

A BALLAD OF INDIAN HEAD

— James M. Flack

'Twas early in the year of fifty-three
When four swashbucklers set forth on a spree;
Established a company for profits to make,
Come hell or highwater, their fortunes at stake.

No money at hand, they signed up for debt,
Hocking their total, all they did bet
That somehow or other they'd favorably cope
With swings of the market to fulfill their hope.

The pressure was on them relentlessly
To keep the cash flowing for solvency.
The goals in those days were clear without doubt;
Take our full swings — but do not strike out!

With our debt to equity at twenty-eight to one,
Some bankers were pale if not downright wan
At the thought of advancing more working lucre
To a fledgling which had a secureless future.

But they did; and we did; to our future we rolled,
Rationalizing capital which in excesses untold
Was tied up in industry by barons of old;
Their monuments full of inventory which couldn't be sold.

We merged; we acquired — *their* common for our preferred.
At times we paid cash but stoutly demurred
From issuing our common (to avoid dilution);
'Cause the assets we acquired really begged for solution!

Castrophe avoidance was the first priority;
Maintain operations came secondly.
If energy were left, after meeting these two;
Improvements were in order if confined to a few!

Diversification served us quite well
To dampen the swings of the pell and the mell.
Joint ventures we tried and liked very much;
Developed good deals and patterns for such.

Instructions to divisions were considerate — not rash
Run it your way, but send corporate all cash.
As long as there're profits, you'll have a full say;
But start losing money, you'll lose it our way!

We scratched in our markets for meaningful shares;
And watched competition for treacherous snares.
Our view towards inventory was cautious — not bold;
It's a liability — not an asset — until it is sold!

Then came the day with capital abundant;
Other people's problems looked repulsively redundant.
So, earnings of quality with vigor we sought;
We issued our common for some that we bought.

We grew and we grew — new records each year!
But action in Wall Street grew lesser, we fear.
Shareholders were restless but never irate.
Resolution came in an offer to go private.

The torch has been passed to a new generation,
Whose competence commands new heights of veneration.
The journey's been great for me and for mine;
Godspeed and success for thee and for thine!

RETIREMENT WITHOUT VACATIONS
Ode to Royal Little on His Ninety-first

Maturity in business was at hand,
With or without plan.
Retirement was the plot--
Ready or not!

Roy was there to pull me ashore,
As he had so often done before.
He advised: "Don't let your brain
Go down the drain!

If you retire to the Golf Club
To play Gin, you'll wither on the vine,
And die before you should--
A disillusioned old man.

After sixty-five, the best is yet to come!
Find things that need doing;
Fix up your hometown;
Preserve the irreplaceable"

Thanks, Roy. We owe you a lot.
Tah and I listened. We used your plot.
Your advice was upbeat - full of jive.
We saved our brains; we're still alive.

However, during moments of high speed
I'm inclined to think that I need
To take a job in expiation
So that again I'll have vacations!

Happy Birthday, Roy!
Many happy returns.

James M. Flack

For Dr. Ernst Weber's
80th Birthday Celebration, October 1, 1981
At the University Club
New York City

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ERNST!

'Twas early this century, some eighty years ago
That Honoree Ernst Weber claimed earthly abode.
It didn't take long after planetary debut
For Ernst to discover there's a lot to do!

To herald his feats and make all believers,
What better support for a born achiever
Than junior admirers blowing his horn,
As one after another, four sisters were born.

Our hero through school strode tall with enjoyment;
Absorbed syllogisms and formulae with deployment,
Til he doctored in Philosophy at Vienna U
And again in Science at the Technical U.

Early on, he impacted Polytechnic's mores;
Was Visiting Professor on Brooklyn's shores;
Awarded the President's Certificate of Merit while in Residency;
Promoted to Department Head enroute to the Presidency.

Despite patents, citations and honors untold,
Ernst welcomes new challenges to unfold.
Between challenges, he relishes all gains
Through visiting with his students down memory lanes.

Ernst travelled and travels throughout his career;
Always in a hurry but showing no fear;
'Cause whatever the weather, close by his side
Stands Sonya, his Soul-Mate, who lovingly abides.

Sonya and Ernst, Ernst and Sonya--climbing together far and wide.
They tackle all mountains--climbing side by side.
Their interests are mutual, their efforts supportive;
They climb to some heights too personal to report!

We have come here together to honor Ernst Weber,
A man for all seasons--A Universal Neighbor;
A Renaissance Man who makes goals to soar.
Happy Birthday, Ernst! And many, many more!

The Flack Family,

With Love