

Poker Poems (in 3/4 time)  
Tanya Ury 2003

To wit or to hit?  
That is the question.  
To respond with a retort or not...  
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Who are we,  
aphrodite actrice  
in a  
stretched skin,  
wearing my lines,  
sloughed  
on my sleeve?  
Her and me  
and I and she  
And Hermes game,  
game for a trick  
game bird trapped  
game and match  
a match for Paris  
me myself I

don't play with matches  
in glass houses  
when your stairs have been made of ice.  
\*\*\*

Ludwig Wittgenstein  
wrote the Tractatus  
in the trenches  
of World War I;  
one hand fraught angels  
the other won medals,  
while she remained silent  
the world was seen wrightly  
from a stairway trod lightly.  
\*\*\*

Er hat mich in der Hand  
My hands are tied  
meine rechte Hand  
my left footloose.

Unhanded unmanned  
maintain full mains,  
Jack's a joker  
and the jokes on we.  
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Jacob Esau  
Jekyll Hyde.  
Jacob's Angel  
Lucifer's bride.

Hyde hides  
his eye's denied  
Jack's Judas  
when she dies.

Unholy twins  
unheimliche Zwillinge  
play a game of exchange  
of names and words.

To wit or to hit?  
That is the question.  
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\*\*\*

The rules:

Poker's a card game  
of bluff and skill  
where risk-taking's  
par for the course.

A poker's a rod  
made of metal to use  
for stirring  
a fire, or such.

A poker is also  
a person or thing  
that pokes with  
a finger or two.

When ideals are at stake  
and the poker is hot  
and giants are playing,  
that's stirring it up.  
\*\*\*

Poker ist ein Kartenspiel  
des Risikos, Bluffs und Geschickes.

Ein Schüreisen ist  
eine Metall- Zange für das Schüren  
des Feuers.

Ein philosophische Poker Spiel  
mit einem heißen Schüreisen  
schürt die Feindseligkeit.  
\*\*\*

The reason:

Had Hit  
Wit in mind  
when he drew  
his ideal Jew,  
in Mein Kampf?  
Mit dem Engel.

So who is who  
when wit hits?  
If Hit's Hyde's  
and right's denied,  
who saves Esau  
when Jekyll lies?  
\*\*\*

To be me  
belittled  
beyond all  
belief  
belästigt  
behindert  
bedauere ich bin

or be she  
beschissen  
be shit  
by God  
where Shadows  
determine  
the alien hand.  
\*\*\*

The house is full  
and the cold  
has made roses  
grow on the windows,  
ice flowers  
to see through.

Alice has grown  
in stature and mien;  
but she doesn't have  
a free hand.

Paulinchen's no nonsense  
for Ein Mann  
wohnt im Haus,  
er spielt seine Karten  
Jack's eating  
her heart out.

Paulinchen's toys  
make not much noise  
but they're bound to  
bring the house down.  
\*\*\*

What was in mind  
when Karl and Wit  
2 Jews  
with different views,  
met near the Styx  
in '46  
out in the cold  
in Cambridge.

Pedantic Popper  
with his pertinent pep  
came with the aim to provoke.  
After all Reiche building  
and Hit's Reifeprüfung,  
was history more or less.

Witzig's wit  
was a listing ship  
but she wouldn't admit  
she'd lost her grip.  
While Popper's deriding  
the myth was exploding.  
And Vienna was so far away.

Ludic Ludwig  
defensively spoke  
extending a poker  
she made a mistake.  
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Extenuating circumstances:

Ludwig Wittgenstein and Adolf Hitler were born in the same week and went to school together in Austrian Linz.

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Said Lucid Ludwig to Aryan Adolf:  
carrots and sticks may break my bank  
but threats will never Hit me.

Said populist Popper to puzzled Wit:  
Philosopher's Steins may break my back  
but probability presents problems.

Said worthwhile Wit to incorruptible Karl:  
Pokers and posers may provoke my pride  
but pretenders will never outwit me.

Sticks and stones my break my bones  
but when Hitler hits it hurts.

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The Poker Game:

Don't throw your poker around  
When you build glass castles.

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Hit hates  
Wit pops  
Pop wits  
Wit pokes

Hitlerhältig hinter,  
an underhand Hit  
makes poker faced Popper  
pop his quest,

the practice of problem posing  
as popular politics  
is practically speaking  
his pragmatic best.

But Wittgenstein's prop  
is puzzling, or not?:  
...the general form of a philosophical question is,  
"I am in a muddle; I don't know my way"  
\*\*\*

Wit pops the question  
Pop's witness here  
queer fears Wit.

Stripping his stripes  
stirring it up,  
strip Jack Naked  
poking fun.  
Don't poke your finger at me,  
poke me.  
\*\*\*

Wit's wrested angels  
and probing Popper plops  
his ivory bubbles pop.

Hit's wit pops illusions  
Which proposition fits?

Hit hits hard  
Wit waits but  
Wit's proposition fits?  
Which proposition sits?

Wit's proposition sits  
\*\*\*

Stealing fire:

Wittgenstein's quicksilver  
ladder is climbed  
the fever spent,  
the moment went,  
the battle fought,  
the drama wrought,  
though Jack's been  
talks too much.

The world's seen write  
on the other side  
when she held the glass  
to the light.

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