

I was a colleague of Martin's in the Subtitling Unit at SBS and have found a silly rhyme I wrote on his farewell card when he and Roseanne were heading off to Italy for some months, in 1987-88 around the time of all the fuss about the Bicentenary.

To explain some of the references, Martin and I would sometimes play chess while lunching at the Rest Hotel when the SBS offices were at Milson's Point. Of course I never managed to beat him. My best result was a draw, and that was only after Martin had had one or two wines too many. He and Roseanne later told me that during the Italy trip (which was not all that successful, I think) they would often quote the last line of my doggerel to each other.

As a newbie to the Subtitling Unit, I found Martin a fascinating colleague. The depth and breadth of his knowledge of art, literature and history, and much more besides, was inspiring and just a little intimidating for a junior editor. Yet he was always good-natured and happy to share his knowledge.

Peter Templeton

*Farewell, dear Martin, and good on ya
As you start on your northward itinerary
From Lavender Bay almost to Bologna
A convenient distance from the Bicentenary*

*Think of us on the far side of the planet
As the sun glints on slate rooves and granite
Walls of a rustic hilltop villaggio,
Your table groaning with vino and formaggio.*

*In autumn, as the light grows poorer
As fogs shroud hills of russet hue
Spare a thought for Hannelore
Pining for her subtitling guru*

*And, dear reader, what of me
Here in the pub, alone, withdrawn
With silent knights, frustrated queen,
Defrocked bishops and dormant pawns?*

*No matter, really, now that Bond is
Intent on causing us un-Rest
Your decision to abscond is
Now undoubtedly the best*

*But in a year will you be keenly
Scribbling away in your spartan garret?
Won't the mere sight of tortellini
Make you long to be back with Peter Barrett?*

*Or will you write the definitive novel,
Your name 'round bookshops rudely plastered?
We hope you have to return to this hovel
You lucky, lucky, lucky bastard.*