The Chaos
by G. Nolst Trenité a.k.a. “Charivarius” 1870 - 1946

Dearest creature in creation
Studying English pronunciation,
I will teach you in my verse
Sounds like corpse, corps, horse and worse
I will keep you, Susy, busy,
Make your head with heat grow dizzy.

Tear in eye your dress you’ll tear,
So shall I! Oh, hear my prayer,
Pray, console your loving poet,
Make my coat look new, dear, sew it!
Just compare heart, beard and heard,
Dies and diet, lord and word.

Sword and sward, retain and Britain.
(Mind the latter, how it’s written).
Made has not the sound of bade,
Say said, pay-paid, laid, but plaid.
Now I surely will not plague you
With such words as vague andague,
But be careful how you speak,
Say break, steak, but bleak and streak.

Previous, precious, fuchsia, via,
Pipe, snipe, receipt and choir,
Cloven, oven, how and low,
Script, receipt, shoe, poem, toe.

Hear me say, devoid of trickery:
Script, receipt, shoe, poem, toe.
Cloven, oven, how and low,
Pipe, snipe, receipt and choir,

From “desire”: desirable–admirable
From “admire.”

Hiccough has the sound of “cup.”

Thereby, wherefore, whenever.

Put, nut; granite, and unite.

Reefer does not rime with deafer,
Feoffer does, and zephyr, heifer.

Dull, bull, Geoffrey, George, ate, late,
Hint, pint, Senate, but sedate.

Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,
Science, conscience, scientific,
Tour, but our and succour, four,
Gas, alas, and Arkansas.

Sea, idea, guinea, area,
Psalm, Maria, but malaria,
Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean,

Doctrine, turpentine, marine.

Compare alien with Italian,
Dandilion with battalion.

Sally with ally, yea, ye,
Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, key, quay.

Say aver, but ever, fever.
Neither, leisure, skin, receiver.

Never guess–it is not safe:
We say calves, valves, half, but Ralph.

Heron, granary, canary,
Crevise and device, and eyrie,
Face but preface, but efface.

Why it’s pall, mall, but Pall Mall.

Muscle, muscular, gaol, iron,
Timber, climber, bullpen, lion,

Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, and chair,

And enamour rime with hammer.

Pussy, hussy, and possess,

Desert, but dessert, address,

Golf, wolf, countenance, lieutenants.

Hoist, in lieu of flags, left pennants.

It’s a dark abyss or tunnel,

Writing “groats” and saying “grits”?

Won’t it make you lose your wits,

Seven is right, but so is even,

Dandelion with battalion.

Is a paling, stout and spikey,

Say aver, but ever, fever.

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