

POETS' CORNER

JOURNEYMAN

He sits in the dressing room, nervous, uptight,
As he thinks of the battle ahead,
He's always like this on the eve of a fight,
Amalgam of excitement and dread;
Excitement and nervousness he understands,
Although dread's an intangible thing,
For he still has the strength and the skill in his hands
That will master most men in the ring,
But tonight he's the underdog, how will he cope
With this new, up and coming top-rated White Hope?

He'll be thirty next August, he's still in his prime,
But thirty for boxers is old,
Twelve years he's been fighting, and many's the time
That he's knocked an antagonist cold,
But tonight he's the underdog, and he's around
For one reason, one reason alone,
To test this new talent, get hit and go down,
to get hurt, writhe in agony, groan....
He's naught but a stepping stone for a young lion
With granite-like jaw and a gloveful of iron.

Comes a knock on the door, then he's out in the crowd
Who are raising their voices to sing,
But only a chorus of boos rings aloud
As the journeyman enters the ring.
A touch of the gloves, then the fights's underway,
He connects with a left, then a right,
He may be the underdog, but who's to say
He'll get played for a sucker tonight?
Bang! Wallop! How's that for a journeyman dope?
As out go the lights for another White Hope?

With the shock first round knockout a chorus of boos
Once again is assailing the ring,
But the journeyman smiles as he says his adieus
For the jeers aren't directed at him.
He hangs up his gloves but this time it's for good,
One big pay day, now he can retire,
Buy an old country cottage, go hike in the wood,
go fish and fulfill his desire:
His desire for a wife, and some kids of his own,
Who will all take for granted what he's never known:

A good education, a nine-to-five job
In business, computers or science,
His sons will be learned, won't run with the mob,
Or spit on the law in defiance.
They'll grow up and live in the wide open spaces
Instead of some ghetto or slum,
They'll be happy, fulfilled, and they'll have kindly faces,
Will all of his daughters and sons.

That's the dream and desire that the journeyman has,
And a dream and desire that will now come to pass,
For he's had his last fight, he's not hanging around
Like Joe Louis or Ali, or some other clown,
To get punch drunk and used by a much younger man
As a stepping stone has-been, he'll quit while he can,
For the World is his oyster, he's no also-ran,
It's no whimpers for him, he'll go out with a bang!

Al Boran

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