

Let it UT {a_n_d} Let it N

By Charles Rammelkamp

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... I find Charles (Horace) Rammelkamp almost poetical. He's informing, instructive and delightful in his writings... (I tend to assemble, excite, unfold, and refer to the instructions after disaster.) 'Let It Out and Let It In' is an engaging take on the Beatles then and now...as both "the greatest rock band" (with condolences to those lonely Stones fans), and "my nephew," a generation, or two, younger just might post-graduate with a degree overseas in a pool of liver. Next, 'Floats Like a Tallis' is all about an eighteenth century underweight "Heavyweight champ" who won by bobbing and weaving rather than rocking and socking, wearing pray-trunks pulled way above the belt. He wrote a book and had an audience with the King. And, just you let 'The Gardyloo Bucket' uproariously rain down on you: "They used to chuck all their keech / out of the tenement windows / and into the streets," MacGowan roared," (To maintain poet's spacing each poem is on its own page. Please scroll down.) HS*

Let It Out and Let It In

In the backseat of Brock's Rambler,
driving around Potawatomi Rapids after school,
sucking on our Kool cigarettes
(the Surgeon General's warning wouldn't appear
on packages for another year),
we'd all join in on the *na-na-na-na* chorus
on "Hey Jude" as it came out of the radio,
Dickie Anthony sitting shotgun,
tuning in CKLW, the Windsor, Canada station,
twisting the dial for clearer reception,
Art doing a bang-up imitation of Paul McCartney
riffing on the "Judy Judy Judy wah-hah-hah" part,
Brock slapping his Ringo Starr on the dashboard,
every one of us *there*.
In the moment.

Half a century later,
my nephew is going to Liverpool to study the Beatles.
(Who knew you could get a Master's degree in the Beatles?)
In a way I envy him —
what a lively year abroad! —
but how cool it was to be a teenager
when the greatest rock band was contemporary.
Na Na Na Na Na-na-na-na.

Floats Like a Tallis

The Heavyweight champ of England, 1792-95?

The Jewish kid, Danny Mendoza.

At 160 pounds, he beat bigger men
with defensive adroitness –
ducking, blocking, weaving –
revolutionary, then, for a prizefighter.

Mendoza's book, *The Art of Boxing*,
changed the sport forever.

Before, boxers simply swapped punches,
gladiators pounding one another
until one of them fell.

But Danny's new strategy,
called the Mendoza School (also the Jewish School),
based on a study of fencing moves,
took advantage of speed, agility,
an ability to feint, dodge, fake out,
transforming the sport
for a new generation of English and American fighters.

The Mohammed Ali of 18th Century Jews,

Mendoza even had an audience
with King George II of England,
the first Jew to have one: Imagine!

Danny Mendoza, descended from Marannos,
his grandfather a shochet,
the ritual slaughterer of the Jewish community,
meeting privately with the King of England.
Wow.

The Gardyloo Bucket

“They used to chuck all their keech
out of the tenement windows
and into the streets,” MacGowan roared,
amused by the thought.

“There was so much of the stuff,
the locals called it
‘the flowers of Edinburgh.’”
He roared again.

“Ever heard of a gardyloo bucket?
‘Gardyloo’ was a warning they shouted
before throwing the piss from the chamber pot
out of the top-floor windows into the street.”
MacGowan doubled over.
“A corruption of the French, ‘Gardez l’eau’ –
‘Watch out for the water!’
“Gardyloo!” He shouted. “Gardyloo!”

MacGowan slapped his leg,
plucked the tears from the corners of his eyes.
Andrea and I looked at each other
over the rims of our beer mugs,
each of us accusing the other,
He’s your friend, not mine.

THE POET SPEAKS: Poetry is part image, part story, part song and all memory. When your past comes calling, you listen! I also love language (well, that’s the song and image part, maybe); hence, the gardyloo bucket, an Edinburgh cry when tossing urine out the window and into the street, from the French – “prenez garde a l’eau” (beware of the water); the tallis, a prayer shawl. As somebody said, poetry slows you down, so you can engage with reality more thoughtfully. That’s why I read it, and why I write it. The movement you need is on your shoulder.

AUTHOR BIO: Charles Rammelkamp is Prose Editor for BrickHouse Books in Baltimore and Reviews Editor for *The Adirondack Review*. A chapbook of poems, *Jack Tar’s Lady Parts*, is available from Main Street Rag Publishing. Another poetry chapbook, *Me and Sal Paradise*, was recently published by FutureCycle Press. An e-chapbook has also recently been published online *Time Is on My Side (yes it is)* –

<http://poetscoop.org/manuscrip/Time%20Is%20on%20My%20Side%20FREE.pdf> Another

chapbook, *Mortal Coil*, is forthcoming from Clare Songbirds Publishing. Two full-length collections are forthcoming in 2020, *Catastroika*, from Apprentice House, and *Ugler Lee* from Kelsay Books.