

TEN RIDDLE-POEMS

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The answers to the following ten riddles are not given in Answers and Solutions. Anyone wishing to verify a prospective answer should communicate directly with me (P.O. Box 120, New York NY 10012), enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope. I request that the prospective answer be accompanied by a signed statement that no answers will be disclosed or published. I offer a cash reward of ten dollars to the first person who mails me the correct answers to any seven of the ten riddles.

1 The French Professor's Riddle

I resemble a diamond that slips into debt
As I face to the front of my Oise faculty.
To arrange all the vowels in a singular set
Is my self-centered jest, as I end cunningly.

2 Three forks, one zigzag, and a winding road
lead on your cosmic journey toward the truth's abode.
Three segments, well-connected - yet a fork ends each;
place all three in alignment - then your Goal's in reach!

3 The CAT and the CANARY
had menus quite contrary.
We know what the canary ATE:
TEN pecks of birdseed heaped its plate -
but when the cat bit off its HEAD,
a CHAIN hung dangling there instead!
This made the feline change its MIND,
Since NARY a clue was left behind.

4 Onto a tor I climb and stand
surveying a mighty northern land
that faces a vast, majestic lake
no tempest can roil, no riot can shake.
A Brave who rode at a Masked Man's pace
once chose my site as his meeting place,
but couched it behind a bull's disguise:
Now conjure my name, and claim the prize!

5 From friendly and sheltering, I become,
 after some scrambling, ay, a slum
 whose outskirts comprise, from first to last
 a substance to shrink from, underpassed.
 Some strange Greek M, that mauls a "Y",
 inhabits my precincts on the sly,
 and gamblers would rather lay a sum
 than hazard my ignominium.
 In Biblical times, I hid Saint Paul,
 And David addressed me as "my Saul,"
 but lately, what tends to make me sick
 is being described as "lunatic."

6 Though Ten Mercies, long pent,
 lie encased in cement,
 you can help set them free
 by recentering me.

As I slump toward the ground,
 feeling slightly unwound,
 not an hundred Tree Men
 could erect me again.

Those who cross me soon find
 recent meals called to mind,
 since despite a Mere Cent,
 I extrude excrement.

Once my secret's revealed,
 and Teen Creams stand congealed,
 nascent meercats make merry
 round my Fern cemetary.

7 A muddy river-bottom, and four snakes crawl through it;
 Four reeds grow there as well, since five might overdo it;
 both pairs of snakes lie coupling, which binds them close and tight -
 so if you're squeamish, squint--those snakes could screw all night!
 Two bailing-pots on sticks stand upright in the mud,
 as if left over from some prehistoric flood,
 while one McDonald's Arch bends double on parade:
 Now guess my name, and end this puerile escapade!

8 There's some scum-rot in me,
 and its mold-crust breaks free,
 when moist curls tumble down
 to bewreath my smut crown.

As I mouth a sot crumb,
 or imbibe my Scot rum,
 one sly hand, de bon aire,
 strums Old Scratch in its lair!

Human progress, they say,
 is just mouse-creaks away--
 so, to make most curs scat,
 you must crosstrain your cat!

9 Hole In One

I belong to no club,
 and there's no club in me -
 just one ball that went flub
 when it fell off its tee,
 as the fairways were swept
 by a wind from the south,
 and my drive, maladept,
 plugged a bunker's fat mouth.

To the right of that tee
 stands the half-rounded cup
 that no putt's errancy
 can turn down nor fill up -
 since all strokes seem to veer
 toward two wickets at right
 that some crass croqueteer
 had set up in the night.

On the ball's leftmost side
 an arcane figure stands,
 torso swollen with pride,
 and a club in its hands--
 He attempts to play through,
 but before he can swing,
 stumbles backward onto
 an absurd horseshoe-ring!

To the left of this crescent
 a sly snake-in-the-grass
 makes the course seem less pleasant
 with its python-impasse--
 but when eyeballed encore
 that mock-serpentine pose
 is revealed as no more
 than a squiggle of hose!

If you've played on this far,
 you can still win the game
 through one stroke so bizarre
 it will heighten your fame:
 Just one piece of equipment
 yet remains to be found,
 that arrives in no shipment
 via air, sea, or ground...

It is taken in stride
 by each golfer on tour,
 but hangs flaccid beside
 caddy-bags less obscure...
 It evokes more guffaws
 than a schoolroom of scolds,
 but enshrines the true cause
 every sportsman upholds.

- 10 I sate a cryptic verse with eavesdrop aberrations:
 SWEET SENSATE SAVIOR, HAIL assertions therewithin
 that tease, but still aver, my parched expostulations:
No Zendavesta seer need serve at Sonia's Inn!