

CARMEN

Duncan McIntyre

**Carmen works for some Spanish British Tobacco
Co and like them she has links to organised crime
singing quintets with contrabandits and playing
mezzo with, well, every dick and harry really**

**so when she lines up a season with a soldier
who's both the handsome tenor and such a doughcock
that every fan can see he's Sergeant Tedium,
how they cheer when she dumps him for the baritone**

**Escamillo, triumphantly drunk on bull's blood,
who's pissed to find that some incompetent peanut,
some amateur José, has carved on his trophy
a parody of his exquisite butcher's skills.**

GALOIS

Duncan McIntyre

Evariste Galois - a shock to hear his name
this afternoon. Someone was saying
Liouville has published his theorems, and proclaims
his genius - the same song playing
that they played those fourteen years ago,
in 1832. I'm still slow
to forgive him for involving Stephanie,
the way he dragged her into his lunacy,
his suicide. Yet it has its pain,
I admit, to revisit his memory -
mathematician, republican; not quite sane.

Back then we all praised the republican game;
such were the times. It was dismaying
to watch the bourgeoisie worming to reclaim
the revolution; and displaying
rage and fervour more than we could show
was Evariste's gift, a roaring blow
in the heave and swirl of some strident rally
of the Friends of the People Society,
and marked by the police on our campaigns
as a troublemaker, sometimes foolhardy -
republican, patriot; perhaps insane.

**I often met him. Uncertainty would frame
his social smiles and sneers, betraying
some inner dislocation; and he became
remarkable for rudeness, straying
off the cliff of manners, in shadows
that darkened when his father died, so
much he lived in him. And yet how fluently
he called from algebra the deeper beauty
to belie the scribbles that remain
as his sketchy and untidy legacy -
patriot, and prodigy; and half insane.**

**Yes, he'd spent a year in gaol - no one to blame
but himself - and so poor that paying
for food, let alone a roof, a candle-flame,
was frequently beyond him. Weighing
his father's death in, I almost know
the paths his failures forced him to go,
why he imagined Stephanie would pity
and love him; and when she rebuffed him gently,
why his loaded head could not refrain
from duelling in her name from fantasy -
prodigy and republican; and insane.**

**Friends, you already know the last tragedy -
poor d'Herbinville goaded into butchery,
and Stephanie grotesquely defamed,
and Evariste shot in the gut. At twenty
dead - still revolutionary; and still insane.**