

PARODY



Clive James

(1939-)

Richard Wilbur's Fabergé Egg Factory (1986)

If Occam's Razor gleams in Massachusetts
In time the Pitti Palace is unraveled:
An old moon re-arising as the new sets
To show the poet how much he has traveled.

Laforque said missing trains was beautiful
But Wittgenstein said words should not seduce:
Small talk from him would at the best be dutiful--
And news of trains, from either man, no use.

Akhmatova finds echoes in Akhnaten.
The vocables they share *a fortiori*
Twin-yolk them in the self-same kindergarten
Though Alekhine might tell a different story.

All mentioned populate a limpid lyric
Where learning deftly intromits precision:
The shots are Parthian, the victories Pyrrhic,
Piccarda's ghost was not so pale a vision,

But still you must admit this boy's got class--
His riddles lead through vacuums to a space
Where skill leans on the parapet of farce
And sees Narcissus making up his face.