

THE SORDID SOJOURNS OF THE ELECTRIC SMOCK

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Herein lies two tales of the bloody journey of the Electric Smock. This work is of yet unfinished, and will upon completion include an introduction, several more tales spoofing other literary genres than merely the Pastoral, and will conclude with the recapture and reimprisonment of the Smock. Possibly at the hands of a small moose named Harold.

- Danny

Busy-Fingered Sidney and the Electric Smock

Beneath a shaft of eldritch light
There waits a wicker box,
An attic cache, eschewed from sight,
Adorned with gilded locks
And reams of silken thrice-twined-thread
And fifty blood-penned notes
Declaring him the "certain dead"
Who dares disturb the motes
Of sere, senescent fusty dust
That coat the casket's lid—
Failed wards against Pandora's lust
And Busy-Fingered Sid.

His digits deftly dance and dart,
His eyes flash keen and quick;
His knives rend reams of silk apart
And hairpins 'droitly pick
Their worming ways though locksmiths' craft
To kiss an iron core:
In eldritch light has Sidney laughed
While gold locks struck the floor.

As blood-penned pamphlets proselytize
The living to their doom,
That healthy men embrace demise,
There enters full the room
A putrid pale fluorescent flare
And hollow humming vox
For Busy-Fingered Sidney, there,
Unlatched the wicker box.

He lifts it from its cradle, spiled,
A gleaming golden fleece,
Bedecks himself in satin, roiled,
And triggers Hell's release.
He screams, he flails, he falls aground,
By attic's cache undid,
Of durance is the Smock unbound,
Of life, divested, Sid.

Halitocia's Gift to her Faithful Shepherd Epiceo

The shepherds and their fleecy fare
Would gather and agree
That ne'er so fair a gentle air
Anon would come to be:
The firmament, a lapis lake
With feathered fish awhirl,
Was etched with waves of alabaster,
Ivory, and pearl,
Was 'bullient¹ with butterflies
And Helios' grace –
They dance in Halitocia's eyes,
And prance about her face.
Though faith, no bonny breeze could pass
Nor pleasant sky could peer
Her charms and pulchritude – alas
But *one* should hold her dear.

Beneath a linden tree she sighs,
Then laughs with dire delight
As earthwards dive her butterflies
And blossoms rain in blight,
Plush moss erodes around her feet
Where worms would loathe encroach,
And thus does Damsel H entreat
Epicio's approach.

A garland bobs about his ears
To time his lively gait
And pale pink petals catch his tears
Of joy for gen'rous fate:
His nymph, his pungent paramour,
His foully fragrant rose
Unfolds resplendently before
The man without a nose.

¹Elided from "*ebullient*."

He rounds her balding linden tree
And cries such sudden hails
That startled, she exclaims her glee
And luffs² her southern sails.

“Epiceo, ye liling lad!
Mine heart has never thumped this glad
As since thy near escape proclaimed:
Thy shearing accident but maimed!”

“Indeed, my dear,” quoth he, “too true
That on that fateful day we knew
The scourge of Nature’s broken laws,
What left me wrecked and took my schnoz.
But that, fair Halitocia, was
My *second*-favourite day because
The morn that followed, bright and blue,
Had left me scentless, sore, and you.
I trace to that, the thankful turn
Of Fortune’s wheel, my chance to learn
Anew of you, my shining sun,
Four senses peaked at cost of one.”

Upon his words the maiden swoons
(Two times, mark you, with care
To demonstrate just where one wounds
The heart, to him, laid bare),
And was, in time, restored to health
At anxious shepherd’s knees,
Though, faith, his fanning of her self
Would poison sheep for leagues.

“Epiceo,” she cries at last,
“Our time as twain has surely passed!
Entrust thy care, thy hand to me
And we’ll as boughs of ivy be –
Entwined beneath the stars above;
Come live with me, I’ll be thy love!”

²Luffs - v. *intr.* To flap while losing wind, as of a sail.

Her shepherd never knew such cheer
As from this simple pledge —
For lonely, sheepy slumber leered
At nightfall's nearing edge.
A married man, no more might he
Recoil from owl's cry,
Nor stir amidst his flock, were he
At *maiden's* side to lie.

He swore, "it must, it *shall* be done:
We wed ere twilight's will is won
And joined, my dear, we'll meet the light
Of daybreak, pending restful night
Upon soft sheets and cushions stuffed
With fleece of lamb, not brambled tuft!"

But here Epiceo gives pause
As doubt's disdainful seed
Within his bosom cruelly draws
Attention to the need
For things that fields and flocks omit
The keeper of the crook:
His shirt and jerkin scarcely fit
The fashions he forsook.
Long nights on brooding, bouldered bluffs
Take tolls upon the cloth,
And *this* poor herder's threadbare cuffs
In sooth could starve a moth.

"My lovely bride," he sighs, "my wife-
To-be, I fear yet some small strife
Against our nuptial day forbears —
I've simply not a thing to wear!"

And, oh, such piteous moans arise
Beneath the linden tree
As Halitocia dabs the eyes
Of husband hers-to-be.
Amidst his sobs and wracking heaves
Her emerald smile escapes,
And from its place amongst the leaves
She carefully undrapes
The cords that hold her parcel fast,
And to her man presents
A gift to give his eyes repast;
His tantrum thence relents.

“Ye needs,” says she, “to ken my dearth
Of things of wealth and worldly worth,
For all mine adoration brings
Our union, sweet, no pair of rings.
I tender, thus, this box forsooth
Contains of constancy, my proof,
My token, testament, and tie
To thee for all days ere I die.”

Epiceo, her hand enclosed,
Beholds again the gift,
His Halitocia’s wits disposed
By prompt, auspicious thrift.
As tattered trappings traipse the mounds
Of meadows, leys, and hills,
Bestrewn, aloft by Zeph’rus³, sounds
The plangent, pealing trills
That issue from the contents freed
Of perspicacious pack;
Engrossed, the lovers fail to heed
The voice of vile attack.

“Huzzah!” laughs shepherd, “Jubilee!
It hums our heartstrings’ harmony!
This golden garb does *husband* host!”
He dons the Smock and doffs the Ghost.

³Elided from “Zephyrus.”

"My darling spouse," cheers nymph, remiss,
"Wherefore ye dance *alone* in bliss?
"Pray let thy wife thy sport partake!"
Thus she, Smock's second victim make.

The shepherds and their fleecy fare
Would gather and agree,
That Hali and Epiceo
A perfect pairing be.
Anoesia and *anosmia*,⁴
Interred, in tandem bound,
Enjoined for perpetuity
On coffin's cushions, sound.

⁴Anoesia (an-oh-shuh) - *n.* Idiocy;

Anosmia (an-ohz-mi-uh) - *n.* Loss of olfaction.