

# In Poor Taste: Clerihews for the End of Time

by [Petrus Tornarius](#) (March 2023)



*Two Laughing Men*, Hans von Aachen, before 1574

*It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.* –Duke Ellington

W.H. Auden  
wrote clerihews too.  
He aimed at the many,  
but spoke for the few.

Amelia Bloomer  
wished she'd done it sooner.  
However, it seems,  
her pantalettes weren't jeans.

Andrew, Duke of York,  
hated rude talk  
but loved without fail  
a nice little tale.

Hildegard von Bingen  
wouldn't quit singin'.  
She lives in the cupboard  
of the late rediscovered.

Adolf Hitler  
had only one ball.  
He was all too careless

of what might befall.

Rudolph William Louis Giuliani  
is a martyr to blarney.  
But he's seldom averse  
to the bad or the worse.

Xi Jinping  
missed that Maoist zing.  
He somehow forgot  
he hadn't liked it a lot.

Petrus Tornarius?  
His scribbling's a bore!  
Is he coming or going?  
Don't know any more!

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Petrus Tornarius is the latinized name of the South African American poet Peter Dreyer—a form often used by some of his medieval German ancestors. He employs this pseudonym to sign poems he thinks “worth publishing, but perhaps a bit *infra dig*.” Dreyer is the author, among other books, of *A Beast in View* (London: André Deutsch), *The Future of Treason* (New York:

Ballantine), and *Martyrs and Fanatics: South Africa and Human Destiny* (New York: Simon & Schuster; London: Secker & Warburg).

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