

*The Annual College Conference: A  
Poem.*

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The sheep jump into the milky race  
Prodded under for baptism by total  
immersion  
By limp wet akubras  
And the crook of an old broom handle  
Giving absolution and  
Maintenance of Professional Standards In  
certificate form,  
And a squirt of drench  
Called MOP's Points.

The sheep emerge from wet railings,  
Greased with years of lanoline,  
And shake dry like drab dogs  
Such is the Annual College Conference.  
The sheep have congregated  
For the collegiate crutching,  
And a dab of tarry stuff  
For a fly-blown rump,  
To eradicate,  
Non-evidenced based heresies  
And maggots.

A young wether jumps high...  
Through a non-existent gate  
Into the holding paddock  
Outside the Plenary Session.

A College ram,  
Struts the paddock  
Showing off his long testicles,  
Ponderous and weighty,  
Laughable for those  
Who can see the emperor's new clothes.

But this is the stuff  
That makes the high-grade testosterone,  
That fuel the College runs on.  
He keeps an eye out for  
An the errant lamb or ewe,  
And guards against heresies  
Or an original thought,  
Or some societal insight,  
That may wreck the gene pool  
Or next year's clip.

The Annual General Meeting,

Always held at 5pm,  
On the second last day,  
Guarantees a shortened sleep latency,  
In the shackles of a meeting's rules,  
The constitution and a tired ballroom  
With no fresh glasses,  
And all the mints are gone.  
Let's limit debate  
For all but the foolhardy,  
Or the recalcitrant  
In the front row  
With the personality disorder,  
And halitosis.  
Snores from the back row,  
Bill nods off as usual  
To the company  
Of a few hypnic jerks  
And his lap's satchel crashes  
Onto hotel-emblazoned crockery  
And the carpet-stain of cold coffee.

The Young Investigator Award,  
For those unlucky enough to be under 35.  
For some new blood,  
Who's taken the vow of silence  
Not to rock the boat.  
This eloquent Trapist on a drug company  
grant,  
Devoted his life and his marriage  
To an obscure gene locus  
Or an esoteric enzyme  
In some far oft land  
Of nude mice,  
All for the accolades of the rams  
And the flock  
Who suppress secret insecurities  
Perhaps even deep jealousy,  
Lest, one day,  
He becomes a ram,  
To accolades,  
And a bronze and satin weight  
Hanging awkward around his neck  
Like a loose noose,  
Soon to be forgotten  
When another gene locus or a nude mouse  
Revolts to the fall of the guillotine  
And the smell of laboratory ether  
Or a better p value  
And render obsolete  
A life's work  
And three cardboard boxes

Of aging foolscap  
And fading green graph paper,  
To be destined to a dusty garage floor  
Near Sophie's old high-chair  
Still used on access visits.

The trade display of pastures green,  
Like Psalm 23,  
Nubile nymphs and sensual charms  
"Free" subliminal pens and long red  
balloons  
For the kids,  
Reminiscent of condoms  
Do they come in red?  
Is she wearing a wedding ring?  
Was she the one who came to my rooms  
Wearing the five inch mules  
And pedal-pushers,  
Revealing her curvaceous calves  
With such effect,  
And a black blouse  
With more than a hint  
Of her tight ripe cleavage,  
As she leant forward on my desk  
To show me  
A drug company glossy  
Of alpha-2 bla-de-bla,  
...Or was it the co-enzyme-3 receptor,  
A quintessential p value  
And Chanel 5.

Such is the Annual College Conference.  
I could tell you more.