

Frederick Feirstein

General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*: A Re-Creation

I came to re-create the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* when I was teaching. My students were not amenable to making the effort necessary to read *The Tales*: they hadn't the motivation to learn a dead language, to learn its spelling and pronunciation. The available translation, Nevill Coghill's, provided them with the modern English words—but these were a non-poet's words that dessicated the spirit and left them wondering what was so zesty and stirring about Chaucer.

So as a tool for them I began to re-create, not literally translate, the General Prologue. If I could reach them on the Prologue they would make the necessary effort then to get to the original itself, and that's the aim or should be the aim of every translation. I found equivalent sounds in modern English for Chaucer's and tried to find equivalent images. I gave the narrator a modern sensibility. Sometimes Chaucer's content was laden with obscure references and I tried to replace them with images that captured the fun the allusions once created for a medieval audience. Once in Chaucer's spirit I even began to add details where he skimmed, usually out of laziness, even to the point of creating a character, THE CARPENTER, whom he mentioned but neglected to develop; I developed him in Chaucer's style and spirit. Because I was doing only the Prologue, I had to create some interaction between the characters as Chaucer creates later in the links to *The Tales*. Thus the re-creation is self-contained, giving the reader a feeling of an aesthetic whole and at the same time serving as an agon for the spirit and style of the whole work ahead of him.

This re-creation, I think, should have the same effect on other students and interested non-academic readers. I've created an experience of Chaucer as a modern theater director, through his interpretation, would give an audience an experience of Shakespeare. It is

not meant to stand for the work—no translation should—and that's why, beside the *recreation* I got and the reader should get out of it, I call it a *re-creation*.

Following is a passage from Nevill Coghill to illustrate what the reader's alternative is:

*When the sweet showers of April fall and shoot
Down through the drought of March to pierce the root,
Bathing every vein in liquid power
From which there springs the engendering of the flower,
When also Zephyrus with his sweet breath
Exhales an air in every grove and heath
Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun
His half-course in the sign of the Ram has run,
And the small fowl are making melody
That sleep away the night with open eye
(So nature pricks them and their heart engages)
Then people long to go on pilgrimages
And palmers long to seek the stranger strands
Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands,
And specially, from every shire's end
In England, down to Canterbury they wend
To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick
In giving help to them when they were sick.*

General Prologue

In gypsy April, when rambunctious showers
Rush life into the slender roots of flowers
And tickle every vein until the season
Is wriggling like a slut without a reason
But to entice the strolling passerby
To kiss his fingers at the brightening sky;
When robins fly with earthworms in their beaks
And Zephyrus with his bagpipe player's cheeks
Resuscitates the earth with barley breath,
Saving the skinny flocks again from Death;
And when the sun is pandering to youth,
Opening up the season's kissing booth
For a new pair of lovers red and swollen
Trading long rolls of tickets they had stolen,
And also for a pair of hummingbirds
Who match their music to the lovers' words;
It's in this gypsy April that the people,
Yearning to wrap their arms around a steeple,
Will wrap their legs around a horse instead
And stuff their pockets full of cheese and bread
And tie their kerchiefs into traveling bags
And turn the heads of thoroughbreds and nags
To where the bell of Canterbury chimes
For martyred Thomas Becket who in times
Of illness they had sought with only prayers
And a couple of the Pardoner's holy wares.

It happened in this season at the Tabard,
A hostelry in Southwerk where I blabbered
To the Host filling my goblet up with wine
About my love for Thomas Becket's shrine,
That a group of pilgrims, twenty-nine in all,
Who met by chance at Southwerk's flowered mall,

Tugged at the Host for beds to stay the night.
The Host could plainly see that some were tight.
But most were truly pious folk, so he
Allowed the drunks to steal the upstairs key.

Among them was a KNIGHT who I could see
Was steadfast in the cause of chivalry.
Courtesy, Truth, Honor lived in his eyes.
They were his only ladies, I surmise.
No man could serve our King as well as he,
This gentle Knight, virtue's epitome.
He fought in Turkey, Spain, and Libya,
At Benmarin and Alexandria,
In fifteen mortal battles without stain,
Including the Algerian campaign,
And also at the siege of Algezir.
Many a heathen kissed his holy spear.
Sometimes this worthy Knight was found to be
Serving our heathen ally, Palaty,
Yet all the time he kept a laundered name,
Untouched by all the grinning heirs of fame.
He bore himself as purely as a maid.
His healthy pride would never have to raid
The dungheap of a little fellow's lies.
A timid soul could look him in the eyes.
He'd never take salaaming as his right.
He was a truly perfect Christian Knight.
And he was modest in the way he dressed:
He wore a very simple cotton vest,
Embroidered just in black—his coat of mail;
His only plume was white—his horse's tail.
The Knight had just returned from a crusade
To head this motley, carefree cavalcade.

Beside him was his son, a jaunty SQUIRE,
A lusty bachelor full of jigging fire.
His locks were curly as the season's petals.
His lips were rounder than a copper kettle's.

His legs were lean, he was quicker than a wren
And smelled much sweeter than the cyclamen.
He rode against the wind in cavalry
That won in Flanders, Artois, Picardy.
Although he wasn't even twenty-one years old,
He saw men eyeless, armor gathering mold.
He wore a meager beard upon his face,
Yet by his valor earned his lady's grace.
He was embroidered richer than a rill
Spilling with moss, with bell, with daffodil.
And when he walked, he whistled like a jay.
Oh, he was fresher than the month of May.
He could compose, write poetry, and paint
And he could play the devil or the saint.
So hot he loved, the rising sun turned pale.
He slept no longer than a nightingale.
He had a virgin's smile and dainty feet
And, at the table, carved his father's meat.

A YEOMAN, straight as a tree and stronger, stood
Sheathed in a green coat and a green hood.
A sheaf of peacock arrows, stiff and bright,
Hung from a belt, polished and fastened tight.
His string would quiver with such a tremolo,
You'd think he had plucked music from his bow.
His head close-cropped, his face cut out of wood,
There was a statue underneath that hood.
Upon his wrist he wore an archer's guard
And by his side a sword and shield unmarred,
And on the other side a kidney knife.
A horn around his neck once saved his life.
St. Christopher's medallion watched his chest.
Of all the foresters he was the best.
He was the only servant of the Knight.
He paced behind him like an acolyte.

Then came my lady nun, the PRIORESS.
She made you want to kneel down and confess.
Her smile was coy, was slower than a cat's.
Her strongest oaths were "Goodness me!" and "Rats!"
Her name was Madame Eglentine, and she
Could sing the service most exquisitely.
In choir she would always take the lead,
Her tongue a fluttering leaf, her nose a reed.
At table she was careful as a bird.
When chewing she refused to say a word.
She'd never let a morsel touch her lip
And never stain her fingers when she'd dip.
Oh, she would dab her upper lip so clean
That smudges on her cup were never seen.
She sometimes seemed a lady of the court,
Ready to join in intrigue or in sport.
For animals she had such tender care
That she'd kneel weeping if she saw a hare
Caught in a trap, wriggling and bleeding.
She had an Irish hound that she was feeding
— Secretly, with roasted meat and bread.
She loved to scratch its belly, kiss its head—
Although it was forbidden by her order.
"These rules!" she said, they sometimes simply bored her.
Her eyes were grey, her nose was finely shaped.
Her veil was pleated properly and draped
About a high-cheeked, but a seal-shaped head.
Her tiny mouth was very soft and red.
Her cloak was tailored well and I could see
That on her wrist she wore a rosary.
The larger beads were green and from them spun
A brooch as shiny as the reborn sun
And on it was inscribed a crownèd "A"
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

And with her was a Nun, a non-descript
And three gay priests who clapped their hands and skipped.
Amidst them I was burning with distress.
I saw a vision of the Prioress
Fully unfrocked, one hand upon her hip,
The other trembling on her lower lip.
And I was steeped in flowers on the heath,
Working a piece of grass between my teeth.
From my next pagan vision I could tell
God had already thrown me into Hell:
It was a centaur, eyes blinking out blood.
I blinked: It was a MONK upon a stud.
His saddle jeweled, his stirrups lined with sable,
This Monk had such devotion to his stable
He said his straw was glowing with the imprint
Of Our Savior's body when he was an infant.
He was all horse, as some men are all heart.
He was no fool: he kept himself apart
From his nail-biting brothers who would meet
For hours, with rocking legs and wriggling feet,
Debating the minutiae of a madman:
Do angels when they're sleepy use a bedpan
And are the bedpans painted or austere
And do they fill with liquid gold or beer?

There was a FRIAR, sprightly, wanton, merry,
A begging Friar with a breath of sherry.
None was a better flatterer or flirt
Among the men who wore the hairy shirt.
And yet he was a decent soul, he wed
Husbands to every slut who creased his bed.
This Friar was the pillar of his order,
Although he seemed to be a traveling boarder
Of Franklins, if their suppers made him belch.
His father was an Arab, mother Welsh

(Or so he told the widows whom he cuddled).
And when he heard confession, if you muddled
The details of your sins or left some out,
He wasn't petty—if you gave him stout
And venison or mallets or a kiss
And then he'd sit with you and reminisce
About these details and give absolution
With water or your vinegar solution.
His hood was stuffed with rhinestone pins and knives
That served as gifts for penitential wives
Who turned their husbands' pockets inside out
In order to be touched by this devout
Begging Friar, this saint—Francis's ghost,
This rock, this rod, this holy hitching post!
He didn't wear a scholar's threadbare cape.
His robe was double-breasted and its shape
Was modeled on his monastery's bell.
He wore a bracelet strung with cockleshell.
His toenails like his fingernails were black
And when he laughed he had a smoker's hack.
At puberty, he said, he learned to lisp,
Although his t's and d's were very crisp.
He was precise in business and in prayer.
He rode to stimulate him a young mare.
He loved her best, he said, when she upreared.

There was a MERCHANT with a forked, brown beard,
A brown mustache, a matching beaver hat
And, as if posing for a brush, he sat
Rigid on his horse, his reins smartly slack.
His boots were polished to a wet crow's black.
His fingernails were filed, his nosehairs clipped.
His coat was muted tapestry, some script
—A corny Latin phrase—adorned his hem.
Each pinky bore an oriental gem.
His words were few, as if inscribed in gold:
What men he bought, what markets he controlled.

He was impassioned by a sole ideal:
“Protect the seas from buccaneers who steal
The wool from ships, those helpless lambs that sail
Between the cities of... Here’s where I fail.
I am so ignorant of money that
I never will afford a sable hat.”
This worthy man so well employed his brain
That every thought was of financial gain.
Such dignity, such reverence he had
For what he could subtract, divide, or add.
He was a slugger in the business game.
But, truthfully, I can’t recall his name.

There was an Oxford STUDENT on a nag.
Its mane was soiled and shredded as the rag
That wiped the grease and wine from our host’s board.
The reins the Student held were twisted cord,
And from a distance you might well mistake
The nag’s unpadded rib-cage for a rake.
The student’s muscles were like ill-hung drapes,
The skin across his knuckles smooth as grapes.
Only his tongue was fat—his hair was thin—
For he was always ready to begin
To alchemize his books to honeyed bread.
Yet he would always wind up in his bed
Embracing Aristotle, Abelard,
Munching a crust of black bread smeared with lard.
His stomach yelping, he would always spend
Money forced on him by a pleading friend
On crumbling books in Hebrew, Latin, Greek.
To keep warm he would pinch blood to his cheek.
And he was generous in prayers for those
Who doled him their unfashionable clothes.
There was no fat, no gristle in his speech.
As he would freely learn, he’d freely teach.

There was a LAWYER, eminent and wise.
One eye was shifty, one could hypnotize.
His legs were spindly and his feet turned out.
He lacked a chin but not a bloodhound's snout.
His element, of course, was London fog.
His fingers strummed the belly of a frog
When he intoned precedents word by word
With no notes to guide him; nothing that he heard
Or even read escaped his claw-like brain.
His face seemed always twisted into pain,
His brows were always chewing on a scheme
To give a thief or killer self-esteem.
Fashion in clothes he couldn't learn by rote.
He wore a blue hat and a purple coat.

The FRANKLIN'S beard was white, his face was red.
He dunked in red wine tufts of barley bread
For breakfast, then on roasted goose he'd munch
—Tidbits of meat in crackling skin—till lunch.
There was no flesh-bound pleasure he would shun,
For he was Epicurus's own son.
When he would host you, there was no restraint.
His fields were yours, Julian was his saint.
His bread and ale were always of the best.
For company, his fowls were always dressed.
His house was always stocked with baked meat pies
Stuffed with sirloin chunks from the fair's first prize,
And mackerels, lobsters, rainbow trout, and clams,
And molds of jelly from the hooves of lambs.
He changed his menu when God changed the season.
His feasting, therefore, always followed reason.
Many a partridge fattened in his coop.
His fish pond could be heated into soup.
His cook was fired if his sauce was flat
Or if his knives were duller than a gnat.
And when the county justices would meet,

He banged the gavel and he held a seat
In Parliament—he'd nibble nuts and dates
While others stuffed themselves with dull debates.

There were five GUILDSMEN and, except for one
—A CARPENTER whom they tried hard to shun—
They dressed alike and spoke alike, they were
A DYER, WOOLENS WEAVER, HABERDASHER,
And an UPHOLSTERER who also made
Tapestries with scenes of the last Crusade.
Their tools were new, their scabbards spiked with gold
Not brass, their wives were mink, not sable-stoled.
Their girdles and their pouches were so clean
That they could blind a well-submerged sardine.
Each was so wise and sure and dignified,
He could become a mayor if he tried.
Their wives in dress and manner aped the Queen
And, if you called them "Madame," they would preen.

The CARPENTER on one hand lacked a thumb.
His other nails were black from gypsum gum.
He loved to rub his stump against a stick
And say it was a dog's red pissing prick.
He wore no shirt, only a leather vest
Buttoned up to the gray hairs of his chest.
His arms were lean, his veins were very blue.
His naked armpits did not smell of dew.
He made the other craftsmen twitch their noses
And taunted them, he called them "thornless roses."
His lips, he boasted, could become so tight
That he could clamp a nail however slight
Or pull like nails their noses from their faces
So they would have to learn a leper's graces.
He hummed his own tune, leapt a crazy dance,
As if they filled his wooden shoes with ants.

Accompanying the Guildsmen was a COOK
Whose specialties were trout fresh from the brook,
Sprinkled with almonds and a ginger sauce,
And chicken boiled in marrowbones and moss.
I think he fried the tongues of nightingales.
He could distinguish among London ales.
There wasn't anything he couldn't fry.
With one hand, he'd make stew; the other, pie.
But he'd a failing, so it seems to me,
A running sore unbandaged on his knee.
This Cook at dressing poultry was the best.

There was a SHIPMAN living in the West,
Dartmouth, I think—he was so rarely home
Except on ocean or on alehouse foam.
His sea-legs held their stirrups not too well.
He made the Miller black when he yelled "Hell!"
A dagger on a cord hung from his neck.
He often cut a path across a deck.
The sun had turned him permanently brown.
He wore a matching woolen cap and gown,
"Lambswool," he said, "from 'helpless lambs that sail.'"
The Merchant chewed the polish off a nail.
The enemies that fought him quickly sank.
He made the ones who cowered walk the plank.
As for the dangers of the wind and sea
No sailor was as brave or smart as he.
He knew each constellation, every star,
As well as every seedy English bar,
And every creek in Brittany and Spain.
His ship was called "the Mary Magdalene."

The DOCTOR seemed a man that you could trust,
The antecedent of a marble bust.
His brow was high, his nose was thin as slate.
His lips were thick; when closed they formed an eight.
His eyes were tiny, but his squint looked wise.
His limbs were firm, he loved to exercise

And rise before the sun, he hated death
Although he bore it on his stinking breath.
He knew no poetry or dances, but
He knew all ways to diagnose and cut
From studying the movements of the stars.
Cancer, for instance, when the path of Mars...
This Doctor knew the chart of every pain.
No more examples, I don't have the brain
To tell you all the learned things he said
And God knows all the authors that he read!
Though for a pittance, you could buy his diet:
He didn't fart, he bragged, his guts were quiet.
As was his walk, his boots were from a calf.
He had a noiseless, inward-turning laugh.
His coat was blood-red and his stockings white.
The only fault he had was being tight,
For no amount of gold could still his fear
The plague he mined would someday disappear.

Then came what you might call the constant WIFE.
She lived outside of Bath, and all her life
She toiled at making cloth till merchants paid
More for her goods than goods the Flemish made.
If someone stole her place in line when she
Filled the poor box, poof went her charity,
Her wrath resounding like an organ note.
She had less patience than a rutting goat.
Her hose were silk, red as a harlot's tongue.
Her shoes were new and felt as soft as dung.
Her face was round and splotched red as a berry.
She left five husbands at the cemetery.
When single, she hit all the haystacks, but
She felt until she married in a rut.
This pious woman traveled to Boulogne
To cleanse herself and also to Cologne.
Five times she traveled to the Holy Land
And knew the Roman catacombs first-hand.
She was adept at wandering by the way.

She was gap-toothed and when she tried to say
“Sexy,” for instance, you could see her tongue.
As her horse ambled, so her buttocks swung.
She called her fat hips “mermaid’s dulcimers.”
Her tiny feet clattered with silver spurs.
She wore a wimple and a velvet hat
That was as wide and blacker than a bat.
She talked incessantly, knew all the tricks
Of love, that is, “my rose-garden of pricks.”

The PARSON’S voice and touch were soft as moss.
And yet if you were suffering the loss
Of love or faith or charity or hope
They seemed as sturdy as a churchbell’s rope.
Although the threads were frazzled on his frock,
He couldn’t shear the tithes from his poor flock.
The inside of his purse was smooth and yet
He’d often enter into holy debt
If one of his parishioners fell ill
Or couldn’t work because he lost the will;
He’d claim his mouth was small, it hurt to eat
More than an inch a day of bread and meat,
And had the stamina to walk to God.
He needed it to walk the stingy sod
Of his poor parish, only great in size.
Try riding it, your horse would pop his eyes.
Yet even if he had to walk in rain,
He wouldn’t shun a single soul in pain.
And even if his fever made him weak,
He’d lurch for miles to pat a widow’s cheek,
Always a staff in hand to show his flock
“Before you open doors you have to knock.”
And he’d make other aphorisms too:
“If gold can rust, then what will iron do?
If priests be foul, whom then can we trust?
If bread be stale, then can we call it crust?”

A rusty scythe can only hot air reap.
A shepherd full of shit has dirty sheep.
You can't wash dishes in a dirty sink."
His wit was more sincere than sharp I think.
His face was round and small, his nose was shiny.
His wrists were thin, his hands were pink and tiny.
Although he seemed to have a virgin mother,
He was, in fact, the Plowman's older brother.

The PLOWMAN on his forehead had a boil.
His hair was kinky, dark-red as the soil.
He had the parson's soul although his face
Was long and wrinkled as a filleted plaice.
His neck was long, his collarbone was wide.
One leg was bandied, when he walked he tried
To be erect—to no avail—and so
His lips were tighter than the Yeoman's bow.
His voice was full of sensitivity.
For all God's cripples he showed charity.
And he would never argue for he saw
Your side as well as his; he loved the law
Secular and divine, his tithes were paid
Promptly, with head bowed, leaning on a spade.

The MILLER had a head and fist of rock.
With either he could break a butcher's block.
His biceps were an old tree's twisted roots.
His teeth were bigger than the nails of boots.
He was broad-shouldered with a stunted neck.
He'd cripple you if you said "Hell" for Heck."
His moustache was the color of a fox,
The nose above was stolen from an ox.
Upon the very tip of it he had
A mole and from it grew a myriad
Of hairs as red as bristles of a sow.
His lips and tongue were stolen from a cow:

His voice was loud, roared at his ribald tales
All full of bulls who pissed in milkmaid's pails.
He was adept at stealing corn and grain
While looking at you straight and talking plain.
He played a bagpipe with a cockeyed frown
And with it he would lead us out of town.

The MANCIPLE, a sly, illiterate man,
The lawyers' bellies' prudent guardian,
Sat rigid on his horse and scarcely breathed,
His head bowed slightly, waiting to be wreathed.
For when he bought the Inner Temple food,
The lawyers learned the right way to be shrewd.
He waited squinting for the time to buy,
Then tossed his purse down with a scornful sigh
And never put their savings in his shoe.
He'd rather show the lawyers who was who.

Then came the REEVE, a scrawny scratchy man.
The texture of his face was marzipan,
Though shaven clean and powdered like a mime.
His lips were pursed as if he sucked on lime
—Ascetic or acidic the effect
For those who came to pay or to collect.
His hair was cropped sans sideburns like a monk.
He had a stork's legs but a midget's trunk.
He was an infant on a six-legged stallion.
His coat was white, his hose green as a scallion,
As if his tuft of hair were turning white...
And yet on his estate he rode a Knight,
Managing here and there a pig, a cow,
Mend this fence here, not later damn you—now!
No foreman, farmhand, miller was so slick
This Reeve could not discover in a trick
To steal the master's time or grain or fruit
Although—to use his word—this Reeve was “cute.”
In case his lord grew needy this Reeve stored
A portion of his goods in a loose floorboard.

The SUMMONER was ugly as disease.
He couldn't fight his fingers' urge to squeeze
The boils that made a spoiled plum of his face.
Their aching made him constantly grimace.
One dream consumed him: that he'd find an ointment
To sap his lechery of disappointment.
Neither fish eyes, pig fat, nor white lead
Could make his burning face a shade less red.
Even his teeth were ugly—yellow, black.
His hair was flat and glistening with shellac,
Though flecked with dandruff, and his brows were balding.
His breath from nibbling garlic cloves was scalding.
Sucking a sack of wine, darker than blood,
He'd gallop madly, calling himself a stud,
Or stand an orator and coughing spew
A gibberish of Latin words he knew
From court when sentencing disturbed his snoozing.
And if you slapped a coin down for his boozing,
He'd tear your summons up and say the curse
Of excommunication left your purse.
He wore a garland tilted on his head
And, for a sword, he wore a loaf of bread.

Beside him was the PARDONER, his old chum,
Whose face was fresh and white as "angel's scum"
(That was the name the Student gave to it.
He also called it "Magdalene's pocked tit.")
Newly back, "Dee-rect from the Court of Rome"
Singing the latest hit, "The Pope's Coxcomb."
The Summoner sang harmony in bass
So earnestly that veins broke on his face.
The Pardoner's hair was yellow as "angel's piss"
(Another name the Student gave to this
"Salesman of Christendom," this "Pimp of God.")
The Miller slapped the tippling Student hard.
The Pardoner's hair was Rumpelstiltskin flax
Ending in curls kept stiff in place by wax.
He wore no hood, the very latest fad,

Only a skullcap made of Scottish plaid.
His look was slightly marred by rabbit eyes,
Bulging and pink, the left a bit clockwise.
His teeth were small, like a harmonica.
He wore the kerchief of Veronica
Around his neck: Christ's face a little knotted.
The Student said "Our Lord is now cravatted."
"Petals," the Pardoner said, "Forget-me-not."
"Pardons, Dee-rect from Rome!" he called, "Red-hot!"
His voice was thin—a goat's—and yet the Wife
Was taken with it, "Sweet," she said, "a fife."
His face was hairless as a baby's ass
And not from shaving which he said was crass.
I think he was a gelding or a mare.
But in his craft, from Berwyck down to Ware
There was no shill or pickpocket his peer.
Out of his bag he pulled the ox's ear
That in the manger heard Our Lord's first cry,
"A pillowcase, the Virgin's veil, draw nigh
And"—rolling up his sleeves—"here is a piece
Of Peter's sail and here is Jason's fleece.
Whoops, that's a joke," he said, "that was the sheep
Our Lord once touched, and if you want to peep
In here"—he spread his bag—"you'll see two feet
A Colosseum lion didn't eat."
He pulled a cross out made of Roman stones
And then a bottle stuffed with piglet bones.
The lawyer paid a ducat to embrace
Our Lady's veil, the Pardoner's pillowcase.
Even the Merchant paid to touch the ear.
The Student roared and spit a spray of beer.
The flock of them, their asses in the air,
Were kissing shit and bullocks' pubic hair.

After a while they pulled up chairs to dine
On pork chops, mutton, chicken breasts, and wine,
And, joking, poked their neighbors in the ribs

To laugh at punch-lines or their own ad-libs.
And when the light grew stronger in the grates
And the bones lay like relics in their plates,
Each rose, cocking his glass back like an archer
To toast the sun each step of its departure.
The Nun's Priest, slowly biting on a yawn,
Announced that they were all to rise at dawn
To make their dusty way to Becket's shrine,
And when I said their aim was also mine,
In scattered burst of drunken energy
They back-slapped me into their company.
Then with the wobbling Miller at their head,
They dragged their sacks of heavy legs to bed.

