith. It is unkind but true. In general I don't write verse, and if I do it is not for publication – this isn't!" No, certainly not – it is almost libellous! Professor F. Llewellyn Griffith was an eminent Egyptologist, especially noted for his translations of hieroglyphics, but clearly Rupert thought him a bore, and a poor teacher.

Elegy on the death of an Emeritus Professor

Lament, ye Muses, and on every face
That loveth learning let the tears o'erflow;
Now let Apollo to funereal pace
Slacken his steeds with loud expressive 'Woah!'

No longer haunts he now that house of his,
No longer o'er his musty books he sniffeth,
He whom we mourn, that prince of learning, viz:
The late Professor F. Llewellyn Griffith.

His many titles loudly, Muse, rehearse,
Rehearse the honours that this hero blessed;
And those that can't be made to scan in verse
Had better be, perhaps, in prose expressed:

MA Oxon, Hon D.Litt, Aberdeen and Leipzig, Reader in and Honorary Emeritus Professor of
Egyptology in the University of Oxford.

Of birds and beasts he also knew a lot;
His nature-lore, I'm told, was quite terrific;
He knew the note of every bird, and what
Each meant as an Egyptian hieroglyphic.

His first wife, Kate (though no Dick Turpin, he)
Gave him her life, and when she died, her money;
His second wife we will not mention, she
Is still alive, and might not think it funny.

If pupils came, desiring to be taught,
He'd wear a saintly look like a confessor
And say: 'Oh no, I cannot teach you that.'
Of ignorance he was a true professor.

Being so shy, 'twas natural to shrink;
He drew the screw (four hundred, a mere charity)
And, while his understudy did the work,
Retired to study Nubian barbarity.

Out in the graveyard at the city's ends
The earth now holds his boredom, brains and bones;
Over the grave his wife received his friends:
'That was my husband, this is Mr. Jones'.

What, Muse, you tire? Think you enough is said?
I haven't kissed you for an hour? You want all
That petting, do you? Well then, let's to bed,
A woman's at her best when horizontal.

Barbara's brief romance with Julian Amery prompted her to verse again and to write what she describes as 'Frivolous lines inspired by looking up at the Randolph Hotel, Oxford, with Julian Amery on a fine sunny afternoon, it being early closing day, 3 March 1938'. [Attlee was a Labour MP, and PM from 1945-50, and Oswald Mosley was founder of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s.]

Much sweeter than Atlee [sic] and Mosley
Is Julian Amery
But not as sweet as the Randolph Hotel
On early closing day.

For the sky is blue behind it,
And the little towers of stone
Of the Randolph Hotel will still be there
When this present day has flown.

When Julian has quite forgotten
That one early closing day
He leaned against the wall with me
And I would not go away.

And he bought me a bunch of violets,
And still I would not go.
I did not want him to write an essay
Because I loved him so.

And then I went back to my lodgings
And there did make a shrine
Of *Oxford Comment* and violets
And the bottle that once held wine.

And I took a glass I had used before,
And I filled it to the brim,
And I thought as I drank of the night before,
When I had been with him.

And the wine was sweet as kisses,
And when I came back that night
I looked up into Balliol
And saw the electric light.

And I thought, he is writing an essay,
And I stood for a moment still
And I blew three tender kisses,
But they stopped at the window sill.

And unless he thinks for a moment
That I may be standing there,
The kisses will never reach him
But will float on the midnight air.

And perhaps they will go to Eaton Square,
Or even out to Spain,
Or perhaps when he is dying
They will come to him again.

And he will remember the Randolph Hotel
On early closing day,
And how I stood beside him,
And would not go away.

But if he never remembers
The Randolph will not forget.
Oh, lovely noble building,
I see you are standing yet.

Thou shalt be a memorial
To Julian Amery
Who is sweeter far than Atlee [sic]
Or Sir Oswald Mosley.

A few weeks later Barbara composed

Lines written to a Dear Young Friend on his Nineteenth Birthday

How like an Angel is my love to me,
Adorable as Bibliography.
Rarer than *Tilia platyphillos*,
Or Mistletoe that in its branches grows.
Lovelier than *Schola Magna Borealis*
Diviner than the poems of Novalis.
Jewel of Balliol and Eaton Square
United in him virtues all too rare,
Like Sunny Beams illuminate the air.

[Lime, Linden]

[Great School of the North – Oxford??]
[German Romantic poet]

Infallible in things political,
And yet as simple as St. Edmund Hall.
Nicer than tea with any Senior Proctor,
As full of *Stimmung* as *Bernkastler Doktor*.
Mysterious as the Soul of Algebra,
Eyes like Astronomy, and yet no star
Reigns with such Brilliance in the Heavens as he,
Young, charming, handsome ... JULIAN AMERY.

As a complete change, here is a verse by another of Barbara's special friends, Richard Roberts. He was a frequent visitor to Brooksville Avenue in the 1960s who did not share Barbara's love of cats. In particular he did not like Minerva, the reigning queen at the time, who, he thought, received more attention from Barbara (called Ianthe in this poem) than he did.

With apologies to All Good Poets from Catullus to Sandy Wilson

Who is Minerva, who is she?
Purring gently on Ianthe's knee.
Goddess of Brooksville, queen of cats,
Pampered Neuter, fantastic fat;
Delighting my mistress with feline graces,
All thoughts of me away she chases.

And when I come on bended knee
Ianthe's making pussy's tea.
Matchless Minnie, cunning cat,
Remember well we had a spat,
And I thee whacked with spiteful glee
To show you could not vanquish me.

But now you jealous wicked kitty
I must pretend to show you pity,
Else I fear Ianthe's rage
Will turn upon me page by page.
So, sluttish 'Nerva peace I offer,
Bowling, scraping, humbly proffer:

Now hide thy claws, come out from Telly
And let me tickle thy vast round belly.
Then once again will Ianthe smile,
Prettily deceived by all this guile.
Oh perfumed pussy, betray me not
Or doomed I be to a sad, sad, lot.

Henry Harvey, with whom Barbara had never completely lost touch, retired from his academic post in Finland to Willersey, a village in Gloucestershire, a convenient drive from Finstock. She and Hilary often exchanged visits with him, and Barbara and he spent weekends visiting places they had known in their youth. Tom Holt, Hazel's son, who had known Barbara from his childhood, wrote *'Lines on a Bowl of Smarties, observed at Henry Harvey's cottage at Willersey'*, parodying the Bard, no less. Note all the references to Scandinavia!

Lines on a Bowl of Smarties, observed at Henry Harvey's cottage at Willersey

Fear no more the midnight sun
Nor the Reindeer's fierce intention
Thou thy wordly task have done
Home art come, and drawn thy pension
Even *jeunesse dorée* must

[Fashionable, wealthy young people]

As Smartie People come to dust

Fear not Academe's Discord-
Nor the frost's insidious bite
Fear no half cooked smorgasbord
Nor the well armed Muscovite
For even Henry Harvey must
As Smartie Person come to dust.

No preface writer beard thee,
American come near thee,
No spiteful critic hurt thee,
No footnote disconcert thee.
At produce shows receive due praise
And in Riseholme spend thy days.

Now to return to Robert Liddell, who to my mind wrote the most harmonious verses of all Barbara's friends. I just loved this one – another elegy, but this time I thought fictional, on the imagined suicide of one Roderick Mackenzie [sic], possibly on the staff of the Bodleian, frustrated by his unrequited love for a Miss Pogson. Dr Craster was Bodley's Librarian at the time.

However, Tom Sopko and I did some research and found that Roderick McKenzie was, in fact, a Greek scholar at Oxford, editor of the edition of Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon* which was eventually published in 1940. McKenzie did commit suicide in 1937 at the age of 50, though details are not known. This has somewhat changed our attitude to Robert Liddell who we feel took 'poetic licence' much too far, and displayed a mean and heartless side to his character.

In Obitum Roderici Mackenzie.

Good Roderick Mackenzie
A man of gift and brains
Was moved by sudden frenzy
To sever all his veins.

He left a bloodstained letter
Beneath his gory head,
And as he grew no better
They thought it should be read.

He said: 'My life is blighted
By cruel Pogson's charms.
Ah, had I been invited
To fold her in these arms,

With that most fair of ladies
How happy were my lot!
But now I go to Hades
To Liddell and to Scott'.

The officers of Bodley
Were summoned in a force
As sober men and godly
To sit upon the corse.

Then first spake Dr. Craster
And sad and slow he spake
(For he could speak no faster):
'He died for Pogson's sake,

Enamoured of her beauty,
So I can only find
One verdict in my duty –
He was of unsound mind.'

The Senior Sub Librarian
Next rose to give his voice.
A proud man and no Aryan,
Who said: 'Miss Pogson's choice

Fell on another scholar
Not quite unknown to me;
Mackenzie in his choler
Has died *felo de se*'.

The third man of the quorum
Followed the other two,
The *Custos Archivorum*
Who held an open view.

Soon through the rainy weather
Marched a cortege of dons,
First two and two together
The fellows of St. Johns,

Vice Chancellor and Proctors,
Bedells of Law and Arts
And Heads of Houses, Doctors,
And other men of parts.

I end now with two short pieces, the first, one of Barbara's better poems, celebrating her love for Julian Amery

**Sonnet written to a Dear Friend on the Third Day of December 1938,
it being the First Anniversary of our Meeting.**

My melancholy disembodied Fingers
Caress the Letters and the Faded Flowers
My Gothick Spirit obstinately lingers
In long-forgotten places, Haunts of ours,
Where we, who loved in a proctorial way,
Did twine our Hands and for a Moment stay.
We were those lovers parted in the Spring
Who never met upon this earth again,
Yet on the Last Day when the Dead shall rise
And Bones be clothed with Flesh, this dusty Thing,
Our love that in so long a Sleep has lain,
Shall spring to Life in our new-fashioned Eyes.
Then shall Belgravia and North Oxford see
The Decorous Kiss of Immortality.

On Barbara's death, her Finstock literary friends, Gilbert and Kay Phelps, wrote valedictory poems. Kay's I think, is particularly poignant, and seems appropriate for this Centenary year.

Your written world was small, they said
Its passions
Slight.

But the size of a prism is irrelevant,
As long as what falls through it
Is light.

And while the bells were ringing
The long procession flowed,
Its tragic burden bringing
Right up the Banbury Road.

There without any prayer
Or psalm or hymn to God,
They buried the self-slayer
Beneath the Rondpoint's sod.

Wheeler had made the coffin,
Mowbray had lent the pall
Refreshments were by Boffin –
Such was the funeral.

The rainbow is unchanging and true,
And so, in your creative arc,
Were you.

¹Robert Liddell. *A Mind at Ease: Barbara Pym and her Novels*. London: Peter Owen, 1989, pp. 12-14.