

Poker Poems (in 3/4 time)
Tanya Ury 2003

To wit or to hit?
That is the question.
To respond with a retort or not...

Who are we,
aphrodite actrice
in a
stretched skin,
wearing my lines,
sloughed
on my sleeve?
Her and me
and I and she
And Hermes game,
game for a trick
game bird trapped
game and match
a match for Paris
me myself I

don't play with matches
in glass houses
when your stairs have been made of ice.

Ludwig Wittgenstein
wrote the Tractatus
in the trenches
of World War I;
one hand fraught angels
the other won medals,
while she remained silent
the world was seen wrightly
from a stairway trod lightly.

Er hat mich in der Hand
My hands are tied
meine rechte Hand
my left footloose.

Unhanded unmanned
maintain full mains,
Jack's a joker
and the jokes on we.

Jacob Esau
Jekyll Hyde.
Jacob's Angel
Lucifer's bride.

Hyde hides
his eye's denied
Jack's Judas
when she dies.

Unholy twins
unheimliche Zwillinge
play a game of exchange
of names and words.

To wit or to hit?
That is the question.
To respond with a retort or not...

The rules:

Poker's a card game
of bluff and skill
where risk-taking's
par for the course.

A poker's a rod
made of metal to use
for stirring
a fire, or such.

A poker is also
a person or thing
that pokes with
a finger or two.

When ideals are at stake
and the poker is hot
and giants are playing,
that's stirring it up.

Poker ist ein Kartenspiel
des Risikos, Bluffs und Geschickes.

Ein Schüreisen ist
eine Metall- Zange für das Schüren
des Feuers.

Ein philosophische Poker Spiel
mit einem heißen Schüreisen
schürt die Feindseligkeit.

The reason:

Had Hit
Wit in mind
when he drew
his ideal Jew,
in Mein Kampf?
Mit dem Engel.

So who is who
when wit hits?
If Hit's Hyde's
and right's denied,
who saves Esau
when Jekyll lies?

To be me
belittled
beyond all
belief
belästigt
behindert
bedauere ich bin

or be she
beschissen
be shit
by God
where Shadows
determine
the alien hand.

The house is full
and the cold
has made roses
grow on the windows,
ice flowers
to see through.

Alice has grown
in stature and mien;
but she doesn't have
a free hand.

Paulinchen's no nonsense
for Ein Mann
wohnt im Haus,
er spielt seine Karten
Jack's eating
her heart out.

Paulinchen's toys
make not much noise
but they're bound to
bring the house down.

What was in mind
when Karl and Wit
2 Jews
with different views,
met near the Styx
in '46
out in the cold
in Cambridge.

Pedantic Popper
with his pertinent pep
came with the aim to provoke.
After all Reiche building
and Hit's Reifeprüfung,
was history more or less.

Witzig's wit
was a listing ship
but she wouldn't admit
she'd lost her grip.
While Popper's deriding
the myth was exploding.
And Vienna was so far away.

Ludic Ludwig
defensively spoke
extending a poker
she made a mistake.

Extenuating circumstances:

Ludwig Wittgenstein and Adolf Hitler were born in the same week and went to school together in Austrian Linz.

Said Lucid Ludwig to Aryan Adolf:
carrots and sticks may break my bank
but threats will never Hit me.

Said populist Popper to puzzled Wit:
Philosopher's Steins may break my back
but probability presents problems.

Said worthwhile Wit to incorruptible Karl:
Pokers and posers may provoke my pride
but pretenders will never outwit me.

Sticks and stones my break my bones
but when Hitler hits it hurts.

The Poker Game:

Don't throw your poker around
When you build glass castles.

Hit hates
Wit pops
Pop wits
Wit pokes

Hitlerhältig hinter,
an underhand Hit
makes poker faced Popper
pop his quest,

the practice of problem posing
as popular politics
is practically speaking
his pragmatic best.

But Wittgenstein's prop
is puzzling, or not?:
...the general form of a philosophical question is,
"I am in a muddle; I don't know my way"

Wit pops the question
Pop's witness here
queer fears Wit.

Stripping his stripes
stirring it up,
strip Jack Naked
poking fun.
Don't poke your finger at me,
poke me.

Wit's wrested angels
and probing Popper plops
his ivory bubbles pop.

Hit's wit pops illusions
Which proposition fits?

Hit hits hard
Wit waits but
Wit's proposition fits?
Which proposition sits?

Wit's proposition sits

Stealing fire:

Wittgenstein's quicksilver
ladder is climbed
the fever spent,
the moment went,
the battle fought,
the drama wrought,
though Jack's been
talks too much.

The world's seen write
on the other side
when she held the glass
to the light.
