A JOURNEY INTO
JUSTICE

IS A "JUST SOCIETY" WITHIN OUR LIFETIME POSSIBLE IN CANADA?

JUST HOW SERIOUS IS THE PROBLEM OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE?

IS THE LAW A SYSTEM OF RULES OR IS IT MORE ?

SHOULD JUDGES AND LAWYERS EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS ?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CULTURAL MINORITY DOMINATES THE LEGAL PROFESSION?

HOW TO LIVE THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM OF JUSTICE IN OUR TIME!

WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BY
Dugald E. Christie

PREFACE

This is a true story, stranger to me than any fiction, of a journey I made in the summer of 1998 by bicycle from Vancouver to the steps of the Supreme Court of Canada courthouse in Ottawa. It is also about another journey, one inside my head, a journey into Justice. For that reason it is intensely personal. It contains poetry which I never intended to publish and wrote along the way.

The destination of my journey I wrote out long ago and put in my wallet. I read and re-read it daily :

By the end of the year 2000 British Columbia will be the only place in the world that promises access to justice within a year at reasonable cost. That means a litigant or accused has a right to a trial in accordance with the glorious traditions of out heritage within one year of commencement of proceedings and be given the same level of justice regardless of income.

I would like to thank all the friends including lawyers, judges and colleagues who have supported me in my journey and, at risk of offending those I have left out, I would like to specifically thank Major Reader of the Salvation Army, Doug Page, Ian Campbell, Doug Robertson President of the B.C. Bar Association, Barry and Jack Hyman and Jerry Winkel.

Above all I would like to thank my children for their love, understanding , sacrifice and wholehearted support for all this seeming craziness of their old dad . Then there is the woman behind it all, the woman without whose fire, insight and love my journey would never have begun, Karen: I have no words that can express my appreciation!

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Can We Ever Reform the Law?

Can we ever reform the law?
This journey is dauntingly huge!
Can I ever cross those mountains?
Why leave my safe refuge?

To think I can climb a mountain
Because I can climb a hill
Is to forget that my aging body
Will not always obey my will!

It is all very well to say
"I shall cross this land by bike
With faith it will be play"
Were it not for limbs on strike.

My chemistry is terribly delicate;
My knees make an audible noise;
My butt is in such agony!
Old men can not be boys!

And it is all very well to say
"We can reform our blighted laws
Faith is the only way"
Were it not for man's sad flaws.

For to change the appointment of judges
And to speed a lawyer's case
Is to dream that greed and grudges
Can be cleansed from the human race!

I confess that my body in spasm
When my body went totally on strike
Has snuffed out all enthusiasm
For this crazy crusading hike!

What I really need is salt
To keep body and mind in tone.
I must remember that fatal fault
Or again have cause to groan!

THE THIRD DAY

CHAPTER 6.

BUDDY LEE'S CLAIM IN THE B.C. SUPREME COURT.

After I resigned as a practicing lawyer I sold my practice and took with me certain clients, including Buddy Lee, who for lack of funds could not obtain other counsel. The Law Society rules allowed me to act as long as I did not take a fee.

We had lost the Federal Court appeal to do with Buddy's dismissal but there remained his claim in the Supreme Court of British Columbia for damages for his boyhood accident. Soon after I resigned came a bombshell! The defendant's lawyers brought an application for "Summary Trial" to prevent Buddy from having a trial where he could give evidence personally before a judge.

It is necessary to give some background on the "Summary Trial". It is a B.C. procedural short-cut that does not exist anywhere else in the Commonwealth or the United States. In B.C. a party to a civil law suit can on two weeks' notice require the other side to write down all its relevant evidence and submit to a "Summary Trial". Essentially the procedure turns the trial into a chambers application. The judge can render judgement without hearing the evidence ! He or she has the discretion to order a proper trial. In my experience with enough resources, determination and experience counsel can usually obtain an order for a proper trial. However, a person of slender means and with no lawyer or alternatively an underfunded lawyer who does not have the resources to prepare the required affidavits and materials is at a tremendous disadvantage.

The rule first came into effect in 1983 and in 1989 was expanded so that a summary trial could be held even though one party had filed a jury notice. In effect the rule then abolished both the right to trial as we have known it and also the right to jury in civil cases.

Over the last two years use of the" Summary Trial" has been greatly expanded to assaults, motor vehicle mishaps and many other kinds of claims. The procedure can be used even if there is a conflict in evidence. A party or witness must sit in the back of the courtroom and hear the judge pronounce that his or her evidence is not believable though he or she has not been allowed to say one word of evidence to the judge. According to two senior administrative judges more than half the civil trials in the Province are now held under the summary trial procedure.

The most extraordinary thing about the B.C. "Summary Trial" is that although it is a radical departure from the traditions of the common law in effect everywhere else in the world there has been no debate on it in either the press or Parliament. Most ordinary people are alarmed and horrified to discover the law has been so profoundly changed. They are not aware that here they can be deprived of the right to give evidence in person at a trial before a judge. Free speech in British Columbia has been

struck down in the forum that is most critical to the individual, the civil trial! Few are aware of that fact.

The twin rights to trial and to a jury are two pillars of our democratic heritage. With respect to the right to a jury trial, the notice that the B.C. Supreme Court requires be sent out to every civil law juror puts it this way:

> "The right to a trial by a jury of one's peers is a cornerstone of our democratic society and is one of its oldest institutions. It exists to protect individual rights and to involve the community in the administration of justice."

According to the new Summary Trial rule that right no longer exists!

I have opposed the procedure since its inception and over the last twelve years have fought approximately fifteen applications for Summary Trials. In all of these applications either the opposing side or the chambers judge relented and agreed to a conventional trial when they realized the pandora's box of constitutional issues that awaited them if they persevered in trying to prevent my clients from speaking at trial. I wanted to get the constitutional issues into the Court of Appeal but that could not be done because every time we succeeded in obtaining a conventional trial in thzat particular case. That result was due to the inherent constitutional weakness of the Summary Trial rule and the unwillingness of judges to unnecessarily explore the issue.

In 1987 after twelve years of fighting the validity of the "summary trial" and never having lost a case to take to a panel of the Court of Appeal I came across something that appeared to be manna from heaven! John Silbernagel, a man who was not a client, came to me with an action he had started for damages for an assault on him. The defendant had applied for Summary Trial. John Silbernagel was indignant that his right to give evidence orally was to be taken away. I suspected that if I took the case into chambers for him our application would succeed for the usual reasons. The judge would take one look at the complicated constitutional issues and to avoid deciding them would grant a traditional trial. Silbernagel would win but once again I would be thwarted and would not be able to get the matter before the Court of Appeal!

However, John Silbernagel, who was a stevedore, thought he was well able to represent himself and having a somewhat combative nature was looking forward to presenting an argument of his own making. In summary, his thesis was that there is a right to a jury because all judges can not be trusted and are fundamentally biased! I knew that argument was doomed and would be like a red flag to a bull. No B.C. Supreme Court judge would resist the urge to dismiss his motion no matter what other good alternative arguments he might have. I therefore gave him a summary of my various constitutional arguments against summary trial. My strategy was that he would lose in the B.C. Supreme Court and then he would ask me to act for him on appeal. At last I would be able to get the vital issue up to the fourth floor of the court house to the

full Court of Appeal!

Unfortunately the strategy worked at first but then backfired. John Silbernagel presented the summary of my arguments along with his own beloved argument that all judges are biased. A Supreme Court Justice dismissed all Silbernagel's submissions including mine using quite scurrilous language and without giving any detailed reasons. So far the strategy worked. The issue of the right to trial could at last be addressed before the Court of Appeal. However, John Silbernagel, now flushed with the spirit of battle, decided to take his cause to the Court of Appeal without my acting for him! This development spelled disaster. I knew that even if he dropped the argument of bias the Attorney General's counsel would make rings around him. He did not have the legal training or experience to fit together properly the various necessary pieces of my legal arguments. If he paraded those arguments in whatever form before the Court of Appeal and lost, I would be prevented from using the same arguments again . Once a principle is decided in the Court of Appeal it is very difficult to overcome that decision with our present rules of binding precedent.

It so happened that at that time I managed to get another Summary Trial challenge (in another case) to the Court of Appeal. Unfortunately Silbernagel's case was ahead of mine. I tried to prevent him from losing and marching us all to doom. I applied to consolidate our appeal with his. In that way Silbernagel could present his case and I would be able to speak to the same issues before the same panel of judges. Unfortunately, Silbernagel had his appeal set for hearing a few months away and if the two appeals were consolidated extra time would be required and another date would have to be set for the consolidated appeal. Silbernagel did not want to be delayed. The Attorney General's counsel, a skillful tactician, clearly did not want the legal issues properly argued and was delighted at the prospect of my constitutional arguments being presented to the Court of Appeal like so much hash-brown by a stevedore. She made an impassioned plea to the court that delay should be avoided at all cost and that Mr. Silbernagel should have his day in court as soon as possible. Mr. Justice Hollinrake agreed and directed that Silbernagel's appeal proceed without counsel and without my submissions.

When the day for the Silbernagel appeal came I had to watch from the back of the court room while John Silbernagel expounded on the errors of the trial judge. He included some of the materials I had earlier given him but was unaware of the gaping holes and inconsistencies in his arguments. He argued human rights principles where they simply do not apply! Then he asserted a right to jury in civil cases going back to Magna Carta but I knew and the Court of Appeal judges knew that simply was not true! He was misstating and overstating his case. In a short judgement the court unanimously agreed that there was no merit whatsoever to Mr. Silbernagel's appeal and they dismissed it with costs. Just to make matters ultimately worse Silbernagel then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada where he received precisely the same curt treatment.

Such was the situation when Buddy Lee's case came on for hearing by summary trial. I knew that if Buddy had a jury trial he would make a big impression on

a jury and we would likely win. On a summary trial without oral evidence and without a jury the scales were tilted against him. Nor could we afford all the doctors' affidavits and transcripts that would be required at a summary trial in addition to the normal trial preparation.

In the Court of Appeal the defendant's counsel was cooperative and we managed to get the issue of the validity of the summary trial before the court by agreement. The Attorney General's counsel defended the validity of the Summary Trial rule. As expected she maintained that the court had already heard the issues in Silbernagel and that there was no point in re-litigating matters that the court had previously decided. The fact that the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the Silbernagel decision further assisted her in her argument.

On the Application for 'Leave to appeal" I tried to distinguish the Silbernagel case but the presiding judge would have none of it. The fact that issues in the Silbernagel case had been presented by a stevedore who was clearly out of his depth was considered to be immaterial! As so often happens in our courts common sense was ignored in deference to "established law".

I then tried to present a new argument to do with the Court Rules Act. It seemed to me a very compelling argument and had the great advantage of not having been mentioned in the Silbernagel case. However, on leave applications the judge can limit the length of oral submissions. The judge asked me how long it would take me to make my submissions on the point. I said "seven minutes". His lordship allowed me three. I knew I would not even get to the first base of my argument in three minutes so I had to say that I was afraid I could not do it in three. However, I asked that I be allowed to proceed in view of the importance of the issues at stake. The judge stuck to his guns and would not allow more than three minutes. I had to sit down without being able to make my key point. To argue with a judge after his ruling is not protocol. Our motion was then dismissed by Mr. Justice Hollinrake.

I then attempted to appeal his decision to a three judge panel. However, the court registry would not accept the appeal motion unless Buddy Lee posted a fee of $208.00. Despite strenuous letters to the registry and the Chief Justice the court would not change its position though fortunately it did later. At the time it seemed as if we had finally met a brick wall . Buddy was prevented from proceeding with his appeal for lack of money to pay court fees!

It was at this most frustrating point that I departed for Ottawa on my bicycle. I contented myself by attaching the Notice of Appeal which the registry refused to accept without a fee to the pillar outside the court house along with an open letter to the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal. (Copies of those documents appear at the end of this chapter.) I suggested Buddy visit the court house regularly while I was away and re-fasten the notice on the pillar but on no account was he to challenge the court house sheriff's authority. Subsequently when I was away, it was taken down and he was told by the sheriff not to replace it. Being the law abiding soul that he is, he complied.

July 15, 1998

The Honourable Allan McEachern

Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal

May it please your Lordship,

RE: Buddy Lip Ying Lee vs. Buck Ying Lee (CA 024686)

As you may know, I have represented Mr. Buddy Lee, appellant, in the above matter. I am sending you this letter to give notice that he desires to appeal the decision of Mr. Justice Hollinrake made July 7, 1998 denying Mr. Lee the right to speak at his own trial and denying him the right to a jury at that trial.

It is submitted that the underlying issue on the appeal itself is the effect of Rule 18A, a rule drafted (in part), introduced, championed (in official memoranda) and then given generous interpretation (in Inspiration Management) by yourself. The submissions which Hollinrake J. refused (for lack of time) to hear are charges that Rule 18A is invalid because it purports to abolish both the right to trial and the right to jury trial without the necessary approval of the legislature. That is by no means the only grounds of appeal but I take the liberty of enclosing a brief summary of those submissions as they relate to jury trials as Appendix A to this letter.

Unfortunately these matters cannot be placed before a three judge panel of your court because there is a rule which mitigates against the interest of the very poor and which I am told by your court registry is uniform and inflexible in application. Indigent persons who are denied permission to proceed by a Court of Appeal Chambers Judge are not allowed to appeal unless they pay the court fee of $208. The fact that they are indigent and therefore unable to pay that fee is apparently considered immaterial.

Therefore the rules of your court as interpreted by its justices and officials do not permit Mr. Buddy Lee (who was found by Mr. Justice Hollinrake to be truly indigent) to place the aforementioned matters of the right to a jury trial before the Court of Appeal.

I do not wish to tire you with unnecessary material but there is another matter which at first glance has no bearing on the present matter but which I think is relevant. In a completely separate action in the Federal Court, Mr. Buddy Lee claimed that he was dismissed after five years working without mishap as a stevedore by reason of his employer's prejudice arising from his

handicap. He alleges that his employer's servants repeatedly referred to him as a "misfit" or a "fuckup". After approximately thirteen years of litigation, Federal Court Judge Muldoon found that the employer had indeed referred to handicapped persons in general and Mr. Buddy Lee in particular as a "misfit." However, he then ruled that disabled persons in general and Mr. Buddy Lee in particular are correctly described as "misfits." On appeal objection was taken to that conclusion but both the Federal Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada declined the appeal.

It was for that reason that after thirty years of practice, I felt obliged December 30, 1997 to resign as an officer of the court and as a practising lawyer. It seemed to me that the words of Muldoon J. exemplified the contemptuous attitude of our courts to the handicapped and the very poor.

I will not labour you with the other complaints that I have, all to much the same effect that the law unfairly discriminates against the poor and the handicapped. Suffice it to say that I am setting forth on my bicycle to travel to Ottawa with the intent of (a) burning my robes on the steps of the Supreme Court of Canada, (b) presenting a petition on behalf of the poor to the Chief Justice, the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister, and (c) raising funds for Mr. Lee to further his cause and in particular raise the $208 required by your court to appeal the decision of Hollinrake J.A.

If I am successful in raising the aforementioned sum, I expect Mr. Lee will apply (probably in September) for an extension of time within which to appeal and pay the requisite filing fee.

In the meantime Mr. Lee intends to post this open letter and attached unfiled application to vary to the front of the courthouse building. In this way, a public record of his position (which has been denied) will be maintained. Mr. Lee will visit the courthouse daily and if the sign is taken down will replace it. However, as I explained to the commissioner at the entrance to the courthouse, Mr. Lee is law- abiding and if he is told by a representative of the court or the police to remove this notice he will do so.

These documents are to be appended to a pillar in front of the entrance and not the glass. We respectfully-submit that given the above circumstances they be permitted to remain.

Yours truly

Dugald E. Christie

APPENDIX A

Summary of Grounds of Appeal which Mr. Justice Hollinrake declined to hear.

(1) Parliament has never intended to abolish the right to a jury trial, a right existing in every other common law jurisdiction of the world. Section 7 of the 1989 Court Rules Act which the Crown claims was an act of Parliament validating the extinction of the right to jury in civil cases was moved and debated by Parliament without the knowledge of the intended effect of the act. At the very same time, as Parliament considered the legislation, Rule 18A was being amended on the instructions of the Attorney General to remove the right to jury. In other words, Parliament was deceived and the rules it purportedly validated were changed after debate and before the Act came into effect.

(2) The forgoing is evident from the B.C. Gazette April 18, 1989 (p.89), July 24, 1990 (p.440), September 4, 1990 (p.463), and B.C. Hansard May 9, 1989 (p.6673), May 31, 1989 (pp.7106-7107) and June 5, 1989 (pp.7205-7207).

(3) That matter is not simply a matter of political or historical interest but has a legal bearing on whether Parliament's intention was to preserve or abolish the right to jury trials as set forth in Section 17 of the Supreme Court Act and elsewhere.

(4) Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that there is a time honoured tradition ofcommon law courts throughout the world that actions, such as that of Mr. Lee, which are wellsuited to a jury be heard by a jury. It is further submitted that that tradition not be suspended without the consent of Parliament.

It is astonishing to me that we should allow the right to trial and the right to give evidence in person to be nibbled to death without a word while a National debate rages on the rights of a pedophile to possess pictures of children being sodomized. We truly "strain on a gnat and swallow a camel "!

The dimension of our error is enlarged when we examine the history of the common law trial. It was evolved over the centuries to prevent all kinds of unfairness. It gave the claimant the right to speak first and in his own words. It gave both parties the right to test the adverse witnesse's veracity by cross- examination in front of a judge, the right to subpoena unwilling witnesses, the right to have a reasonable time within which to prepare for trial, the practical ability to appear without counsel and still have a reasonable chance of winning and a host of other rights. All the hitherto sacred rights are set aside in the bold social experiment of rule 18A! We have not simply allowed error to creep into the law. We have betrayed our heritage, one that has brought us closer to true democracy and personal freedom than any other system yet conceived!

From the point of view of a practicing lawyer to express such sentiments would only alienate the Court of Appeal ! From the lawyer's more practical point of view fighting a case in the Court of Appeal is a little like playing a chess game. Moral arguments carry as little weight as popular opinion. It is the **practical consideration** that are the most telling in the Court of Appeal, more so than anything else including the law itself. It is all very well to argue that the law requires a certain result. However, to push a Court of Appeal judge into deciding in a way he or she does not think is practical is usually as useless as pushing string.

In my view, none of the Court of Appeal judges want to invalidate the Summary Trial at this stage. They see too many practical difficulties. The crying need to make proceedings

faster gave birth to the Summary Trial. That need is now greater than ever before. Judges are under the impression that if the Summary Trial is abolished, the court trial list will be inundated and we will never catch up. I suspect a proper study would show that that is not so. In any event the real answer is to reform the court's time-consuming and archaic procedures so as to shorten proceedings. That is the correct approach and not to throw the baby out with the bathtub and abolish the right to trial!.

Another reason why judges support the "summary trial" is that they like things neat and tidy. It is nice to have all the evidence neatly bundled into affidavits, readily tabbed and referenced to written submissions. The alternative, the traditional trial, requires the judge to scrupulously take notes and hear days of boring oral evidence. The fact that the "evidence" in most Summary Trials consists of words chosen by a lawyer is lost on most judges. They are more interested in intriguing points of law than enduring hours of boring oral evidence to determine what really happened.

Such practical considerations have until recently endeared the summary trial to judges. However, the deluge of summary trial applications in recent months is beginning to worry some judges and lawyers. It is obvious that some of these applications have little chance of success and are made for the purpose of flushing out information, requiring the respondent to commit his or her position to paper or exhaust it into surrender or settlement. The tide is beginning to change. Some trial judges are having doubts. Little by little the public will become aware of the loss of the right to speak in court and there may be embarrassing questions. Some our judges are sensitive to public opinion. As time slips by those judges who drafted Rule 18A and have a vested personal interest in its preservation will retire.

There is another strategic consideration. A powerful committee of judges and lawyers is working towards shortening procedures for traditional trials. Some of its recommendations are already law. If these reforms work, the trial list may shorten to the point that the Summary Trial procedure will seem to some judges less necessary. It is therefore a reasonable hope that the Court of Appeal may, at least to some extent, be prepared to look again at the validity of the Summary Trial in the future.

I sometimes submit poems to judges with my submissions. It is possible to make a point with a poem that otherwise might be too confrontational. The following is a piece which I left with the Court of Appeal before leaving for Ottawa. It concerns Summary Trials and the underlying changes in attitude that have occurred in our courts since the Summary Trial rule was introduced. It presents my overall picture of developments in the law in its true human perspective.

HEARTS OF STONE IN A COURT OF STEEL

It used to be that judges smiled seldom on the bench ,yet underneath showed compassion for the poor and oppressed. Now judges smile and exude compassion but underneath they have so cut themselves off from the real world that they question whether the "poor" or "oppressed" exist. They acquit criminals for obscure "human rights" understood only to themselves, split meaningless hairs and now will not even hear the voices of the poor and oppressed. The change in heart is manifested by the pictures of prominent retired judges hung in the hall on the third floor of the Vancouver

Court House. Until about fifteen years ago they were grim and unsmiling. The last few are smiling. The brave new age of smiles from judges with great logical brains but no heart was heralded in 1984 by Mr. Justice Meredith. He pronounced that rights of parties to give oral evidence at trial are: "relics of a bygone age".

At about the same time the Court House was moved from the old building constructed of stone to the new one across the road which under its outward fascia is constructed of steel.

It was once said of the navy that " men of steel used to sail ships of wood but now men of wood sail ships of steel!" It can be said today: "Judges with hearts of steel used to sit in a courthouse of stone but now judges with hearts of stone sit in a courthouse of steel.

"From a bygone age,
Is the right to speak at trial".
I must contain my rage:
Such words defile!

With a heart of stone
In a court built of steel
A judge reads alone
And ignores what is real!

If a witness with a tear
Says "I have a right to be heard?"
His enemy can sneer
"Trials are absurd!"

"Trials are too long
And hard to predict.
Trials are wrong;
Here you are licked!"

A Judge of old
In that picture on the wall
Is above this race,
A man standing tall.

This man of steel
In his courthouse of stone
Would not stoop to this deal
Keeping people from his throne!

The face on the wall
Has cause to not smile.
He deplores from his hall
This court process of guile.

Was it in a "bygone age"
That men dared to be right?
Are judges still sage
Or do they fear to fight?

Judges listened and heard
To the rich and the needy.
Their hearts could be stirred
Yet in calm they were speedy.

In this age of sciences
We are desperately wed
To time saving appliances
Yet in haste we are dead!

In a headlong rush
We decide paper is faster.
People stammer and blush
Consuming time, our true master!

But there is yet hope
For our speeding generation.
If we hang by a rope
This kangaroo abomination!

There is in the Charter
Freedom for us slaves.
Our fathers were smarter:
May they rule from their graves!

May our ancient constitution
Magna Carta and all
Make trials an institution
Too sacred to fall.

If trials could be heard
Before memories fade
Justice would be served
And the law obeyed.

And if we again can dare
To call on the Lord
On that day we will care
And carry his sword.

There is only one way
Such miracles will come:
While alive, in our day
We must repent what we have done!

Then with hearts of pure steel,
And principles set in stone,
We lawyers can feel
And as humans be known.

It is tempting to describe the plight of Buddy Lee solely in terms of principles and ideas, freedom of speech, the right to a jury and the such. However, there is another whole aspect to his story of access to justice that has little to do with such principles. Personalities are often the key. An impossible and unjust law can be rendered just by a kindly judge. An unfair procedural rule can be cruel in the hands of an unthinking officer of the court but another will find a way around it. These observations apply to

court clerks as much as to judges.

A case in point was Buddy Lee's application to appeal. The single appeal court judge refused our application but he did agree that Buddy was indigent. Indigent litigants do not normally have to pay court fees. When I tried to appeal his decision a court clerk refused to accept our application without a fee of $208.00 notwithstanding Buddy had been found indigent by the court and could not afford the fees. As events turned out the clerk had made a mistake which eventually was corrected but that mistake delayed us over six months and required much sacrifice. There was another clerk who had previously worked at the same Court of Appeal wicket who would never have made such a mistake. I knew her, had met her husband and had written the following poem about her a couple of years previously:

A BEACON OF JUSTICE.

A tall black lady works as a filing clerk in the Court Registry. She has a patience and radiance that calms and guides the most cantankerous litigants. I discovered her secret when I saw her leaning on the arm of her tall white husband .

Even unfair laws can be interpreted with justice by such loving souls as she!

She shines bright and black
Like ivory snow.
What is her knack
Of keeping that glow?

Wed to a lighthouse
Tall and white;
Growing with the right spouse:
Is the key to her light!

He, an awesome beacon,
Serene with power
Cannot weaken
Powered by his flower.

The lighthouse keeper
Has her own domain.
She is far, far deeper
Than what she would feign!

Mahogany to the roots,
To the core of her brain,
Black as your boots,
There's no flaw to her grain.

A lighthouse blossom
With perfume strong,
Even her Corpus Callosum
Knows right from wrong.

The world is her oyster,
Not merely her pearl,
Though her eyes may be moister
When with him, his girl.

It is not just her tower
That she cares for and scrubs!
To the shipwrecked in her power
She saves, never snubs.

Those who come close,
Appealing to her court
Must prepare for a dose
Of tough love of her sort.

A powerful lady
She guards this court.
To someone shady
She is polite but short!

In the day, her work
Is protecting lost souls.
Cruel reefs there lurk:
Only she knows their holes!

She makes all the difference
To a despairing soul,
Who expecting indifference,
Is coaxed nearer his goal.

With exacting care
She guards against mistakes.
Only lovers so dare
Feel stranger's high stakes!

If all were like her
There would be no need for courts.
Such faces deter
Us from reefs to ports!

Black as the night
Her radiant face
Sends our light,
A beacon of grace.