

Tax Poems in Honor of (and With Apologies to) Real Poets

By Robert W. Wood

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In previous attempts at tax humor, Wood has tried to write original tax poetry or tax limericks. This time, he takes a stab at following in the grand poetical footsteps of a handful of great poets, imagining how they would have tackled tax poetry.

Stopping By the IRS on a Snowy Night (After Robert Frost)

One April night 'twas dark and dreary,
Cold and frosty, midnight nearly.
At the IRS I stopped to linger,
Collect some forms, one per finger.
I'm not e-filing, no, not me!
For I like filing on a tree.
Quite old-fashioned, like a frock,
I fear e-filing's just a crock.
And so I shake my coat and wander,
Beyond the IRS, then down yonder.
My taxes like two paths diverge:
Must I pay? Will refunds emerge?
For the code is lovely, dark, and deep.
And it holds promises that I shall keep.
Its tax law secrets, clear and crystal,
They pack a punch, just like a pistol.
And so I slipped away that night,
Tax law my solace, my delight.
Since tax law never tells a lie,
It is the road less traveled by.

For Taxes My Heart Is Laden (After A.E. Housman)

With rue my heart is laden, for the taxes I have paid;
For deductions I've forsaken, tax credits I've

mislaid;
For exemptions and dependents the IRS waylaid;
For losses and donations, wishing tax bills all defrayed.
For taxes give me sustenance, like food they give me life;
With accountants I have skirmished, I often meet with strife;
Return rules they are rigid, my deductions they will knife;
They tell me I am careless, they complain like some fishwife.
My software's not much better, just TurboTax and such;
Programs for the masses, they don't cut taxes much;
Mere shortcuts, simple tables, a type of taxes crutch;
They don't fix AMT and won't get you through the clutch.
Let others pay their taxes, waving red and white and blue.
Uncle Sam will waste it, big spender through and through,
While I slave pen and paper, to cut tax bills in two;
For I'm a dying breed, and oh 'tis true, 'tis true.

When in Disgrace With a Tax Bill (After William Shakespeare)

When I'm disgraced by an IRS tax bill,
I all alone beweeep it, feeling rather ill.
I know that I should muster some arguments and proof,
Yet sorely I do worry, my taxes through the roof.
But when your love I remember, can it a tax bill fix?
It's not enough to save me, for I need good tax tricks.
Citations, yes, and rulings, some tech advice and more,
I need to win each battle to win the whole tax war.
It's clear my tax is painful, my arguments are few,
I swear and ask the gods to act, praying that they do,
For Heaven seems quite deaf to me, never coming through.
But letter rulings rescue me, my arguments renew,
The rulings they support me, and like a soothing balm,
The tax law is my savior, and then I'm finally calm.

COMMENTARY / TAX HUMOR

**Let Us Tax Them, You, and I
(After T.S. Eliot)**

Let us tax them, you, and I.
Tax the people until they die;
The masses will be etherized by cable;
We'll tax them 'til they're hardly able
To do much else but whimper, whine, or moan;
And soon they face their tax-time groan.
When women they will come and go;
Wagging fingers to and fro;
Anthony Weiner, he'll wag anew.
He'll surely host a cable show, too.
And through it all I ask, I'll query;
You'll claim a home office? Oh, how dreary!
As I ask myself in earnest, "Do I care?"
Methinks I should, but I don't dare.
For taxes, they're a children's toy;
Bad and spiteful, a sassy boy.
Rarely comes a tax law treat.
Taxes leave no morsel to eat.
Like a pair of ragged claws;
I exploit the foibles, tax law's flaws.
Scuttling across each return to complete
My days in harmony, I'm complete.