

FAWM 2024 – Sherwood Anderson’s “The Egg”

13 **mildly insane but harmless –**
present tense?

he grinned and winked
he swore and sweated
he danced and shouted a string of inarticulate words

Afire with the showman’s passion...

*Father grinned and winked at his visitor. Joe Kane decided that the man who confronted him was **mildly insane but harmless**. He drank the cup of coffee that had been given him and began to read his paper again. When the egg had been heated in vinegar father carried it on a spoon to the counter and going into a back room got an empty bottle. He was angry because his visitor did not watch him as he began to do his trick, but nevertheless went cheerfully to work. For a long time he struggled, trying to get the egg to go through the neck of the bottle. He put the pan of vinegar back on the stove, intending to reheat the egg, then picked it up and burned his fingers. After a second bath in the hot vinegar the shell of the egg had been softened a little but not enough for his purpose. He worked and worked and a spirit of desperate determination took possession of him. When he thought that at last the trick was about to be consummated the delayed train came in at the station and Joe Kane started to go nonchalantly out at the door. Father made a last desperate effort to conquer the egg and make it do the thing that would establish his reputation as one who knew how to entertain guests who came into his restaurant. He worried the egg. He attempted to be somewhat rough with it. He swore and the sweat stood out on his forehead. The egg broke under his hand. When the contents spurted over his clothes, Joe Kane, who had stopped at the door, turned and laughed.*

A roar of anger rose from my father’s throat. He danced and shouted a string of inarticulate words. Grabbing another egg from the basket on the counter, he threw it, just missing the head of the young man as he dodged through the door and escaped.

**Afire with the showman’s passion,
Father starts to grin and wink.
Joe Kane looks at the man confronting him,
Not sure what to think.**

**The egg wouldn’t stand when father bade it,
But he tries to keep the disconcertion to himself.
And he pulls down the poultry monstrosities
In their bottles from off their sacred shelf.**

**“How’d you like to have 7 legs and 2 heads like this fellow?”
Come my father’s slightly crazy words...
Joe Kane is made a little ill by the sight
Of the floating bodies of the deformed bottled birds.**

**He gets up to leave, father gets a little angry
But forces another cheerful showman smile...
Comes around the counter with a free cigar and coffee
To entice the visitor to stay awhile.**

**The hour is growing late and time is running out,
And the scores are moving towards their final tally.
And father heats an egg in a pan of vinegar
For his big grand finale.**

**The heated egg shell has a little flex
Allowing it to pass through bottle necks.
You can take the bottled egg everywhere you go.
Keep people guessing – don’t let ‘em know!
And just when everything is about to click:
The egg is ready to consummate the trick...
Just then the delayed train comes rolling down the track,
And Joe Kane heads for the door not looking back.
Father, desperate, forces one last gaff –
The egg breaks and Joe Kane turns around to laugh.
A roar of anger as father begins to shout
My father dances ‘round and a string of nonsense comes out
He grabs another eggs and throws it at Joe Kane
And it just misses his head as he escapes out toward the train.**

**These are the simple facts of the case
And I guess that should know.
This was the final triumph of the egg
And my father’s final show.**

Afire with the showman's passion,
Father starts to grin and wink.
Joe Kane looks at the man confronting him,
Not sure what to think.

The egg wouldn't stand when father bade it,
But he tries to keep the disconcertion to himself.
And he pulls down the poultry monstrosities
In their bottles from off their sacred shelf.

“How'd you like to have 7 legs and 2 heads like this fellow?”
Come my father's slightly crazy words...
Joe Kane is made a little ill by the sight
Of the floating bodies of the deformed bottled birds.

He gets up to leave, father gets a little angry
But forces another cheerful showman smile...
Comes around the counter with a free cigar and coffee
To entice the visitor to stay awhile.

The hour is growing late and time is running out,
And the scores are moving towards their final tally.
And father heats an egg in a pan of vinegar
For his big grand finale.

The heated egg shell has a little flex
Allowing it to pass through bottle necks.
You can take the bottled egg everywhere you go.
Keep people guessing – don't let 'em know!
And just when everything is about to click:
The egg is ready to consummate the trick...
Just then the delayed train comes rolling down the track,
And Joe Kane heads for the door not looking back.
Father, desperate, forces one last gaff –
The egg breaks and Joe Kane turns around to laugh.
A roar of anger as father begins to shout
My father dances 'round and a string of nonsense comes out
He grabs another eggs and throws it at Joe Kane
And it just misses his head as he escapes out toward the train.

These are the simple facts of the case
And I guess that should know.
This was the final triumph of the egg
And my father's final show.