

*When I'm standing starkers in my room,  
in the mirror I see Time with trousers on.*

### **Time Can See You**

Clouds cover the sun,  
it's overcast and dark -  
but Time can see you.

You're all alone and feeling ignored,  
like no one sees you, no one needs you,  
as if you'd almost vanished -  
but Time can see you.

You walk down a street and catch sight  
of someone you don't want to meet -  
you duck round a corner and sigh with relief –  
but Time can see you.

### **After the Rain**

After the rain  
the sun peeps through clouds  
and makes the cobweb glimmer in the air  
but one by one the silk threads tear -  
that's the touch of Time.

### **A Drop of Water on a Leaf**

I watch a drop of water on a leaf.  
It doesn't move at all, just gleams and gleams,  
till it suddenly rolls off.  
Time is like that too, it seems to stand stock-still  
then shoots past, faster than Bolt

*Time is longer than John Silver.*

*Time helps the snow to melt, the seeds to grow and the hurt to heal.*

### **Look Up**

Look up. If it's a cloudless night  
Time shows us twinkling stars: events  
that happened long ago when Time was young.  
It's been so many, many years  
since their light first started to appear.  
Too far for us to go, but Time has been.  
We really wish he'd tell us what he's seen.

### **There's a Time for Everything**

There's a time for everything – to scale an oak, to share a joke,  
to take a bite, to light a light or give the cat a poke.

PLAN:10 "Laugh like mad"

## **Time and Me**

### *How a boy met Time*

Today I've got time on my hands.

No one to meet, nowhere to go,

Here I am, home alone.

My usual pastimes no longer entice,

I'm at a loose end, I need some advice.

I ask Time, 'Have you got a moment to spare?'

'I could make some time for you,' he said.

Perhaps Time could be my new best friend.

'It's been a while, since we sat like this

together, a rendezvous of just us two.

You never ever think of me,' sighs Time,

'You fritter and twitter your days away

and don't even see me slip past.'

'Why should I ever think of you?'

'If you think of me, you'll soon see

that you're really thinking about yourself.'

'Why should I think about myself?

It's so much better to think

that I don't have to think at all.'

'I'll show you now what I can do.  
With my magical powers,  
I speed up seconds, minutes, hours!  
Look now, it's one o'clock,  
Look again, sleepy-head, it's time for bed!  
'How did that happen?'  
'You were miles away.'  
'But I didn't go out the door!'  
'Tell us now, where you went, what you saw.'

'I was here all along,  
then all of a sudden, it was last summer,  
then Christmas Eve,  
then I'm in a swimming race, climbing up a cliff face,

sliding down a staircase, then someplace else,  
piloting an airplane  
through the clouds to Spain.

Next I'm playing... with kids of my own -  
oh my, how I've grown -  
and telling them all about the time  
when Time lent me his wings  
and I time-travelled.

And Time smiled a smile, as wide as a mile.  
A happily humming  
continual continuum.

I thought to myself, 'Time is my new best friend.  
Though I couldn't tell you where he's come from,  
or how he got the idea to be my chum.'

Then I asked, 'Are they trousers you've got on?'

'Do you see them?'

'Sometimes. How did you come by trousers like that?'

'It was so long ago, I can hardly remember how...'

## **The Tale of Time's Trousers**

*A saga in three parts*

### **Part 1**

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away,  
when Time was still small, he had no trousers at all.  
He crawled and crawled, till out of the blue  
up popped a woman called Eve, and said:  
'Hey Adam, look there, it's Time without trousers  
larking about as if he were in Eden.'

The man named Adam took his pipe from his mouth,  
found a Tree of Knowledge to tap the ashes out,  
then ran his tongue across his only wisdom tooth  
and thoughtfully replied:

'What kind of trousers do you think he'd need?

This season's ones, or the timeless kind?

Let's go and ask Moses, he ought to know:

he's been all over and he's mixed with fellows

Published by liels un mazes, 2019

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in high places, and some down below.'

Time was surprised. 'Am I starkers?' he asked.

'You are indeed. Let's find you some trousers.'

'But why? What do I need trousers for?'

'You'll keep going and going and meet lots of folks:  
Speed freaks and slow pokes, boxers and rockstars,  
writers and rhymesters,  
cops and robbers, priests and beasts,  
barbers, butchers, bakers,  
and even the odd candlestick-maker...'

'But they'll see me, if I've got trousers on.'

'It won't matter a jot if they see you or not:  
you'll see them too, either way.

Without any trousers, you'll wind up in trouble,  
you might have to cut and run at the double.

It's always worth having trousers on.'

'But where can we find some trousers for me?'

asked Time, still in a hydric-helium haze  
and more than a little dazed.

'Where there's a will, there must be a way,' said Eve.

'Let's wait for the waves of our brains to heave.'

'A brainwave, you mean,' said Adam.

## The Tale of Time's Trousers

### Part 2

Now the Snake didn't dither  
but slithered out  
from behind a toadstool  
and said: 'Time is mightily perplexed.  
What now? This problem's so complex  
we need some other minds on deck.  
We ought to consult the tailors of thought.'

The Snake slipped away  
behind the toadstool, but after a day  
or a year - who knows, it's not clear -  
he was back again with philosophic news  
about Time's trouser don'ts and do's.

'ARISTOTLE said, the measure of natural motion is to be used  
for the size of Time's trousers. Like the sun's movement in the sky.  
AUGUSTINE confessed that we must look to our own minds  
to stitch together the past, the now  
and the future as one present,  
but DESCARTES thought that inner and outer dimensions should also be considered.  
LEIBNIZ maintained that Time's trousers must continuously  
be measured by events, not the other way around.  
NEWTON announced: 'Time flows absolutely of itself,  
so has no need of trousers, but in case it meets other bodies,  
one must remember that apparel makes the man.'

KANT countered: 'Let each imagine  
whatever trousers one wants.'  
NIETZSCHE needed to add that they should be  
beautifully round with a terrible depth.  
But HUSSERL was convinced that with no trousers on  
Time had no content at all.  
FREUD, meanwhile, seemed more concerned  
with Time's unconscious mind.  
And HEIDEGGER could hardly wait to see  
how Time put on his trousers.'

Eve was not impressed:  
'All that blather is way over my head.'  
'Blather?' Adam said indignantly. 'It's philosophy!  
The reasoned opinions of famous fine minds!'

'A lot of hot air,' whined Eve, unconvinced.  
'On the contrary,' continued Adam, 'much food for thought.  
I'll have to write a report of some sort on  
*The Ideas and Opinions that Arose in the Making of Time's Trousers.*'

Just then, someone holding a half-eaten apple  
dropped down from an apple tree that grew there.  
A man with wild hair and bushy moustache.  
'Excuse me,' he said, 'how do you do?  
I happened to hear your exchange of views  
which were, I'm sad to say, most misconstrued.



My calculations prove that for Time's trousers  
all of space must be used! Come and try these on.'

Time felt compelled to obey  
this relatively genial hombre,  
and he put on his new trousers.  
'What do you think? Too short, too long,  
too tight, too wide?'

From deep in his pocket the man took out  
a piece of white chalk and a small black board

on which he proceeded to scribble some squiggles  
trigonometrically inclined and sined, declaring that:  
' You don't need to play dice to recognize  
that these trousers here are the perfect size.'

Time was chuffed to bits:  
'I have to admit, they couldn't be a better fit.  
They're just like me, roomy and free.'

'They are like an extension of you,  
like a relative or long lost friend.  
When you're both combined, you form *spacetime*,'  
said the man who we all know as Einstein.

### Part 3

'But they are a bit on the heavy side,' said Time  
'You'll grow into them,' said Eve, 'don't whine.'

Adam scraped at his pipe  
with a stick, while the Snake  
wrote a rap-tilian quatrain  
on a fig leaf he'd obtained:

*Times were bad, Time was sad,  
Now's his chance, he's got his pants.  
But me they never give a break,  
Always blaming, hating Snake.*

It's G R A V I T Y my friend,  
Einstein proclaimed, with hair  
even wilder and moustache  
a shade longer.

Still Time complained, 'I don't understand.'

So Einstein started to explain:  
'As you know, space (and all things it contains)  
has only three dimensions:  
length, breadth and height.

Space, be it a courtyard or a cage,  
Published by liels un maza, 2019  
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is a stage  
on which all things happen  
and appear.  
But you dear Time, are the fourth dimension.'

'What, I only came fourth?' sulked Time.

'But with your new trousers,  
you're now S P A C E T I M E, a brand new entity.  
You'll curve when you come across matter in any modality,  
but it *will* slow you down, this curving called gravity.'

'I said they were heavy,' mumbled Time.

'You are as clever as can be, Mr E,' said Eve.  
'I bet he just looked it up in Wikipedia,' hissed Snake.

'I'll have you know, he's won a very noble prize,'  
countered Adam, so angry he stopped poking his pipe.

Time kept quiet, and thought to himself,  
'They're all bonkers! Never mind, I'm off.  
We'll see whatever we will see:  
how things turn out and how they'll be.'

And so they parted, said farewell.  
Where and when they'll meet again  
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we do not know and can't foretell.  
What lies ahead remains unknown.

It's the future. It's out there,  
just round the corner.  
Biding its time.  
When we see it, it's become the present.  
And much too soon, it's the past  
that fades so fast into forgetting,  
unless the Snake (or one of us)  
decides to write it down.  
Describing your days in a diary  
lets your past live again in the future.

*Time plays in a sand pit with his spade and small-waisted  
glass bucket.*

## **Timeland**

Time lives in Timeland.  
Nobody's certain where it is,  
though it's a place where we've all wandered -  
once you've left, you can't retrace your steps.

Those who've stopped there are no longer seen:  
they're those of us, who once have been

but since then have slid down Time's ravine.

In Timeland there are eras and epochs,  
various stages and ages,  
like different cages in a zoo:

an age of iron, an age of stone,  
ages that we've now outgrown,  
ages of history, ages of mystery,  
ages that have barely passed,  
outrageous ages we hope won't last.

There are ages and times we discover in books.  
Times we mark and times we hark back to,  
times that nowadays we have to reappraise,

as people often change their minds  
about many things, including times.

And days of yore that are not yours  
or mine,  
but a time long ago,  
time out of mind.

*for measuring time?*

*But there are other times  
as yet unseen.*

*Here are just a few:*

### **Spotless Times**

Everyone here is squeaky clean,  
each grown-up, teen and even tween:  
clean cut drivers in immaculate cars.  
To find some dust, you'd have to look far.  
There's not a smudge, not a single stain  
in this domain - spotlessness reigns.

But suddenly, from a far-off field,  
as if from bygone days,  
up high in the air, like an enemy drone  
a wind-blown seed drifts down.  
In unison the people cry:  
'O, horror of horrors, shoot it down,'  
but the tiny seed creeps underground,  
beneath a statue of a hero from history,  
to bide its time, until the time is ripe.

*Excuse me, have you brushed your teeth?*

### **Stolen Times**

Where have the best years of our lives gone?  
Somebody's nicked them!  
Call the police! Typical,  
they're never there when you need them -  
they're as lazy as

a truckload of toads!

Never fear, my dears, they're not stolen at all.  
They haven't even happened yet. Hold on:  
the best years of your life haven't even begun!

### **Promised Times**

'We were promised acorns and frogs!'  
'We were promised cats and dogs!'  
'They promised us some plaice and pike!'  
'I was told, a brand new bike!'  
'A sunny day, an angel cake!'

Don't stake it all on a promise, or fate.  
Don't assume you'll be given the moon.

When you have a dream to achieve,  
believe in yourself – before it's too late.

### **Milk and Honey Times**

Where did they vanish?  
Where did they go?  
Are they banished from our minds forever?

No.

They're still here, in happy-ever-after tales:

stories from the bygone days

which can still cast a spell today.

Brief whispers from our yesteryears

that seep so softly into sleep

and keep on drifting

through our dreams so deep.

Will they set us free? No,

but they lie beneath beliefs

which help us seek and find relief,

and show us where to turn

in times to come.

Those tales and mighty myths of old

forever comfort, nourishing the soul.

### **Times that Never Were**

There wasn't a time when a wheel fell off my ear,

or when I could hear the shriek of a chandelier.

No pain ever troubled the telephone mast,

cellars never climbed up to attics in the past.

The fire brigade didn't douse the sun:

they were never assisted by a stunned nun.

The Flying Dutchman flew nowhere



but stayed at home and grew his hair  
to a length extraordinaire  
and didn't care if people stared.  
I cannot recall what happened tomorrow,  
the year before last hasn't even begun.  
Lay to rest the never-seen times, haven't-been times,  
and clean your mind's slate for the day that awaits.

*I'll have a fish ragout!!*

*Times two, ha ha*

*Doctor, I can't get to sleep at night.*

### **Hard times**

A slow train won't reach the hilltop.  
One kilo is almost two.  
The down of ducks as hard as nails.  
The songs of flutes impaled on prongs.  
All that remains is to bear it with a smile.

### **Mushroom Times**

The boy goes mushroom picking.  
Oh, there'll be much finger licking!  
Quick, start to pick, they're thick on the ground,  
glorious fungus all around –  
mushroom rivers, mushroom meadows,  
mushrooms strewn, festooned in hedgerows:

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cep seas, parasol trees,  
horns of plenty and golden fleece.

When the mushroom sun has set,  
a mushroom moon will fret  
and sink in mushroom gloom.

The boy will rush back  
with his mushroom-packed sack  
fit to burst.

### **Tarteating Times**

Here, they're eating all kinds of tarts.  
Seated round tartables in tartrooms,  
they tuck into mashed potatarts and tart balls.  
Tarts for breakfast, lunch,  
and tea, plus snacks and brunch.  
When the very last crumb of the very last tart  
is polished off, they'll all heave a sigh,  
and someone will reach for the  
peppermint drops!

### **Imaginary Times**

Here, circles have three sides  
and cages' doors are open wide.  
Polka dot robots row boats as

pot-bellied bellhops pop in a shop,  
to purchase a tickle  
and a prickly pickle. Here,  
you can think what you will,  
crawl up a wall,  
dive in a think-tank,  
or drink from a zinc sink.

Rubber ducks go to work in the city,  
and shifty committees sit in the sea.

Here I like to stay a while  
and while away some hours,  
but when the time is right,  
let me go, set me free  
to find the extraordinary  
in the ordinary everyday:  
the wonders that surround us here,  
under a star that's a sun,  
our only one.

### **Nap Times**

Peace descends on towns and fields,  
everything's taking a nap:  
clocks in clocktowers napping,  
railway sleepers napping,  
dogs stop yapping - now they're napping -  
boots and sneakers nap in doorways,  
statues nap in noonday parks,  
phones and laptops nap...

Only Time is still awake  
checking to see if all's in its place,  
so when everyone starts to rise and shine

the whole universe will start to stir,  
and Time will keep watch over it all.

### **Shouldn't Have Times**

Shouldn't have been out in the cold with no cap.  
Shouldn't have left my cap in the mud in the spud field.

### **Why Did You Times**

Why did you go out in the cold with no cap?  
Why did you leave your cap in the mud in the spud field?

### **But I Told You Times**

But I told you to have a cap, it's cold and windy today.  
But I told you to put the spuds in your cap. Then we'd have  
spuds to eat and you'd have a cap on your head.  
But remember, when you're eating spuds, take off your cap.

### **I Haven't Had Time Times**

There's no time  
everything happens at once  
on one and the same day

and hour (and minute and second)  
you  
are born  
on a tennis court  
winning a game  
and scraping your knee  
on the way to school  
you reach for a glass  
that falls and smashes to smithereens  
as you get your physics degree  
happily taking your first steps  
under the kitchen table  
while you scold your grandson  
for smashing the glass  
and bring home a frog  
to show to your mum

Everything happened at once  
because there was no time  
The task of time is to slot things in order  
and keep them in line, one after the other  
though sometimes it seems  
there's too much to do  
on one and the same day  
that it feels like everything has to happen at once

*Happy burpday fishes*

### **On Holiday Times**

It's morning and the girl says:

'Mum, I'm hungry, where's my breakfast?'

Her mother answers:

'Get it yourself, I'm on holiday.'

On the door of her school

she finds a sign:

'Closed. On holiday.'

An icecream would be nice,

but the kiosk is closed with a note on the door.

What does it say? 'On holiday!'

The further she goes,

she finds more of the same:

firefighters

crimefighters

airports

law courts

reporters

football supporters

train spotters

government ministers

even the president -

they're all on holiday.

All the stores have closed their doors

and put up signs: 'On holiday. No sale today.'

Tired of walking all over the place,  
the girl takes her bike  
and rides to the beach for a swim,  
but it turns out, the sea's on holiday too.

She looks up and sees in the sky  
'On holiday' in big cloud letters.

The evening's warm. The girl lies on the sand  
and before she falls asleep, she sees  
twinkling letters, made by stars  
spell out the word 'holiday.'

It's morning and the girl wakes with a start  
when she hears her mum's voice:

'Time to get up, or you'll sleep away  
your whole holiday!'

*The sea's shut, where should I set?*

### **A Few Alternative Trousers**

If Time was clever, he'd be smartypants.  
If Time was more friendly, he'd be heartypants.  
If Time learnt martial arts, he'd be karatepants.  
If Time just wanted to have fun, he'd be partypants.  
If Time was more impatient, he'd have pants in his trousers.

Some clouds aren't really clouds, they're Time's cloudypants.

*If you are never on time, you are still in time.*

*Times change, but Time is always the same.*

### **The Tale Of Time's Sneeze**

Not once upon a time because there was no time,  
perhaps someone whispered: 'Time does not exist!'  
Then Time appeared, proclaiming: 'Here I am!'  
But no one was aware as there was no one there.

Just then, Time sneezed – it made a massive boom,  
though The Big Bang is what we call it now.  
(So Time, and everything else, began with a sneeze!  
No wonder that we're always catching colds.)

So mighty a sneeze had never been seen!  
Out came the chaos  
of particles smaller than atoms,  
then hydrogen, helium, other strange gases,  
and elements: mercury, iodine, gold  
and many more if truth be told,  
then stars and the Sun and our planet Earth  
and clouds and seas, rivers and trees,  
and ice cream, candy, waterfalls,



and mushrooms, buttons, basketballs  
and you, and me  
and even more stuff -  
like bits of fluff,  
like toilet rolls, toad in the hole,  
and more, much more... too much to recall.

And all of that happened because Time sneezed.

But where Time came from  
and what made him sneeze  
we (still) don't have a clue.  
Perhaps he'd caught a cold  
from going out with no trousers on?

*A small note about Time's sneeze:*

There is no evidence that Time actually sneezed, but it is known that the universe was once smaller than this dot: .  
Then there was a Big Bang and the little dot expanded until, 138 billion years later, the universe looks like it does today.  
But who knows, perhaps the Big Bang really was Time sneezing!

The person you're calling can't be reached right now.  
*When you need Time the most, it's already flown.*

### **Time in the City**

Time has moved from Milky Lane  
to Milky Way.

Be careful Time, when you're crossing the Milky Way,

look left and right at the Sun's traffic light  
to see if the road is free!  
Collisions do happen in outer space as well.

LIGO\* announced some news just now  
about a pileup of two megastars!  
This happened somewhere very far away, but only  
130 million years ago, and from the crash we're told  
a mass of elements flew out, like silver and like gold.

*Bring me, Time, a pot of gold,  
and put it in my hand to hold.  
Bring me all the silver too,  
And hide it in my shoe.*

*\* LIGO – Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory.*

*This is a fantastic experiment that detects cosmic gravitational waves, ripples in the fabric of spacetime. It detects these ripples that spread out in all directions from collisions between huge cosmic bodies a very, very, very long time ago. It hears the ripples, it hears the universe and tells us about it. Thank you LIGO!*

## **Seeing the Forest**

When you look at a forest, you see a mass of trees:  
tree next to tree – fir, pine, birch, aspen, elm...  
But it isn't just trees, the forest's everything that's there:  
trees, shrubs, ferns, fungi, berries, birds, insects, mammals, moss,  
each living thing that walks or crawls or flies  
or, rotting on the forest floor, is eaten where it lies.

All living beings are part of one another,  
so you and I and every other creature  
are joined together in the web of Time forever.

Greetings, neighbour!

Mine!

### **Time Keeps Us**

Time keeps us

and we keep Time

we are kept by Time, we keep in Time

Time is ours

and we are Time's

for we

are

particles of Time

we

are

of Time

(with trousers or without)

### **My Time's Trousers**

They are worn and torn,  
threadbare in spots,  
and patched in five places.  
They are my favourite pants.

When I put them on,  
I feel the march of time  
and a bond with those that  
lived before me, who felt  
in turn a bond with their forebears.

They were passed down to me by my dad.

He was an artist.  
He had them on when  
he painted his last painting.

That's why they are my Time's trousers.

Juris Kronbergs "Laika bikses" [Time's Trousers]  
Translated by Māra Rozītis, edited by Richard O'Brien

*Times when I don't have time, there is still Time.*