

Arun The Magnificent

Arun the Magnificent has performed for 36 years.
His high wire walking can make your heart stop.
He has dazzled audiences with his daredevil deeds.
His act is the best under the Cal/EPA big top.

The cable is strung between two legislative poles.
Pesticides must be beneficial for their intended use.
And walking the efficacy policy is a balancing act,
Between scientific judgment and bureaucratic abuse.

The balancing pole is the secret to the high wire act.
It's the data's weight and breadth that holds him on the wire.
Controls and replications and analysis of variation,
Provide the rotational inertia that walkers require.

But the circus wants him to perform for every show.
And to walk the wire with any kind of pole.
And sometimes all he gets is a green painted stick.
From a registrant looking for a data loophole.

Arun doesn't always trust the surly Ringmaster.
He has had run-ins with the man before.
Once he had the elephants bump the cable poles,
When Arun was walking high above the center ring floor.

When he steps out to cross the treacherous wire,
Some folks in the audience begin to cheer.
Step over step he crosses the hundred feet of cable.
And pretends he doesn't hear the crowd if it starts to jeer.

Arun has walked the wire a thousand times,
But reaching the other side you just never know.
He remembers what happened to the Flying Chemistry Brothers,
Someone cut the ropes in the middle of a show.

But now the walking cable is starting to stretch,
The efficacy policy strands are starting to fray.
And the Ringmaster thinks his act has lost its thrill.
But the high wire act may not have seen its very last day.

Old Man Leverage

A deal is made, the check is signed.
The new owner has paid a reasonable price.
But the tractor isn't sold till it's on the truck.
It's the last roll of the horse traders dice.

Now the buyer seems to be a savvy fellow,
An apple grower from over on the coast.
And his truck and trailer look study enough,
And the new winch he talks about the most.

The crawler tractor hasn't run for a few years,
And now the pony motor refuses to start.
And with those tracks and three tons of inertia,
Loading her is going to half work and half art.

She faces us off like a stubborn old bull,
You're not taking me without a fight.
And with tracks to magnify her resistance,
We might have to convince her with a stick of dynamite.

We try to drag her to a better loading site,
But the spring grass sets the truck wheels a spinning.
And now we have the truck stuck in the mud.
Something tells me, "this is only the beginning".

We finally get the truck moved to a better spot,
And we use the winch to drag her uphill.
It's better to have gravity on our side.
We'll need every ally in this test of will.

With the truck wheels spinning and grass flyin.
He backs the trailer down the narrow dirt lane.
And with the truck and trailer finally in position.
I got a little whiff of victory champagne.

With a jumper cable assist from my pickup,
The farm show winch has got her on the roll.
But then she stalled half way up on the trailer.
Her tracks have locked up in a rebar hole.

Now the morning has turned into the afternoon,
And my buyer looks like he's ready to break.
And my sweat is smearing the ink on his check.
This sale could be lost with one more mistake.

But there was an ally waiting to help us,
Do you recall college physics 1A?
The fulcrum, the plank and applied force.
This simple machine helped me save the day.

Old Man Leverage doesn't care who you are,
And he doesn't care about where you are from.
He is the simplest of the "five machines",
Old Man Leverage will work for anyone.

I grabbed two poles from a broken fence,
And blocks of wood from the back of my truck.
And we pried those tracks up the loading ramp.
She flopped on the trailer like a wounded buck.

Forty-Mile An Hour Alfalfa

I still wonder what the old man was thinking.
Why he bought this ground at the bottom of a crease.
With the Sierra Nevadas to the west,
And five hundred miles of desert to the east.

The down sloping wind really owns this land.
She's a cruel landlord always asking for more.
And you know it's her coming to collect the rent,
She starts banging on the back porch screen door.

She stampeded my wheel lines late yesterday,
One mile of sprinkler pipe was on the roll.
She ran them till they jumped all of my fences.
I found them wrapped around their favorite power pole.

Now I own one mile of "hippe" pipe art,
with a big "wowie" in every piece.
I guess I call "Scrape Iron Eddie".
He might pay extra for a nice mantle piece.

And my bales are FOB¹ at the neighbors again.
I can't help it if he's downwind from my ranch.
And I know he gets tired of selling my hay.
I'll return the favor if I ever get the chance.

Why I keep farming,
I just don't even know.
Because 40 mile an hour alfalfa,
It is the toughest hay to grow.

Now some storm clouds are moving up from the south,
A little moisture would help settle the dust.
But the promise of rain was just a joke.
She swept it away with a 50 mph gust.

And she lets the dust devils, play on the ranch.
Her juvenile nephews are rotten to the core.
And when they get done running in my windrows,
I've got nothing but an alfalfa eyesore.

Now the harvest ants and the horned toads,
They've got it figured, no doubt.
Just let her blow till she's tired,
And then you can just dig yourself out.

And I wish I could join those lucky horned lizards.
At least they've got somewhere to go!
Because I'm trapped up here in my pickup,
Till the landlord collects the rent that I owe.

Now I just loaded 20 tons of discounted hay,
As more TDN² disappeared in the wind.
And now my eyeballs need a good washing out.
And my brain just wishes it would end.

How can one place have, this much wind?
Isn't there somewhere else it needs to blow?
Because this 40 mile an hour alfalfa.
It's gotta be the toughest hay to grow!

Now the roof on the hay barn left last night.
And tumbleweeds are pushin my fences down.
I think the landlord is trying to tell me something!
I think it's finally time to move into town!

1 FOB –Freight On Board, the price of hay at the ranch.

2 TDN –Total Digestible Nutrients, A grading system for hay. Most of the digestible nutrients are present in the leaves.

YOU CAN'T FARM WITH AN AEROSTAR

**Well, I bought this piece of ground ten years ago,
To build some city boy dreams.
I cleared the sage and planted the seeds.
This farming, it can't be as hard as it seems.
And I got the name of a local farmer,
Someone I might try to befriend.
To answer all my crazy questions,
And the things I couldn't comprehend.**

**Now he always acts surprised,
Every time that I drive up.
Because everybody he knows,
Drives a pickup truck.
So he hides out in his shop,
Hoping I will just drive away.
Until he realizes it's me,
And not some tourist from the highway.**

**When he finally offered me some neighborly advice,
He didn't mean me any harm.
"David, buy the pickup first!
Then start the farm".**

**Well, I prayed for the snow and the spring rain.
I learned that water is precious indeed.
And I learned that a farmer has to experiment,
If he is ever going to succeed.
But after four years of worry and sweat,
I am going to have to concede.
The only crop I can seem to grow,
Is a new kind of jackrabbit feed.**

So I asked him, "What am I doin wrong?
Is there something I cannot see?"
He stared at the ground, took a deep breath,
And then he told me.
"IT'S THE CAR!
YOU CAN'T FARM WITH AN AEROSTAR!"

"Now you better stay off the highways,
When those cold winds start to blow.
Because that's a California car.
It doesn't like the snow.
Or always carry your tire chains,
Flashlight and poncho.
Unless you like driving sideways,
Where ever you try to go."

"And I know that sliding door opens wide,
And those seats, they do come out.
And you can just fit a pair of calves inside,
From the tail to the snout.
But if you desecrate the family car,
Your wife is going to shout.
And you better not drive in the carpool,
Until all that poop dries out."

"And when you take those rear seats out,
There is plenty of room in back.
For your tools, pesticide cans,
And your handyman jack.
But, you better pray the Lord is with you,
If you ever get in a wreck.
Because that load you have been a carryin,
You will be wearing around your neck!"

"So you had better hire a good lawyer.
And write a brand new will.

**Because if your tools don't getcha,
That 2,4-D will!"**

**"Ah tell ya, IT'S THE CAR!
YOU CAN'T FARM WITH AN AEROSTAR!"**