

Kneeology

To begin in the mists of prehistory,
(as Alexander Pope might have had it):

*All nature stands stiff-legged 'till God decrees,
"Mankind must learn to dance, let there be knees!"*

And there *were* knees.

Now flies have knees and fleas have knees
And hairy chimpanzees have knees,
Bird's have knees and bees have knees
(the bees' being, of course, the best).

There's left knees, right knees,
black knees, white knees,
knees indeed of every creed, and nation:

Slavonic knees, Teutonic knees,
Angelic and demonic knees,
Conventional and quirkish knees,
Albanian and Turkish knees.

Strong knees, weak knees,
Grenadian and Greek knees,
Slav knees, suave knees,
Chic knees, and meek knees:

The humble nun has pliant knees
to bend in fervent prayers,
The Nepalese have giant knees
to scale the Himalayas.
Beloved of both the nuns and Sherpas,
Knees – so neatly multipurpose:

The sporty French ride bikes with 'em,
The hearty German hikes with 'em,
The Dutch block leaky dykes with 'em,
Knees – your flexible friends:

Lowly perch for saints, or sinners,
Handy stand for TV dinners,
Nature's nimble, springy hinges,
Broad, or slim as Fred and Ginger's.

History abounds with notable knees:

Genghis Khan and Julius Caesar,
Marilyn Monroe, Mother Teresa –
every one possessed them.
Lord Nelson sported sunburnt knees,
befitting of a sailor;
Napoleon wore dungarees

and thus his knees were paler (and, of course, boney.)

So, wearing shorts, revealing knees
gives keys to our identities –
(‘by their knees ye shall know them’):

Chimney sweeps’ and miners’ knees
are battered, bruised and grimy,
While Martian knees (which come in threes)
are little, green and slimy.

Knees obscure and knees renowned,
Knees to make the world go round,
Knees to make the heart grow fonder,
Knees to roam the wild blue yonder.

Knees of Cubans, Poles and Gurkhas,
fit for mambos and mazurkas,
fit for foxtrots and fandangos,
Highland Flings and torrid tangos.

So remember, never denigrate your knees –
these most universal of all joints:
the spice of life, the windows of the soul;
they can move mountains,
or launch a thousand ships.

Whether noble or plebeian, Kuwaiti or Korean,
Grecian, Venetian, Tahitian or Fijian,
Russian, Prussian, Chinese or Thai knees,
These are the Knees of the World –
All human life is there!