

'T WAS A MITE BEFORE MIDNIGHT

(An Ode to Great Cranberry Isle)

[With apologies to '*Twas the Night Before Christmas*]

'T WAS A MITE before midnight, when all 'round the isle
Not a creature was stirring, nor had for a while.
And I was all comfortably stretched on my bed,
While visions of lobster-meat danced in my head.
As my dream spread before me a great seafood platter,
It occurred to my brain that some thing was the matter.
As I came to my senses, I uttered "Oh, no!"
For the chimes on the church were beginning to go.
Now twelve, for the chimes, ain't a minute too soon,
But the twelve that was meant was not midnight but noon.
And so, as I picked up the strains of a song,
I soon realized, with dread, that some thing had gone wrong.

So the carillon pealed, with its notes softly falling,
Playing *Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling*.
And while people craved sleep, with no wishes to roam,
The song pleaded that *Ye Who Are Weary Come Home*.
I just huddled in bed, for things couldn't get worse,
And my hope was that silence would follow one verse.
But as soon as one stanza had passed by my ears
The second began, thus fulfilling my fears.
I leaped from my bed and jumped into my pants,
And dashed down the stairs, in the midst of my trance.
Out the door, 'cross the lawn, in my bare feet I ran
Thinking: "Surely I must stop this thing... If I can?!"

Now, one song's not too bad, in the midst of the night,
Though it just might engender a slight bit of fright;
But wouldn't you know it! From out of the breezes
The carillon moved on to *Stand Up for Jesus*.
I started to wonder just how many tunes
Would emerge from the thing, 'fore my night was in ruins.
And I hoped against hope I could figure a way
To persuade the church carillon to wait until day.
I thought to myself, "On a night such as this
All the island must surely be roused from sleep's bliss";
When I noticed some house-lights go on, I was shaken,
Convinced that the whole isle would shortly awaken.

When Filmore sat up, with a jolt to his heart,
It appeared, for a time, that the fireworks would start.
"It's enough when this thing hits my six o'clock news,
But it's starting," said Filmore, "to shorten my snooze."
And just two houses down, voices started to ring
As Jacqueline and her hubby both started to sing;

For the sound of the music was not cause to weep,
They'd just let the songs roll, and be lulled-off to sleep.
But far down the road came the sounds of a car,
As the headlights approached, it pulled-up with a jar;
Then the door opened-up, and as quick as a flash
A blurred figure went by, in a 50-yard dash.

Now, I'll bet you can guess who that figure might be!
And the fact is, her name was apparent to me.
With her stride lengthened-out, and her steps neat and tidy,
Gaile Colby ran by, in a pretty blue nightie.
With firmly-set jaw, and eyes sharp and keen,
So intent upon stopping that errant machine,
She dashed towards the door, just one thing on her mind,
"Stop the music," she thought, "or my name is maligned."
"Gaile, I just pulled the plug," I spoke out at last,
For the music had stopped, and the crisis had passed.
So she turned on her heel, and as still as a mouse
Aimed the car up the road, to return to her house.

Well... The lights 'round the isle all blinked off, bye and bye;
I climbed back into bed with a laugh, and a sigh.
And I thought: "This whole thing isn't really so tragic,
For the bells, one can see, have their own kind of magic.
So oft, when we sleep, we seem burdened with care,
But the carillon says that the church is still there.
So that whether the songs play at midnight or noon,
We're reminded that God sends the sun and the moon."
In a few minutes time, I fell off into slumber,
Content that God's gifts come to us without number;
Now my mind hearkens back to that night, I must say,
When in God's time, not ours, the chimes started to play.

Arthur W. Forrester ("The Wayward Poet")
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