

**Dr. Seuss Collection
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MSS 230**

**Lake Forest, ABA, Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, California
Reading Association**

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SMALL EPIC POEM, SIZE 3½ B

As everyone present undoubtedly knows...
due to a prenatal defect in my nose...
(which seems to get worser the longer it grows)
I am completely incapable of speaking in prose.

Especially so early in the morning.

Most all other great poets, such as Shelley and Keats,
had this identical problem when they stood on their feets.
When they tried to speak prose, they invariably blew it.
Not even the Great Geoffrey Chaucer could do it!

Especially so early in the morning.

There are so many things
I might say at this time.
But I can't.
Because not a damned one of them rhyme.

And how lucky you are that I have this defect!
Thank your stars I can't talk normal English correct.

If I could speak prose,
I've a real sneaky hunch
that I'd stand up here gassing
til quarter past lunch.

I'd start and sound off, using fine prosey clauses,
explaining innumerable indigent flawses
existant within the new Copyright lawses.
And then I'd continue, without any pauses,
and take up the matter of Hiff-a-lon Hooks
which are used by the guys who stitch backbones on books.

I'd discuss Russian Limericks, and why they don't write 'em.
And Eskimo children, and how to delight 'em.
And the Fingernail Problem, and why not to bite 'em.
And then Id go on ad in-fin-it-ty-tum.
I'd discuss Norman Mailer and why not to fight 'em.

Oh, if I could speak prose,
you would be in a fix.
I'd harangue ycu poor people
til quarter to six
about Watergate Memoirs
and Richard the Nix.
But I can't because Richard and poetry don't mix.

So...

why am I here on this 27th of May...?

That I can speak of.

I've come to convey

in a most humble way

the thanks of ALL AUTHORS to the ABA.

Were it not for our friends in the old ABA,

everyone of us authors, I vouch safe to say,

would be engaged in the Dry Cleaning business today.

And I'd never been here

this fine morning.

WILDER AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

by DR. SEUSS

Thank you very very much....

And if this were a Moving Picture Academy Award occasion
I would now proceed to thank everyone I know, without
whose help I never would have made it.

As a matter of fact, I think I shall:

For starters

I ought to give due thanks, I think,
to Mr. Higgins

who furnishes my indispensable India Ink.

And my thanks to Mr. Strathmore
who furnishes the paper that I ink up.

And to Mr. Smirnoff

who furnishes the vodka
that occasionally I drink up.

And my heart-felt thanks go thankfully
to my good friend, Mr. Wong

who made me the shirt I'm wearing
in his shop in West Hong Kong.

And I must give a special thank-you
to Mr. Aloysius Flynn
without whom my illustrious career
would never have started to begin.
He was the trolley car conductor
way back in 1911,
who has long since gone to his reward
up in trolley car heaven,
who used to trolley me every Saturday
in comfortable first class,
to the Carnegie Public Library
way back in Springfield, Mass.

Within that magnificent edifice
dwelt Miss Angelina Bodanker,
a lovely apprentice librarian
and I certainly have to thank her
for the infinite loving care
that, every Saturday, she took
in finding me the latest new Rover Boy Book.

Thanks to Mr. Flynn's transportation
and Miss Bodanker's erudition,
I soon was embarked upon
my literary mission
and my talents rapidly blossomed
into glorious fruition.

So...in Miss Bodanker's name,
I thank all of you
for this generous award.
If you librarians hadn't embarked me,
I would never have got aboard.

California Reading Association
Young Reader Medal Award
November 6, 1982

In thanking you for this honor, John, I gather that it behooves me to deliver some sort of a lecture or sermon on the subject of reading.

SO my sermon today will be in the form of a very brief Epic Poem. The title of this epic poem is:

Lamentation for Omar Khayyam Who Once Spoke in
Praise of Four Great Commodities.....A Book of
Verses Underneath the Bough, A Jug of Wine, A
Loaf of Bread and Thou.

The Epic Poem goes as follows:

In our present day civilization
many many dumb louts are inclined
to take the bread
and the jug
and the thou
into the bushes....
and leave the poor book out behind.

In his desert tent, Omar sits queasy
and he prays that some day and somehow
the book will in fact get back into the act
with the bread and the jug
and the thou.

And I am confident that the California Reading Association will continue to do all it can to hasten the process.

Dr. Seuss