

Grinding Out a Ph.D

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(Marc Majka)

It's a damn tough life full of toil and strife,
We graduates undergo.
And we won't give a damn when the programming's done,
What bugs are in the code.
When the thesis is signed on the signature line
And it's in the library -
We will bless our luck, but 'til then we are stuck
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Grinding out a Ph.D, me boys,
Grinding out a Ph.D.
We're going insane
Just to live with the strain
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Once more we change an array subscript range,
That we've often changed before.
Then it's one more "make" but the work was in vain,
'Cause it keeps on dumping core.
So our brains we'll wrack for a kludge and a hack -
Then compile it with "cc".
And we won't give a damn just how fast it will run,
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We'll drink coffee 'til we get our degree,
From a cup of styrofoam.
Our blood pressure's high, which will cause us to die,
Or create some health syndrome.
Our doctor prescribes that it's milk we imbibe,
Or perhaps a cup of tea -
But we need the caffeine so we'll stay on the bean.
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The bank account shows a tiny amount -
All the money has been spent.
Tuition fees, macaroni and cheese,
And the rest to pay the rent.
Our stomachs groan so we take out a loan
For to buy some groceries.
But we spend it all on our books for the fall -

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Our thesis research goes ahead with a lurch
And occasional setback.
We think we have found a technique that is sound,
But a proof we sadly lack.
Our advisors advise that we need to revise
Chapter two and chapter three.
And we'll try to make sense in our oral defense.
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(tune: Rolling Down To Old Maui)

From the collection of Andrew Draskoy

AJS

apr97