

The Ræen

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Once upon a midnight dreary,
as I labored, weak and weary,
Over a battered Model 15
purchased at the surplus store -
While I nodded, nearly napping,
suddenly there came a tapping
Of the armature a-rapping, rapping
at the magnet's core.

"This receiver noise," I muttered,
"pulsing in my magnet's core -
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remembered
it was in the bleak December;
And the main shaft's driven member
lay in fragments on the floor.
RTTY contest was tomorrow;
vainly had I sought to borrow
From this junk surcease of sorrow,
sorrow for my sweepstake score -
Working rare and radiant stations
to upgrade my sweepstake score -
Zeroed here for evermore.

Now unto my TU turning,
all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping
somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely,
that is signal at my crystal lattice;
Let me see, then, what threat is,
and this mystery explore -
Plug the speaker in a moment
and this mystery explore; -
 'Tis the RTTY I adore!"

Inserted one connector,
pow'ring up the cross inspector.
There appeared a tape-sent signal
which did make my heartbeat soar.
Not the least QRM frayed it,
not one moment stopped or stayed it;
Pausing just for car ret / line feed,
it ran RYs by the score -
Like a little kitten purring,
running RYs by the score.
 My trained ears these sounds adore.

Then the cross on scope face twitching
set my finger tips to itching
To attempt to print the characters
this warbling held in store.
"Now thy works are oiled and greasy,
to print this should be quite easy.
Now upon that paper sleazy
print the RYs I adore.
On that yellow surplus paper
type the RYs I adore!"
Typed the printer, "464".

Much I marveled this ungainly
old machine to type so plainly,
Though the alternating figures
quite a hint of trouble bore,
For we cannot help agreeing
that the typebar carriage being
shifted upwards, I was seeing
in rotation 6 and 4 -
The upper case of RY
alternating 6 and 4.
Only this and nothing more.

But the carriage, sitting lonely
on the greasy rails, typed only
These two numbers, which was all
the vying typebars did outpour,
Nothing other, then it uttered,
as the printing bail it fluttered -
Till I scarcely more than muttered,
"It needs run a little more,
Till the oil and grease have worked in,
then assuredly no more
 Shall it type that '464'."

Then, methought, the air grew denser,
perfumed by my oil can's censer,
Pumped until the viscous fluid
trickled on the pock-marked floor.
"Oil," I cried, "a friend has sent me,
this repairman he hath lent thee
Respite - respite and nepenthe
from this ill I so deplore.
Soak, o soak this magic liquid
and type upper case no more!"
 Typed the printer, "464".

"Rubbish", said I, "Thing of evil!

Rubbish still, designed by devil!

Whether Bell hath sent, or Western

Union tossed the here ashore,

By a legal waiver granted,

with thy sixth vane firmly canted,

On this shack by horror haunted, -

tell me truly, I implore -

Is there - is there sense in Teletype -

tell me - tell me, I implore!"

Typed the printer, "464".

But the carriage, never shifting,

still is drifting, still is drifting

O'er the fourteenth roll of paper

it has gobbled to the core.

To attempt to break its fetters,

I've worn out the key marked "LTRS",

And by now the sweepstake-getters

have run up an awesome score.

And my spirits from that pile

of paper snaking on the floor

Shall be lifted - nevermore!