

# GENERATION GAP

by Harry Dunn, received 25/2/19

They were seated 'round the table at the local bowling club  
Following completion of their harmless little game -  
Too early to go home to their home-cooked evening grub,  
The thinkers and the drinkers, and the six o'clock philosophers  
With their years of wisdom, wit and knowledge,  
Some were left-inclined, others right of centre,  
Some were never seen in church, and others keen theosophers;  
And none had been to Uni, or even plain old college.

They were reminiscing, by the way,  
About their tough up-bringing, with all its' pain and deprivation  
And how this turned them into the men they were today  
They lamented the rapid sad decline of the *current* generation ,  
Clearly in a state of imminent decay,  
Caused, no doubt, by unlimited access to gadgets and technology,  
Seduced by useless toys and every new abomination  
*Inside* the house, when they should be out the back, never mind the rain,  
Kicking 'round a ball, or some other kind of healthy animation.

And how they never help their parents, meaning we who brought them up  
'Our kids today have gone to pot - lazy, one and all'  
It was an old familiar song they sang, about the way that things had changed  
Since they themselves were growing up, answering the call,  
Hard-working, strong and virtuous, toughened by experience,  
But today's spoiled and molly-coddled generation was riding for a fall,  
Bone-lazy, shiftless, some drug-addicted and mentally deranged,  
They make no sense at all.

So, where's the suffering today,  
To case-harden our benighted sons and daughters,  
And prepare them for the challenges ahead,  
They asked in sad dismay,  
And what's in store for Planet Earth  
When our spoiled brats assume control,  
When we're all be too old to work, and mostly senile, mad or dead?

Every ageing martyr had a hard-luck tale to tell,  
About what he had endured in child-hood, and his teen age years as well,  
And how he'd suffered all in stoic silence;  
Deprivation without limit  
And indignities grotesque  
It was the proper way of growing up, they all attested,  
Endless suffering, even violence  
– Monty Pythonesque!

'I remember back when I was just a kid,  
Three years of age, not one day more,  
I had to ride a bike to school, seven days a week,  
Thirty miles a day it was, so I had to leave at day-break,  
And in winter, at least two hours before,  
Arriving back at dusk, to milk two dozen cows,  
Feed the pigs and exercise the boar.'

'Gosh, you must have been a wealthy lot  
If you had a *bike* to ride to school;  
I never even saw a bike until I was nine or ten,  
I was unwanted by my folks, 'cos I was ill-begot  
I slept out in the pig-sty, behind the septic pool,  
I dearly loved my family, naturally, of course,  
And I think of them at times, every now and then,  
And forgive them for their sins,  
Although I haven't quite forgot.'

' You enjoyed the comfort of a *sty*, you say,  
Warm and cosy, I have no doubt,  
And were you nurtured by a loving sow?  
Myself - I did it tough  
And still survived, I never will know how,  
Outside the sty, on a pile of pig-manure  
Without the comfort of a sow.  
I never went to school at all,  
-They wouldn't let me in -  
So I studied hard at home, summer, winter, fall,  
With just a birthday candle for a light,  
And my only teacher was an illiterate deaf old jersey cow -  
Old Daisy was my only kith and kin.'

'Ye gods, you lot were spoiled, my pampered bowling friends,  
Until the age of twelve, I had never once been fed,  
My family was so poor, they didn't have pig-pens....'  
And so on and on the hard-luck stories went '  
From those who could remember  
And those who could pretend,  
But they all agreed their suffering  
Had prepared them for their lives ahead,  
And youthful suffering was in fact,  
A thing they'd highly recommend.

'So, where's the suffering today,  
To case-harden our be-knighted sons and daughters  
For the trials which lie ahead'  
They asked in sad dismay -  
And what's in store for Mother Earth  
When our children are in charge  
And we're all too old to work, senile, sick, or dead?'

These ageing men, lamenting as they did  
The way the coming generation was surely doomed, every guy and gal,  
By unlimited access to all that modern gadgetry,  
Their wireless and their hi-fi,  
And flashing lights as well,  
Tape recorders, amplifiers, electrified guitars,  
Synthesisers straight from Asimov and Sci-fi,  
Surely by the Devil, they were being groomed,  
To one day join him down in Hell!

Those thinking, drinking, bowling men  
With all their wisdom, wit and knowledge  
Were in fact our Fathers and our Grand-dads  
Who'd never been to college:  
Well, nothing much has changed since that round-table conversation,  
The fears held by ageing parents for the future of the world  
When it passes to the care of another generation,  
The year was way, way back - *Nineteen Sixty-six*,  
The year that Ming retired,  
Yep, nothing much has changed,  
As we grow too old to learn new tricks.