

Three Poems

by [Robert Heard](#) (April 2021)



The Queen Mates

(for Robert Graves)

It was an unfortunate error,
Ending in a reign of terror,
When everything was alive,
Pell-mell in the hive;

When one had the work of two,
Which was more than four could do,
And when workers of the honey
Knew that time was money.

Busy inspecting their haste,
The Queen, aloof and chaste,
Commanded every drone
To leave herself alone:

More important is survival
To the hive than love of rival;
Drones shall, by the behest
Of their Queen, take a rest.

But they, though an idle sect,
Were of excellent intellect,
And believing labour lost
More important than its cost,

Assuaged their love's distress
In a comb apart, with chess.
But the Queen was worse than bored
With opponents on a board:

The roles of bees, her tools,
Should not waste time with rules,
Where queens by a mate may be beaten.

So the mates by the Queen were eaten.

A Grey Thing Grey

Some call a grey thing grey.
(I say good for they):

What others call a dark white.
Or a light black, as I might.

The Jar

The world has been compared to many things:
A stage; a labyrinth; a grain of sand;
An island; a dream; the bones of a giant.
Be perverse—think of it as a jar,
That can hold all the other things the world is,
And one important thing it isn't.

In it, we need a special kind of glass,
To hold our world, and keep it from dissolving
In its auras of rising and falling light.
And in it, we're invisible, and untouchable,
Yet with no seeming limit to our motion,
For through it, a beyond we see; but the journeys
Are inside, beating hands, arms not long enough
To reach out and put in what's not already there.

[Table of Contents](#)

Robert Heard was born and educated in Toronto, Canada, and is

retired from work in the city's library system. His avocations are poetry, and illustration.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](https://twitter.com/NERIconoclast)