

An Essay on Criticism
(for Martin Johnston)

Maisie were a critical
Severe she wore her bun
She lecturing on literature was grim.
Arnold he be engineer
He's reading just for fun –
Maisie meaning all the world to him.

Maisie has her secret
She blush when she bethink:
"Tide me woe I Arnold loving you."
But engineer is simple
He silently and blink
So other love the neither lover knew.

He pass around her passage
She walk with head abstruse
But fingernail she clench into a page.
Poor engineering Arnold
What skulking is the use?
She Bridges scorn, he building them in rage.

Thus pass they days in likewise
Till one day force his mind –
He burst upon a paper 'I love you'.
And brain alit in lightening
He search and searching find
A blending line that rhyming 'Eyes of blue'.

In short he writing poem
His first and only work.
He nameless post to Maisie English Lit.
Her greenly eye she cast up from
The paper with a jerk
She running find her colleagues of the crit:

"O someone be me sending
Such funny little verse
What drivell are his word upon the sheet."
They look and fog their glasses
It torn to shreds, and worse –
For Arnold pass and hear them in their heat.

His ears start to burning
His soul it next to go

He sneak away before his hair catch flame,
For Maisie she were laughing
At all the love he know
And take apart he's poem like a game.

Her echo follow Arnold –
He rush where he forget –
Go building bridges on the upper Nile;
And one day – is it accident?
He fall and getting wet
And getting eaten by a crocodile.

Maisie now professor are
A virgin do I add
She going down 'The Great Tradition' way –
She whittle off the authors
She think they mostly bad
And glaring from her pedestal she say:

"Dismiss dismiss dismissing
Minor minor miss
Discuss disgusted there is only one!"
Her night-mare re-occurring
(She always dreaming this)
She in the campus bookstore getting Donne.

She publish pile of article
She talk and talking talk
She crossing out in pen that mostly red,
She pouring scorn on versicles –
Through literature she stalk –
She only still and silent in her bed.

If moment had you faltered
O Maisie times ago
You spy the love that helplessly he send,
You might have found it Arnold
You might have come to know
A poem can be way to make a friend.

Andrew Huntley