

Naturally, I was focusing my exquisite concentration on my latest work of art when that insufferable rogue interrupted my thoughts by hitting his head against the doorframe. My vexation was incalculable! My name is Percival, incidentally. Percival Barrett Edmond Terrell Conrad, in full. I'm a bard. So I'm certain you're inquiring – why is a bard signing up for a potentially dangerous assignment that could jeopardize his longevity?

The answer, unfortunately, is money. You see, the art of writing – of telling stories and crafting verse – is perhaps the most dramatically underestimated and undercompensated profession in the entire history of man. Despite the brilliant luminescence of our works and the myriad benefits they bring to our fellow man, others steadfastly refuse to reward bards in the manner in which we deserve – which is to say, with large sums of gold. So I take such jobs, unpleasant and unsavory as they may be, to fill my modest coffers until my artistic efforts receive the appreciation they are due.

Not that this particular piece was going to make me any money anyway. No, this one was for a girl. You see, with my predilection for poetry, I'm fond of expressing my affections by composing short pieces of verse. In this case, I intended to deliver this piece to the comely barmaid on shift tonight. And then the insufferable rogue made me lose my train of thought with his incompetence!

Needless to say, I was exceedingly displeased, though in hindsight it may have been for the best that I was unable to complete the poem and deliver it to its intended recipient. The paladin seated to my right was gazing at her with great interest, and it was probable he would have killed me if I tried anything.

I glowered and tried to go back to my writing as the rogue approached the table at which I sat. As I realized he was coming to join me – as well as the paladin and warrior who sat with me, awaiting our prospective employer – I was consumed by the strong temptation to write one of my venomous verses.

You see, being besotted isn't the only non-monetary thing that can provoke me to write a poem. Sometimes, I do so to indulge my angry or spiteful emotions as well. For instance, I composed this for my previous girlfriend after we parted ways:

There once was a maid of such girth
That her every step shook the earth
She had such a mass
And she passed so much gas
That we all ran for all we were worth

I was proud of that one. Apparently the young woman in question was less pleased, as she promptly stopped speaking to me after I delivered it to her. In fairness, this gem may *also* have had something to do with that decision:

There once was a 'lady' quite loose
For she clearly had no other use
She had little for a brain
And her looks were quite plain
So she slept with men just as obtuse

Either way, some people simply have *no* sense of humor.