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## A BIRTHDAY SPEECH

**A professor of linguistics gives a speech at a party to celebrate his retirement and his 65th birthday, and thanks those present for their accompanying music.**

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Ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues, boys and girls!

You may think it incumbent upon me to hold a little speechoid on what proved to be this unavoidable occasion.

Unaccustomed as I am to being sixty-five  
... Well, it's the first time I've ever been 65.  
Indeed it's the first time I've ever had a sixty-fifth birthday party  
... but I hope it won't be the last.

Firstlymost of all of course:  
appreciating and thanking to the singers, fiddlers and blowers  
who have sung, fiddled and blown  
their joyful of sing, fiddle, blow and musicality,  
some notes climbing up, other notes falling down ...  
and still more sliding glissando:  
deepy bass profundo up to the trittly-tootle of the highest ever reachy.

Entertail for the whole company  
in several keys and stylistically variable  
with roots in the folklordy lore  
and the mediaeval fundamould of expression in the classical form.

Players playing on several instrumoulds:  
three times catgut'n violin scrapey-joy  
and one time tootling on the hobo  
with an occasional semiquail and contrapuntal modee  
a tonic sol-fardy of lively music  
so much superior to the Cee-Dees or the jukebockers  
with fine accomplimode voice of several flavours  
all congregale together with verbally thrips out of the voice box  
and so floating into the ear droves.

Gladlymost many thankfulness.

Now, people keep asking me what I'll do when I have no more students to impress.

Well, apart from pottering in the flower garden  
and gardening in the flower pots  
I'll be continuing to develop the work of the language scholar who has had more  
fluence on my work than any other ...  
Professor Stanley Unwin ...  
I'll be trying to contribute to his overall projectile:  
from BABBLE to BABEL.

Given the interests of those present in things linguistic and otherwise language  
I am sure that most of you know Professor Unwin's work on semantics  
(though he also got up to several entirely different antics).  
And by diggit deep and thorough, he reached into the very fundermould of the  
arty crafties of Angloid in detail right down to the smallest.

He studied the multitudinous crafty fragmolds, all the weeny parts and pieces of  
speaking, squeaking, writing  
(and also the other way round, to the left)  
alongsides with many text-typicals, such as storytelly and fairly tales  
and nowadays those flottering in the word wide webbing, shaggy blog stories and  
easy-mails and ess-messes – to name but few.

Rightly is Professor Unwin's work fully fame the worm over, and read with  
leisure by people in their manifolds from Great Brixton to the Antipoles.

So, I'll be continuing with Professor Unwin's uniquely-mould of approaching  
language and tripling over the edge.

As some of you know, I'm working on one article on a book called the *Double-  
biners* by an Irish fellow called Jamey Joyce. My computer is counting all the  
words and adding them up, and checking if they come to the number I first  
thought of.

I'm also writing an article on a book called *The Name of the Name* by  
Humperdinck Echo. He's called "Echo" because when he writes a book it echoes  
lots of other books. French post-structuralist gymnasts call this "inter-textual-  
hiccups".

Many other projects are in the eerily developmental: taking Stanley Unwin's work  
to unexpected highs and deepness, and investigating how in the four corms of the  
earthlobe the populade can communicate by chattering and gossiping or all three,  
written down by the scribbly scribe ... and of course viva voce when air is  
expelled from the mouse.

Then there's my other project: not quite a campus novel, more vignettes of life in universities, at conferences, and with editors and publishers, in which many of my colleagues past and present will find a place (of course, anonymouse).

My main problem is that, if I wrote down a true account of what actually happened, no-one would believe it: they would think it is all too exaggerated. We better not go into that now.

But I'll certainly include the student who told me last week that a little book entitled *How to Do Things with Words* was written by Jane Austen.

But sufficiently of such talky talky.

Now we have on the tabloids in the cookery, for eating: fluffy bits with buttery-flabes and cheesy flavour, with spinach for Popeye and Olive Oyl, a cut up finny fish with bread for filling up, quiche for the ladies and onion tart for the gentlemen, variants for vegetarians and carnivores. And strange mince pies which contain mincemeat but neither mince nor meat.

And on the tabloids here, for drinking, flagons of your finelymost brew from up in the wine mountains.

So, I'm really pleased that you could all come.

Now, everybole all scuttley round, collect eat and drink it all up.

I declare the buffeting open!