

# Of Poems About Figs and Farts

by Con Chapman

*When Prince Rainier III asked an expert whether there was a literature of Monegasque, the native language of Monaco, her research produced only a suggestive ode to a fig and a poem about a fart.*

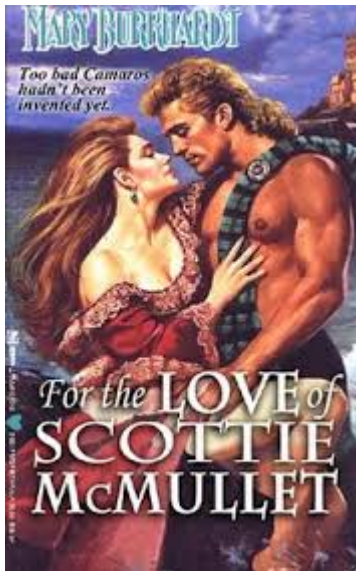
*The Wall Street Journal*



*"You couldn't have stifled it until the photo shoot was over?"*

It's not easy being official archivist to the poet laureate of Freedonia. People think a life in poetry is a cushy job, but the problem with literature is—the paperwork!

We've got reams and reams of the stuff, going back through the entire eight hundred years of our country's glorious heritage. The long-suffering people of Freedonia have gone by many names, we who have suffered as the dodge-ball target of central Eurasia: Swervakia, Carjackistan, for a brief period in the forties as part of a franchise deal "Howard Johnson's," until finally, as the tanks rolled out of Zworbniak Square in 1956, pelted by day-old *yorkblies* (our traditional breakfast pastry) hurled by my courageous compatriots—Freedonia!



Because we have been subjugated throughout our history, we are a linguistic smorgasbord, always taking on the native tongue of our oppressors (and try saying *that* five times fast). We are a veritable graveyard of dead languages; Attic Greek, Esperanto, Pig Latin. As such, much of our nation's literature flies under the flags of other languages. It is my sacred charge and duty to discover poems written in Gludaesq, the native tongue of my people. Yes we have songs and plays. We have plus size romantic novels of the early 18th century, when a taste for the *zaftig* in women capable of hefting a brood sow over a stile found expression in works that gave rise to Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and American bodice-rippers of the twentieth century.

*"I haven't got time for poetry—I've got to go milk the donkey."*

But where are the poems? Where is the written record of the *blorzaks*, the merry lyrics recited by our yeoman as they mucked out stables? Previous attempts to establish Freedonia's rightful place in the universe of little magazines that pay in complimentary subscriptions have not been fruitful. A banana here, a box of raisins there, but we have no erotic ode to a fig, as the snooty Monacoids have to recite to their luscious fruits late at night in their native Monegasque.



*You know you want it.*

Hmm . . . what's this. Looks promising: Ode to an Artichoke. I'll just get out my Eurozone-approved Metric Scanning Device and give her a whirl:

*I love thee, little artichoke,  
I'm usually not a lustful bloke  
But you, you're all green and gnarly,  
and so let us commence to parley  
about the things a doe and buck do  
and how much I would like to . . . kiss you.*

Have to say . . . not at all bad. As good as any fig-lust sonnets I've seen come out of a certain tiny Mediterranean country whose principal export is postage stamps!

But still . . . if we are to take our rightful place among the nations of poetry, I feel we must have our own variation on the classic of men's room walls, the one that lights the fire of poetry in young boys' souls, never to be quenched until they are dead and cold in the grave. Let's see . . . wait . . . is it . . . could it be? It is! A Freedonian variation on the universal theme so dear to the hearts of the male of the species:

*Here I sit all broken-hearted,  
paid 12 glotkies, a niklosh and 4 norgeshes to shit  
and only farted.*

