

## WHAT VAUDEVILLE KILLED

Every evening at eight and at ten  
the Great Wantondo did it again.  
A flourish of cape, a tap of wand.  
Both cage and sweet singing bird were gone.

Oh, Great Wantondo, I could never guess  
where you hid that bird.  
The cage could fold up, hang under your coat,  
but the bird -- the bird was alive.  
You made sure we'd seen that.

Oh, Great Wantondo, may you saute in Hell.  
May your body be pressed  
in the vise of despair. The bird that vanished  
into the air smashed flat with a snap  
when the cage snapped flat. Replaced  
with another in every act.

Evil Wantondo, do you still wander  
from town to town, buying canaries as you go?  
Oh, Great Wantondo, may you be squeezed  
quite flat by the thighs of fate  
at eight and at ten. Two deaths daily  
and a matinee Wednesday.

## CARPENTER'S APPRENTICE

"You can tell a carpenter by his chips,"  
he said. I wasn't sure if I should judge  
by quantity, measure waste, or seek  
smooth edges, the blessing of sharp tools.  
Or did he mean those blond ringlets  
writhing at the plane's throat were signs  
we left behind so when the aliens  
came they'd know what we had done here?

Which seemed to be too much philosophy  
when all I wanted was a piece of board  
"about so long." He showed me how  
to mark the edge, pull back the saw  
to start the cut. Then threw in the bit  
about the carpenter and his chips.

-- Robert M. Chute

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